

Atelier 10: Se réappropriier les savoirs

Dépossédées de savoirs traditionnels jugés obsolètes par les prophètes occidentaux de la science et de la technique, souvent convaincues elles-mêmes de leur incompetence, des populations entières sont devenues par la grâce de l'aide et du développement des analphabètes dans leur propre langue! Des initiatives existent qui montrent que la prise de conscience de cette dépossession peut être source d'une réappropriation bénéfique.

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> Introduction

Kalpana Das (INCAD, Inde-Canada)

I should like to make some introductory remarks on the subject « reappropriating knowledge ». For the last two days we have been more concerned with the ruins of development. Today we shall be focusing more on where do we go from here and how do we deal with our lives, our communities, as well as our cultures. Reappropriation, or as I prefer to call it, « recovering » knowledge of systems and traditions of knowledge that exist in the world may be possible alternatives. The world is plural, which means there is a diversity of cultures, diversity of life styles, diversity of knowledge systems. But the problem begins when one single, standardized mode of living and one culture becomes dominating and hegemonic.

So when we talk about globalization, we are also concerned about the monocultural nature of globalization. But the fact is that globalization is only the most recent phase and face of the process of homogenization of the plural world that we live in. It started in 1492, in fact, with conquest, colonization and organization through development and now globalization. We have heard about this the last couple of days. The monoculture and homogenization trend has been going on for about 500 years. It has also constructed and produced models of relationships between peoples and cultures, a kind of relationship which I call anti-intercultural because interculturality presupposes reciprocity and reciprocity can

only happen between equals. So in today's context we see globalization has produced – from conquest to globalization – this particular process of relationships between peoples and cultures on the basis of subjugation, domination and we can also say interiorization of a large number of cultures and also inflicted wounded identities on people – their sense of identity has been wounded.

So in this context of power-based relationships when we talk about reappropriating or recovering knowledge, knowledge systems of different peoples and communities, we should also speak of recovering identity because cultural identity includes the cosmovision and knowledge of the world based on that cosmovision and peoples' ways of being in this world, living in this world, that is, their practices. So their knowledge systems and practices are foundations of their identity. If you take that away from them the sense of identity breaks down. So I suggest that we need to frame the issues concerning reappropriation and recovery of knowledge within the frame of this anti-model of interculturality and the politics of knowledge based on power relations between the dominant knowledge system and the other traditions of knowledge. And I include in that, the West, as well. I think that the West has been the worst loser in this: that we have really almost eradicated the knowledge of ordinary people: the commonsense of the people has no validity today. So how do we recover this?

This is our concern this afternoon.

Without going any further I will ask our panelists to address these issues on the basis of their own experiences. The first speaker will be Helena Norberg-Hodge. She is from Norway and the UK and she is the director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, a founder of the International Forum on Globalization and author of the book called « Ancient Futures ». Her topic will be the modern culture of dominant knowledge and reappropriation of knowledge by globalization.

> Development in Ladakh

Helena Norberg-Hodge (ISEC, Norvège/ Royaume-Uni)

Thank you Kalpana. I agree with everything you said and the analysis that my Institute is making is very much along the same lines that Kalpana spoke about. In other words we very clearly see the continuation from colonialism to development to globalization and I was thrilled to see that this conference was based on that analysis. I have to say that, from having worked in this area for 25 years, this is a historic conference, it is a very, very important moment for making this clear link in this continuous process. It is very important that we have this big picture analysis to see how things connect.

I have come to this work from a very extreme experience, an experience that was both a great privilege but also a great burden and very painful. It happened that I was a linguist and I was in Paris, working as a linguist, when I was invited to go to a part of the world that I had never heard of called Ladakh, or Little Tibet. I almost reluctantly agreed to go because I had traveled a lot and was very happy to be settled in Paris, but I decided to take this opportunity to go when I heard that the area had been completely sealed off from the Western world and that for political reasons no-one had been able to travel there since 1947, and before 1947 it had been closed primarily for geographical reasons. It was part of Tibet topographically and culturally but politically it belonged to India.

So I arrived in this place which had been so untouched by the modern era of development. I also discovered that it was part of the world that had not been colonized and I think that what I experienced after deciding to stay there to study the language – and I learnt to speak the language fluently in the first few months because I was so fascinated that I worked hard at it – what I saw there in a very short period was a real compression of things that in other parts of the world had happened in over 500 years. The fact was that Ladakh had been independent economically in the colonial era because it was so remote and because it didn't have resources that were of interest to the outside world. The most important thing I discovered was what people are like when they are psychologically free, when they have not had round the corner the sense of the *conquistador*, or colonizing, enslaving forces that have often created a certain retreat, a certain fundamentalism, a closing-in.

When I came across this culture it was incredibly open to the outside world because it had not had to build up pretensions through fear. So I came across people who were more open, more tolerant, more joyous than any people I have ever met and of course I was always accused of romanticizing and it is a difficult thing to be constantly accused of. But the contrast between what the Ladakhis were like in the first few years and what happened once they opened up to development was tremendous. Development came in via India and it was a really Western model of development, very much dictated by the same forces we have been talking about here: the GATT, the IMF and the World Bank. And these policies that destroyed the local economy destroyed it very rapidly and you could see the beginnings of it.

Imported subsidized food, even wheat which is grown in Ladakh, very quickly destroyed the local farming economy and the amazing thing that I witnessed was that these imported foodstuffs came in much cheaper than the local food but strangely the local farmers couldn't survive economically. You would have thought that if the local food cost more in the market place that they would be earning a good living. No, the subsidized food from the outside destroyed the market for local food.

Just as frightening was the destruction of self-respect. I saw how the opening up of the area led to a gradual introduction of advertising images, images of modern Western life and tourism. The tourist would spend in one day the amount of money that the local people would have spent in maybe a year. That, however, did not mean that they were poor.

But the economic illiteracy of the westerners, as well as the local people meant that together they created an image of poverty. The Westerners who heard that their Ladakhi guide was earning only a few dollars a day would say: « Oh, my goodness, poor guy, let me give you a big tip. » They did not realize that in that economic system money played a very insignificant rôle. I also saw how, in a short period – about ten years – the external economic pressures led to internal violence, the breakdown of internal structures. The extended family suffered and the relationships between different groups that had lived together for many years: Moslem's and Buddhists who had been living side by side for over 500 years. There had never been group conflict, but after only ten years there were tensions and after fifteen years there was violence between the two groups.

I happened also to work in Bhutan - another very remote area in the same period – between 1984 and 1989 and saw the growing tensions there, for exactly the same reasons, and which led to bloodshed. The Bhutanese Buddhist government has been accused of ethnically cleansing the Hindu Nepali-origin people there.

It is very frightening for me to know that this increase in violence around the world is because of development and the knowledge in the West is very limited of just how much

terrorism and fundamentalism has been growing worldwide. I have been a passionately activist about these issues because I was a first-hand witness to this rise in violence.

Having said all that, what do we do? No. 1, the most urgent need today is for people to be better informed, better educated about these issues. That requires us in the Western world to understand how limited our view is of the outside world. There is a tendency for us to believe that we know it all, what is happening in the world. Not only have we got our newspapers and televisions which show us the reality of what is going on in Israel, what is going on in Afghanistan, but we also now have Internet which is providing us with this wonderful way of getting information from all over the world. I beg to differ. I think in a certain way we are more ignorant than ever before. More ignorant of the deeper fabric of life, the deeper knowledge of what is actually going on. And it requires on our part a great search – for where do we get accurate information? How can we also have some roots in experiential knowledge? It is part of the path to real knowledge to be able to trust our experience. How can we get experience when the globe now is demanding of us to know what is going on all over the globe? It is not easy, but I think it is much easier than we believe.

Let me put it this way. I think that No. 1 in the West is this realization of just how limited our knowledge is how manufactured is the report, the description of the world. That is the first step is to recognize our ignorance. No. 2 is to analyze how this ignorance has been created. I was very pleased the other day when Lakshma Yapa was talking about the fact that this doesn't happen just in one center. This concentration and control of knowledge means that what our children are being taught in school has to be profoundly questioned. In absolutely everything they learn they are being taught to see themselves as isolated individuals, they are being taught to see themselves as essentially aggressive and violent. They are being put into a totally unnecessary and unproductive competition. They are being taught to see themselves as separate from the natural world, and on and on. These attitudes to our belief about human nature and nature at a deeper level is shaping our sense of what is happening to the world.

On another level, this is of course extended and continuing in the universities, reinforced by what is happening in the media and what is happening in the universities. We are encased in a kind of monoculture which is being more and more controlled. We must look at the way that globalization has been responsible for destroying independent book publishers, independent journals, independent book-shops. There has been a concentration of the wealth that controls what sort of books are produced. Twenty-five years ago, thirty years ago, when Ivan Illich – whom you have all seen here – wrote brilliant books analyzing what was happening in industrial society, writing superb books that were needed, and needed to be spread and discussed. At that time he did reach most of the

Western world, with books like « Deschooling society » and many others. Today, most people have not heard of Ivan Illich. So we need to recognize that this concentration of power and wealth is preventing these ideas from getting out.

So what do we do? No. 1, we recognize the constraints in getting really accurate information. We search particularly through this opportunity here for accurate information. Of course, we know that there is no objectivity, but having said that, we need to recognize that there is a world of difference between the manufactured controlled knowledge that is being disseminated from the centralized centers of power and the information that comes from small, on the ground, non-governmental usually, small initiatives. For those of you who are interested in my Institute, we have put together a curriculum which includes writings by Illich and many people who are here : other voices that we don't normally get to hear. We recommend that you look for those in your own communities, in your own homes probably, as part of a group process, because creating a community of like-minded peers is a prerequisite, I believe, for really meaningful action, the action that you can take, once having looked at this spectrum of ideas. There are many very constructive things that we can do.

In our work at Ladakh we have succeeded in having a basic impact. I can tell you that in the last three years I have been more inspired than in the previous twenty and it is because helping Ladakhis and other people around the world to know the realities of life in the West is an absolutely positive and fundamental way of preventing a sense of inferiority, a sense of inadequacy, stupidity, corruption, which is what they are being fed with to explain their poverty. Being more economically literate in the non-Western world is an excellent and necessary prerequisite for regaining self-esteem and for helping the search into what is really going on.

It is the same with us. We are not aware of just how much we've been co-opted. How often do you hear people saying things like, in England for instance, « Our economy is doing so badly because we are not nearly so efficient and hard working as the Germans. » I go to Germany and I hear Germans saying : « We're not doing nearly so well as the British because we don't know how to collaborate as well as the British do. » There are certain myths that are promoted, always pointing the blame back to us, on our own inadequacy and not giving us the economic literacy to understand how we too are being developed. And the process of development here means the systematic breakdown of the knowledge we need, but also of the community we need. Thus group activity is what we need in order to make positive change.

I finally want to say that one of the most strategic things we can do is to analyze the systematic and global nature of today's development model – global model – and to rebuild local food systems in North and South. There is a process happening in France. It is not nearly enough to really withstand the forces of Walmart that are coming from America, the forces of the WTO

which are responsible for « forced » trade – not free trade. It is I think a good term : you pay a fine if you don't eat American genetically modified food, etc.

If you see the various manifestations that are destroying the local economy and realize that food is something we all need three times a day, rebuilding local food systems right now is a way of practically reversing the process of globalization. I was asked in the course of a meeting to suggest that you do everything you can do to pressure any aid organizations, any of the NGOs working in the South to focus on food security, real food self-reliance in the South as a priority. So rebuilding local food systems that promotes local perspectives from a sense of solidarity and concern for all the human family is a way of localizing what is now narrowly rightwing or fascist. I hope that you will consider joining the local food movement right now and perhaps join the study group to look at the cultural dimensions at a deeper level, while you also do activist work on local food. Thank you.

> L'utopie ici et maintenant !

Diogène (La nef des fous, France)

Introduction

Nous voici donc réunis, nous autres occidentaux, nos cartes de crédit et de sécurité sociale en poche, nos points de retraite acquis, pour dire au tiers-monde : il faut défaire le développement et refaire le monde ! Pardi ! Les enfants disent : "C'est celui qui dit qui fait."

Aussi vais-je tenter d'apporter ma modeste contribution à notre crédibilité incertaine.

Les sociétés se forment, se déforment et se transforment selon des utopies, pas sur des analyses. Les images ont un pouvoir de séduction que n'ont pas les théories.

Il y a actuellement 4 utopies sur le marché :

Au hit-parade, l'américain way of life qui fonctionne bien depuis longtemps avec le bonheur que l'on sait. Mais ses jours sont comptés, pour des raisons techniques, pas sur le fond hélas.

Vient ensuite le capitalisme à visage humain qui s'élabore à Millau et Porto Alegre. Théorisé depuis longtemps, il monte très fort depuis qu'il est devenu utopie. Imaginez toutes les grandes surfaces autogérées par leurs caissières et ne vendant que des produits du terroir, deux fois plus chers il est vrai, mais tellement bons. Ou le remplacement de l'euro par des grains de sel. La face de la planète en serait fondamentalement bouleversée, n'est-ce pas ?

Vient ensuite l'économie distributive de Jacques Duboin, utopie collectiviste très cohérente, sur le marché depuis soixante-dix ans, mais qui a du mal à se faire entendre.

Vient enfin l'utopie du philosophe inuit Aper Sonn, complètement confidentielle, et dont je vais vous parler, histoire d'enrichir le marché des rêves qui guident nos pas dans la vie.

Aussi parce que la Nef des Fous, que je suis sensé représenter ici, explore cette utopie depuis 1974.

L'utopie du philosophe inuit Aper Sonn

Le monde idéal selon Sonn est un réseau de "lieux" sans propriétaire. Chaque lieu est équipé des moyens de production des besoins élémentaires de la vie quotidienne (nourriture, vêtements, énergie, construction, mobilier,...), ainsi que des moyens de communication, d'expression et d'accès à la culture. Par ailleurs, chaque lieu se donne des moyens d'assurer une ou plusieurs productions spécialisées, destinées à être distribuées aux autres lieux d'une même vallée ou d'une même région (poterie, imprimerie, filature, entretien des chemins, recherche, hôpital, aéroport,...).

Ces lieux sont gérés par ceux qui y séjournent (10-20 personnes), organisés en association paysanne. Ils décident à l'unanimité exprimée (et non au consensus).

Toute la production est donc décentralisée, il n'y a pas d'usines mais que des ateliers et des laboratoires. Les personnes ne possèdent rien, mais sont assurées de pouvoir survivre, communiquer, s'exprimer et se cultiver, où qu'elles aillent. La propriété n'est ni privée ni collective, elle est absente. De même, l'argent est inutile car il n'y a pas d'échanges.

Cette utopie n'est donc ni individualiste ni collectiviste. Elle est fondamentalement écologique, car elle n'est pas fondée sur la personne mais sur le lieu en tant que milieu, c'est-à-dire sur l'autre terme du rapport au monde, qui devient l'élément de sécurité, de stabilité, anhistorique, laissant le champ libre au développement des histoires personnelles.

Une autre caractéristique intéressante de cette utopie est qu'elle ne nécessite ni révolution ni concertation entre un grand nombre de personnes pour se réaliser, car elle permet une phase intermédiaire très simple : la surproduction spécialisée prévue dans chaque lieu et destinée aux autres lieux du réseau peut, dans un premier temps, être vendue pour subvenir aux frais de fonctionnement relativement faibles de chaque lieu. Des lieux viables peuvent donc être créés immédiatement à l'initiative de petits groupes. Un autre monde peut naître peu à peu dans la société actuelle sous forme d'îlots, jusqu'à ce que les îlots soient contigus.

Ainsi se développe une économie domestique qui remplace peu à peu l'économie mondiale, qui se trouve plutôt abandonnée que combattue.

Cette utopie n'est pas plus surréaliste que l'utopie libérale : sachant que la majorité des humains rêvent du mode de vie américain, que les États-Unis représentent 5 % de la population mondiale, polluent comme quatre et consomment près de la moitié des ressources de la planète, et que donc le modèle n'est pas généralisable, que va-t-il se passer ? Le recours à l'utopie de Sonn sera peut-être nécessaire.

Depuis 1974, la Nef des Fous étudie et expérimente les conditions psychologiques, sociologiques, politiques, économiques, juridiques, et technologiques qu'il faudrait réunir pour que cette élucubration ne soit pas impossible.

La méthode d'expérimentation

Pour expérimenter l'utopie de Sonn, il nous fallait un terrain. Nous avons donc acheté pour le prix d'un 3 pièces à Paris un domaine de 320 ha (2 fois la principauté de Monaco) à 1 100 m d'altitude, isolé géographiquement et visuellement, abandonné aux moutons depuis 40 ans. Nous nous sommes installés là, les mains vides, en 1974, en effectuant une espèce de table rase à la manière de Descartes, mais concrète. Nous ne voulions pas importer des besoins préconçus, des faux problèmes, des réponses antérieures à des questions nouvelles. Nous voulions voir apparaître les questions en situation, et inventer des réponses spécifiques, autant que possible avec les moyens du site.

Nous pensions au début qu'il fallait s'approprier le savoir scientifique existant, et oublier le savoir technique, pour inventer des solutions adaptées aux conditions inhabituelles dans lesquelles nous nous trouvions, mais nous avons constaté que même en physique il y a des idées reçues et des anthropocentrismes. Deux exemples :

1. Les motoristes croient qu'un moteur thermique est condamné à un mauvais rendement à cause du principe de Carnot qui dit que toute la chaleur fournit au cycle par la source chaude ne peut être transformée en travail : une partie doit être cédée à la source froide. Le principe est indiscutable mais contournable : en mettant en série les 2 générateurs de sources qui, eux, ne sont pas soumis au principe de Carnot, on recycle dans la source chaude la chaleur cédée à la source froide. On raisonne alors sur un rendement théorique de 100 %; ça ne marche pas avec les moteurs à combustion interne, et il faut réunir certaines conditions pour que ce soit possible. Nous n'avons trouvé pour l'instant qu'une solution, avec un cycle d'Ericsson, mais je suis sûr qu'il y en a d'autres. Un prototype est en cours de construction.

2. Les physiciens disent que la chaleur est une forme dégradée de l'énergie alors que c'est l'énergie mécanique qui est dégradée : si je monte avec ma voiture au sommet du Mont-Blanc, je peux récupérer à la descente l'énergie que j'ai dépensée à la montée. Tout va bien, nous sommes dans un cas de figure conforme aux principes thermodynamiques. Mais si je fais un aller-retour au supermarché à l'horizontale, je dégrade de la chaleur en travail inutile, le système se retrouvant à son état initial. Si on isole thermiquement un système, Paris par exemple, les va-et-vient incessants à l'horizontale vont le refroidir irrémédiablement sans qu'il soit mécaniquement modifié.

Les questions rencontrées nous ont amenés à étudier des savoirs aussi variés que la diététique pour définir nos plans de culture et d'élevage, le droit pour définir notre statut juridique et fiscal dans la société française, la thermodynamique pour imaginer des moteurs nouveaux, l'électronique pour la régulation automatique de nos machines à partir de composants récupérés dans des vieux téléviseurs, le filage au rouet pour faire des pulls-over avec la laine de nos moutons, etc.

Dans l'utopie de Sonn, les lieux sont équipés de telle manière que les générations puissent s'y succéder en se transmettant les savoirs et les savoir-faire, et puissent refaire le matériel qui s'use ou se casse.

Nous avons donc constitué une bibliothèque technique d'ouvrages du XVIII^e siècle à nos jours, notamment l'encyclopédie de Diderot et d'Alembert en fac-similé, des ouvrages de la fin du XIX^e siècle qui a été particulièrement inventif, des bouquins traitant des techniques "ersatz" utilisées pendant les guerres mondiales particulièrement faciles à mettre en oeuvre, et surtout des manuels pratiques des nombreux métiers d'autrefois : manuel du savonnier, du tourneur, du conducteur de chaudières à vapeur, du fabricant de peignes et boutons, etc.. Tous les savoirs et savoir-faire que nous avons acquis proviennent de cette bibliothèque.

Parallèlement nous avons acheté pour une bouchée de pain à une vente de matériel de l'État toutes les machines nécessaires pour fabriquer des machines, donc capables de se reproduire elles-mêmes. Pour abriter ces machines, nous avons démonté d'anciens logements de harkis sur un terrain communal, et les avons remontés autour des machines, celles-ci étant trop grandes pour passer par les portes. Il a fallu apprendre à se servir d'un tour, d'une fraiseuse, d'une rectifieuse...

Pour fabriquer l'électricité nécessaire à ces machines, nous avons accouplé un moteur de Ford Anglia et un alternateur provenant de l'armée américaine en Allemagne. Entre le militaire américain et la vieille anglaise, le courant passait bien. Mais le moteur consommait de l'essence. Nous avons alors fabriqué un gazogène, appareil qui transforme le bois en gaz et qui était en usage pendant la dernière guerre mondiale. Nous avons un bouquin de 1942 sur la question qui commence par cette phrase : "La femme enfante dans la douleur ; les peuples dans l'épreuve." Quelle époque épique ! Nous avons donc produit notre électricité à partir du bois. Nous en avons profité pour mettre le gazogène sur une remorque derrière un fourgon et sommes allés nous promener sur la route sans essence. Ce moment a été pour nous une émancipation mentale. Après avoir constaté qu'on pouvait même se passer des émirs, nous n'avons plus eu peur de rien.

Nous voulions par exemple faire de la sérigraphie, et il nous fallait une base à vide, machine très chère qui aspire le papier par un grand nombre de trous pour le maintenir à plat. Après avoir demandé leur documentation à tous les marchands de bases à vide de Paris, nous avons fait une synthèse des différents modèles proposés et l'avons fabriquée de toute pièce à partir de matériaux de récupération. Il a fallu percer 5 000 trous. 3 jours. Elle semblait sortir du magasin, et marchait très bien.

Le nucléaire ou la bougie, disent EDF et les braves gens. Nous avons choisi de dîner aux chandelles comme dans les restaurants de luxe. Nous les fabriquons (400 dans la journée) par trempage comme les cierges des églises, à partir de

paraffine qui est un sous-produit du raffinage du pétrole. Cette solution est donc provisoire pour nous, parce que non généralisable.

Nous avons étudié toutes les sources d'énergie existantes (sauf le nucléaire, allez donc savoir pourquoi) en distinguant énergies renouvelables c'est-à-dire nouveaux marchés, et énergies alternatives c'est à dire décentralisables. Les cellules photovoltaïques des multinationales, les éoliennes à 25 000 euros et les chaudières à bois à 5 000 euros ne sont pas alternatives, ni les microcentrales hydrauliques à 13 000 euros (c'est le prix qu'un fabricant italien m'a proposé récemment pour une puissance de 4 kW ; nous sommes en train d'en fabriquer une équivalente qui nous coûtera moins de 300 euros). Nous avons donc opté pour la biomasse, qui est de toute façon la seule source décentralisable possible pour les transports. Mais sous quelle forme ? L'utilisation comme carburant de l'huile de colza ou de tournesol est une insulte à ceux qui ont faim, car la forêt demande 400 fois moins au sol que les champs pour produire la même biomasse. Le biométhane et les alcools causent une perte d'un tiers du carbone manipulé sous forme de dioxyde lors de la fermentation, ce qui diminue d'autant le rendement de la filière. Reste donc le bois.

Or les "lieux" de Sonn sont des sites boisés dans lesquels sont taillées des clairières cultivées. La proportion entre terres et forêts est d'environ 1 à 10. La forêt, habitat naturel des ruminants, est pâturée. Elle produit donc à la fois les protides animales et le bois d'œuvre (construction et mobilier), la chimie organique (on obtient par distillation du bois, simplement, environ 400 molécules différentes, semblables à celles qu'on tire du pétrole) et l'énergie, qui se trouve ainsi intégrée à la question agricole.

En fourrant un serpent dans un poêle ou une chaudière qu'on relie à un vieux moteur de tondeuse à gazon transformé en machine à vapeur, accouplé à un alternateur, et en reliant l'échappement à un radiateur pour condenser la vapeur, on produit de l'électricité en se chauffant. Produire son électricité soi-même à partir du bois est donc à la portée ce n'importe quel antinucléaire de base, à peu de frais. Ce qui supprimerait cette curiosité française : comme les pronucléaires sont minoritaires, ce sont surtout les antinucléaires qui financent les centrales en payant leur redevance EDF.

Conclusion : l'écologie personnelle

Se réapproprier le savoir n'est qu'un moyen pour se réapproprier le milieu au sens écologique.

Car s'il est vrai, comme le veut la phénoménologie, que la conscience est toujours conscience de quelque chose, alors ceux qui décident de notre milieu construisent notre conscience, ce qui est inacceptable.

Nous avons adopté l'utopie de Sonn, non pas parce que nous n'avons pas assez joué au Meccano dans notre enfance, mais parce qu'elle nous est apparue comme le seul moyen de

reconquête de la souveraineté du sujet sur son vécu.

La question du sujet, ce qu'est un sujet dans le monde, est la question première, car l'idée que les humains se font d'eux-mêmes façonne la surface de la planète.

La psychologie étudie le sujet en considérant le milieu comme donné. Une science symétrique est possible qui considère le sujet comme donné et étudie le milieu en tant que vécus possibles.

C'est cette écologie personnelle qui fait l'objet de notre recherche, à travers l'utopie de Sonn.

On ne peut pas tout faire soi-même sans s'associer. La famille est une unité sociale insuffisante. On est très vite submergé par l'ampleur de la tâche. Nous avons eu l'occasion de vérifier la théorie de Sonn : moins on est, moins on fait des économies d'échelle, plus on est, plus on risque de tomber dans le collectivisme, pouvoir de tous sur chacun dont émerge un intérêt collectif distinct des intérêts individuels (certains aiment ça). 8 à 10 personnes, sans compter les enfants, les handicapés et les vieux comme moi, est un optimum !

C'est alors qu'apparaît un problème de haute technologie : la coexistence pacifique de tout ce petit monde, savoir que nous n'avons pas fini de nous réapproprier...

Le philosophe inuit Aper Sonn n'est pas un individu mais un jeu de mots qui désigne un moyen de vivre sans nuire, aux autres, à la planète, aux générations futures !

Kalpna Das : Now we'll go to Teodor Shanin. Please say some things about yourself, where you are coming from and the topic you will be treating here.

> Peasantry and traditional knowledge

Teodor Shanin (sociologue)

I am a professor emeritus at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom and was professor there for a quarter of a century - professor in sociology. In that time I wrote extensively on matters concerning the peasantry and the Third World. Those who are in this field in the Anglo-Saxon countries would know me because of my works and still quote me, I think.

For the last seven years I have been running a project for the University of Manchester, as Rector - equivalent to Vice Chancellor in England - of a university which I set up in Moscow. As part of my studies I had carried out extensive studies of the peasantry in various countries and during the last ten years I studied the Russian peasantry at the same time as directing the University. In England I was a board member of the first British organization that introduced the concept and structure of fair trade, which was established to secure direct contacts between smallholders in Africa, Latin America and Asia and the markets of the First World, over the heads of the multinationals. It is still going strong and everything is working well.

In this audience it would be fair to say that Ivan Illich and myself have been friends for the last thirty years, which means not simply a mutual emotional attachment that undoubtedly exists, but also extensive and systematic exchange of information and working together, even though we disagreed profoundly time and time again, which probably was part of our friendship - and still is.

Enough about myself, I suppose. I would like to say that, as a man who because of my age has participated in quite a number of conferences - indeed endless, I would say, if I try to remember them - that such conferences have two possible routes to take. One is the reinforcement of the belief of those who believe in a specific image of the world and the second is trying to spot blind spots in our understanding, lack of knowledge, or something like that.

I must begin on a possibly disagreeable note by saying what I have heard so far in this conference was mostly in the category reinforcing beliefs which are already held by people. In this audience I think, to say that local knowledge is something that was smashed by capitalist development of the world is a waste of time, except for the youngest of the young here who have not yet heard it. But for the last 30 to 40 years, beginning with the achievements of economic anthropologists 30 or 40 years ago, all those who are involved in this issue know it, and I mean not only professional scholars but also activists. It is common knowledge.

To speak about that is to indulge yourselves. You will get the easy laugh. You will get the easy clap. But that is as far as it goes.

I think that to exemplify the blind spots and what blind spots can do to us and our understanding of reality, I will take the simple fact that in this conference we speak - spoke - a lot about colonial society, colonialism and ex-colonial society. We didn't speak a word about Russia, about Eastern Europe, ex "Socialist" countries and those countries that still define themselves as socialist, including China. This is unacceptable if you have to understand what is going on, because it is one third of mankind. But it is also unacceptable for one more reason. Because then you get the wrong model of the reality. Not testing it against a major piece of the world. I have heard yesterday, time and time again, a model which is persistently repeated: there is a colonial force - nasty - which was taking away the freedom and the knowledge and the self-respect of the people in colonial countries. So far, so good. Then there are the people from whom the knowledge was taken away and you have those two camps facing each other.

I think that what is forgotten if you don't look at Russia is that the knowledge and the ability and the identity were taken away from people mostly by their own elite and not only by external forces. Colonialism has been on the decline for the last fifty years. But things haven't improved that much in ex-colonial countries. Who carries the blame?

I have seen a lady dressed in ethnic finery which no peasant

family can afford, but not only can no peasant family afford it, it would take them three months of hard work to get the necessary money to buy such a dress. It is no good explaining that colonialists are responsible, do-gooders are responsible, the World Bank is responsible, everyone is responsible. I think that Russia in this sense is an extremely important investment in knowledge, because it was Russians that smashed Russians in Russia and took away knowledge from Russians in Russia. It was the ruling elite, the government and the State who took away the knowledge, the capacity to work and self respect of the peasants who were 85 per cent of the population.

I think the main destruction of knowledge which took place in Russia in the previous century, in the 20th century, was the collectivization. The crucial element of what happened in collectivization was that all the best farmers were labelled kulaks and sent away from their villages. What happened next was the collapse of production, the collapse of productivity, the collapse of the ability of those communities to defend themselves against the government. Because they were the natural leaders of those communities, who grew up from below. The communities were left headless. It was done by Russians to Russians. Please, let us not forget it.

And therefore if you look at the picture this way, I think you will also see better what is happening within this model of colonial versus non-colonial. I know it is very good for one's soul in the Western world to indulge in explaining how bad we were. This type of self-flagellation is a rather interesting element of Western ethics. However, it is repetitive, it does not add to our knowledge and it does not offer us a solution of what to do. And therefore I think we should keep it at least restricted and concentrate on what can be done.

The topic here, the idea, was fundamentally - so I was told - the recovery of traditional knowledge. But what is needed is not the recovery of traditional knowledge because part of it cannot be recovered. Part of recovery, and here Russia is a good example, is a paradise for crooks because Russia is full of people who say that they recover the spirit of the Russian people, and sell it at a good price to those who think that possibly it is the way to get health if you are ill, instead of going to the medics. And I am no defender of medics, please. As I said, I was sensitive to this before the "medical nemesis" was published and I accepted it. But I think that at the core of the matter of knowledge stands the problem of the recovery of practical knowledge, of realistic knowledge, of knowledge that is not abstract and unrelated to the knowledge of the people. And turning to face the needs - the defined and the self-defined needs of the majority of the people.

In this sense from my studies of the Russian peasants in the last ten years, it is clear for example that American experts expected the capital accumulation - relative - in the south of Russia which is rich in agriculture, to result in capitalist development. We studied the budgets of those peasants. What they did with the surpluses was they invested in the education

of their children. There was no buying of tractors, there was no investment in capitalist development. There was investment in education, which cannot be understood in terms of the maximization of returns. You have to think about it differently. You have to look at the culture of those people and their choices. *Their choice is knowledge, but at the level at which it is practical.*

I would like to refer you to the last book of James Scott. What he presents as an alternative to what has happened he called *mentis* - picking it up from Ancient Greek. It is that practical knowledge from below which helps people to live their daily lives, relatively autonomously, or sufficiently autonomously from government intervention, from state control, from state pressure on them to do a variety of things and to take away from their own self-understanding and knowledge and, as has been said, their identity. Because that is the way to secure self-identity.

To sum up, I would like to suggest that the way forward is the knowledge that is the instrument of empowering people from below - and also above. It is not traditional knowledge, although we must be aware of and open to those elements of traditional knowledge that can be useful and should be used. It is rather knowledge of a practical nature that gives autonomy of choice and autonomy of movement forward to the thought of people. And it does this from below and not from above.

> Production de savoirs et ruptures

Emmanuel N'Dione (Enda-Graf, Sénégal)

J'ai hésité entre raconter une histoire et tirer des leçons. Je crois qu'à l'échelle de temps où nous raisonnons, il est préférable de parler de leçons et nécessairement de ruptures à réaliser. La première rupture est d'ordre mental et consiste à modifier notre propre géométrie mentale. Tant que nous continuerons à raisonner sur le principe du haut et du bas et de ceux qui se trouvent en haut et de ceux qui se trouvent en bas, de différence pour déficit et non pas différence comme richesse, pour reprendre l'idée évoquée précédemment, de parler de riches et de pauvres, de pauvreté et pas d'appauvrissement, nous développerons des dispositifs contraires aux aspirations des pauvres eux-mêmes. La réalité que nous observons est d'abord le fait de notre projection mentale, de ma propre représentation mentale. Il s'agit de révolutionner cette représentation, de ne plus raisonner en terme de pauvres, de ne plus faire des transferts suspects Nord/Sud. Nord signifierait riche et Sud pauvre. On retrouve le haut et le bas. Ce qui entraîne l'apparition de sauveurs et de messies. Si nous voulons préserver ces représentations, c'est pour préserver nos postures messianiques.

Nos représentations mentales, comme celle de l'Afrique comme sauvage, impliquent d'apporter le développement parce qu'elles sont porteuses d'un mythe, alors que les

différences entre le Nord et le Sud sont minces. Le rapport au savoir n'est pas simplement un rapport néolithique au savoir. Le savoir est un processus de production actuel.

Cette révolution de notre propre géométrie mentale entraîne aussi une révolution linguistique. Quand nous continuons à utiliser le mot masse ou des singuliers suspects comme la population, la globalisation, nous ne parlons plus de globalité au pluriel, nous ne parlons plus de diversité parce que cela fait peur. Quand nous parlons de diversité, nous ne savons plus où nous poser. Révolution linguistique signifie davantage de richesses. Tout le monde est riche, mais pas seulement de ce que nous prétendons central comme définition de la richesse. Nous pouvons aussi parler de la pauvreté des autres comme nous pouvons parler de notre propre pauvreté. La base de notre solidarité, que nous soyons au Nord ou au Sud, est d'affirmer que nous sommes tous pauvres de quelque chose, la pauvreté est plurielle. Nous sommes peut-être disqualifiés parce que nous ne savons plus produire des savoirs. En effet, nous parlons de savoirs traditionnels et non de savoirs actuels sans référence propre. Nous ne parlons que de centre de production de savoir comme peut l'être la science. Les autres processus de production de savoirs sont disqualifiés et partant, ceux qui les portent ou les produisent sont de fait disqualifiés. La révolution linguistique est de rigueur, comme parler des choses telles que nous les entendons et à partir de nos propres histoires. Ce que je pense aujourd'hui dépend étroitement du lieu d'où je parle : lieu physique, lieu historique, lieu social. L'enfant de la rue ne voit pas de la même manière le Sénégal que le président de la république parce qu'ils appartiennent à des lieux sociaux différents. De même que vous, si vous parlez du monde, vous ne pouvez pas en parler comme moi. La pauvreté, la domination consistent à me faire croire que depuis ma posture, je vois ce que vous souhaitez que je voie. Vous me délogez de mon histoire et vous m'appauvrissez. Parlons plutôt d'appauvrissement parce que, quant à parler d'un état à changer, il vaut mieux parler de dynamiques qui appauvrissent. L'appauvrissement est en marche à partir de nos propres représentations depuis notre processus de captage de la réalité. Dès que nous captions cette réalité en imposant une langue internationale, nous imposons des concepts dominateurs, nous enfermons les gens dans des bantoustans. Le monde actuel peut être comparé à ce qu'était l'Afrique du Sud il y a quelques années.

Beaucoup d'individus ont acquis leur notoriété en luttant pour l'indépendance et aujourd'hui nous constatons malheureusement qu'il n'y a pas d'indépendance. Il y a des ficelles tirées partout, probablement l'axe du mal à combattre partout. Tout ce qui est différence ou tout ce qui fait peur est un mal à combattre. La preuve en est qu'on oppose bien et mal, et probablement les pauvres, c'est un mal, pas forcément une richesse.

La révolution stratégique est nécessaire puisque aucun pays ne s'est développé dans le passé à travers des projets, des

situations artificielles. J'aurais bien aimé parler de projets et de projectiles (ces deux mots ont la même racine) parce que cela signifie dissocier les cohérences culturelles locales. Si nous continuons à pondre des projets, nous continuerons à dissocier les cohérences culturelles locales et les capacités de production de savoirs spécifiques ainsi que la participation de tous à des processus de mondialité. Dans des espaces spécifiques, les individus peuvent raisonner depuis leur propre autonomie, depuis leur propre histoire, depuis leur propre posture, depuis leur propre culture, depuis leurs propres mythes, et peuvent se mettre éventuellement en perspective réciproque.

Une révolution stratégique consiste à s'insérer dans les situations que vivent les gens. En s'appropriant la totalité des préoccupations de ces situations, ils produisent tout ordre de choses. Ils produisent des techniques, ils apprennent à s'organiser autrement. Observons les tontines, il n'existe pas de ministère de la tontine, seulement des ministères de la coopérative, notion importée qui serait une manière de gérer la solidarité alors qu'il existe des techniques locales pour gérer cette solidarité. Une révolution stratégique signifie que les gens vivent, se réapproprient leurs situations, les gèrent, produisent des techniques, produisent des valeurs, produisent des systèmes sociaux, produisent des mythes, produisent de la culture en permanence. Ils nous donnent à penser que la culture n'est pas un dépôt néolithique dans lequel il faut puiser mais qu'elle est en constante production.

Révolution spirituelle aussi. Mettre en œuvre des projets, gagner de l'argent, accepter la compétition a été le déterminant ou, du moins, ce qui a été enseigné plutôt qu'aider financièrement un membre de sa famille. Dépasser le principe de croyance égal savoir, permettre aux gens de produire une multitude de croyances, quels que soient les critères avec lesquels ils définissent les savoirs, c'est libéraliser le rapport au savoir, libéraliser le rapport entre soi et le savoir et obtenir sa place dans un ordre social donné. On accepte d'autant plus un effort, qu'on a de raison d'y croire et pas seulement parce qu'on a des raisons objectives d'agir ou parce qu'on y gagne par sa propre construction.

La révolution personnelle montre que le changement n'est pas loin. Elle est dans l'identité que je me donne par rapport à l'autre, y compris dans ma propre posture en terme d'utilité sociale dans une situation sociale donnée. Si je n'accepte pas de modifier mon image, y compris celle que voient les autres et que je ne travaille pas mes propres représentations y compris ma propre identité, si je ne suis pas dans un rapport évolutif en terme de position sociale, je m'accrocherai à des privilèges et m'épuiserai inutilement.

Une prise de conscience importante n'est plus de faire des projets, mais d'entrer dans les situations vécues par les gens

eux-mêmes. Encore peut-on les accompagner, à condition d'accepter le principe de la réciprocité et de la transformation réciproque, autant de mes valeurs que de moi-même, de ma raison d'être et de ma légitimité.

Dans la production de savoirs, ces questions diverses sont à prendre en compte et à mettre en processus. Dans ce laboratoire de changement, généraliser l'expérimentation suppose que je sois moi-même dans l'éprouvette. Ce ne sont pas les autres, mais d'abord moi qui dois changer. Et dans la mesure où j'accepte le principe de me changer, je compléterais cette trilogie : la société change, mon organisation change et moi aussi je change.

Dans cet itinéraire, j'expérimente quatre types d'apprentissage :

- l'apprentissage technique, parce que j'apprends à me transformer. J'apprends à me repérer différemment dans des groupes, j'apprends à me repérer par rapport à des savoir-faire en terme de production.

- j'ai des postures sociales différentes, multiples et j'accepte de me connaître à la fois comme Sénégalais et aussi comme Africains et comme citoyen du monde et, pourquoi pas, Français aussi.

- j'accepte aussi d'être dans un processus de construction solidaire avec tous et selon tous les enjeux. Cette production est importante autant que la production culturelle. Quels sont les mythes qui vont fonder ma rupture avec l'oppression et la compétition ? Que je décide enfin d'aimer sans vouloir détruire ou être le plus fort ? Il est indispensable de changer de repères culturels, de changer de valeurs, de changer de savoir-faire, de changer aussi de normes.

- et enfin apprentissage politique. Comme l'a dit Gandhi : « Tout ce qui est fait pour moi, s'il est fait sans moi, il est toujours fait contre moi. » Si j'accepte le principe que tous participent à la définition de ces règles du jeu, je crée la première condition qui fait de tous des humains, c'est à dire être un animal politique et participer à la gestion d'une globalité quelconque. L'État, par sa fonction de régulation, doit être la résultante de tous ces processus que je crée. Il n'est pas un en-soi qui doit réguler depuis un centre. Il deviendra tous les centres et probablement la circonférence disparaîtra. Et tous ces centres qui réguleront depuis leur espace d'appartenance, articulés et mis en réseau, créeront les mondialités tant nécessaires pour le changement de la planète.

On se rendra alors compte que ces valeurs sont encore acceptables pour l'ensemble de la planète et jusqu'à l'infini, la vie ne s'arrêtant pas ici, il faut que l'on passe par la destruction, par notre propre auto-destruction. Si vous y croyez, je vous invite, comme tous nos parents, à habiter au pays des ancêtres, encore présents parmi nous et à notre écoute, qui attendent que nous soyons, comme eux, des héros.

> The Philadelphia Field Project

Lakshman Yapa

(Pennsylvania State University, Sri-Lanka, Etats-Unis)

A couple of times during these sessions the question came up about « What is to be done ? » We know a lot about what is wrong about development, but where do we go from here ? I want to use this session to address that question around a specific project that I have implemented in West Philadelphia. Philadelphia is a coastal city and West Philadelphia is a very poor area, an Afro-American area, a low income area. This is a project that I have been carrying out there with several of my students at Penn State University. And I want to talk about that. Now yesterday at the plenary session, when I gave my talk I did address this question of what is to be done. And there I suggested that anything we do should satisfy at least three criteria.

First of all, I think that as we move forward we need a powerful social theory. It is not enough just to work at the grassroots level. We need to engage and test the kinds of rationalities that come out of universities, that come out of newspapers and television stations, we need to contest neo-classical economics, we need to contest the rationality of social science. So, whatever we do that component has to be there and somebody has to be doing that. At the same time, we should have an element of practice so that the kinds of things we say and the kinds of things we do make an immediate and material difference to the lives of people in terms of their health, in terms of their nutrition, in terms of their housing. We have to find a way in which we talk about all these things simultaneously. And thirdly, we need to have a theory of power. We need to show who will do this for us so we need to talk about agency, who will do this for us.

So let me talk about the Philadelphia Field Project in the context of these three topics. While the hypothesis of this project is that when we think about the problems of poor people, whether they be in the US or in the Third World, we look to things like underdevelopment, like racism, like unemployment, like exploitation, but we never explore – or not systematically – the role of scientific rationality as being implicated in the material deprivation that poor people suffer. We have not explored that, so that part of my hypothesis is that knowledge is a causative of poverty. I want to explain that now, in the US and almost everywhere else, when rational educated people approach the topic of poverty, here's what they do. We have a certain income criterion by which we measure poverty. We say people who are over that are not poor or those who have less than that are poor, etc. Then we use the criterion to identify a set of households and we call them the poverty sector. This is what the US census will do, this is what the World Bank will do and this is what every central bank and development agency in the Third World countries will do. They

identify this poverty sector. They even map it and they always love to map it. So, once you have it you get this sense of control. We know who they are, where they live : if we could photograph them, if we could map them, if we could survey them, we could surely find out what's wrong with them. So this is the idea, that somehow the causes of poverty are resident in the bodies of these people, in their psyche and in their region. That is what standard social science is about. Now, that idea of the causes of poverty as being resident in the poverty sector, or in these poverty regions or households comes from a larger social science epistemology of how we know. And the way we know is that, as academics, as journalists, as educated people, we tend to divide the world into two sectors. The realm of the problem, in this case poverty, and then there is the realm of the non-problem, people who are educated, people who pay taxes, people who come to conferences like this : we are part of the non-problem. And we have the privilege and the resources and the intellect to think about poor people and to do something about them. So there is the dichotomy of the problem and the non-problem and this is increasingly routine in social science, economics, geography, sociology, etc.

What I want to do is to contest that dichotomy and try to argue, to in some way dissolve it so that we begin to see what is our responsibility in their deprivation, and what is the responsibility of our knowledge in creating the conditions that poor people face. Let's start with the basic idea that most people subscribe to, that poverty is an economic problem. Now, if indeed it is an economic problem, you have to ask why is it that some 14 per cent of the people are officially poor in the greatest wealth-producing engine ever conceived in human history, the United States. And the criterion itself is very artificial. They take the cost of the minimum food budget, a very elementary food budget, multiply that by three and that is what's called the poverty criterion. And even by that very modest criterion 14 per cent of the people are poor. Now if you come to West Philadelphia, the area where I work, in some of the area the poverty rates climb to 80 per cent – I said 80, not 8 per cent. That means that 4 out of 5 people are deemed poor. So you ask yourself how much wealth are we going to create to eradicate poverty if, in the greatest wealth-producing machine we have that much poverty. And racism is a big element, but that is not the whole story. Exploitation is part of the problem but that too is not the whole story.

I want to explore some other issues here. Until the Bush administration, we had just come through the longest period of economic expansion in the US and yet poverty rates were very high. And there has been a welfare program, trying to get people from welfare to work. The minimum wage in the US is legislated at \$5.15 an hour. If you work at that wage for 40 hours a week, every week of the year, with no vacation, you are still below the poverty line. So I begin to think then, as I sympathize with my American friends, what do we do to meet the real situation ? I am sitting on a stop, I am sitting on a

sidewalk and I am living in the greatest wealth-producing country and I am not sharing in any of this prosperity.

This is what I want to do. I am going to give you a concrete example of how we can begin to see how this dichotomy can be dissolved and to see how our own knowledge can be implicated. This is just an example. Now think of the geography of an American city for a minute. This is what it looks like. It is fairly large and it is very spread out. Most of the poor people live in the inner city. Many of the newer jobs with a minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour are in the suburbs. And we have a public transportation system that is almost inexistent. You have no choice to walk to work because these places are about 30 to 40 kilometres away. So these Afro-Americans are pretty much trapped in the inner cities because work is so far away and there is no public transport. You can't walk to these places and you can't bicycle. You have to have an automobile and you are also living in the highest insurance area in the city. What I am trying to tell you is that a transportation logic, a spatial organization of the city, a structural transformation have developed for which blacks are not responsible. They are not the ones who designed this transportation system, they are not the ones who took the jobs overseas and the minimum wage jobs to the suburbs. And yet they are the victims of this situation. You find then that we have a transportation logic that has come out of what the city planners have done. You have a transportation logic that has come out of what the transport engineers from the University of Penn and Drexler and other places of higher learning have done. And they have organized the city in which the deprivation that poor people suffer is constituted by the transportation logic designed by some place else.

This is what I mean when I say you cannot simply just blame the victims. You have to figure out who designed the transportation system. You can also use nutrition logic : the way that nutrition is understood. The way that diseases are understood. So my suggestion then is to work through the technical details of transport and the denial of alternatives, of food and the denial of alternatives, how we understand beauty and how we understand health.

These are all sites at which we could do practical things and we could contest hegemonic theory at the same time and their most important agencies. I always say to myself : I can't solve the problems of Africa, I can't solve the problems of India if I can't change my own university, as this is where I teach. So what I do in a practical sense, as a project, should be correlated to, should be proportionate to my own power. I am a university teacher, I have access to students, so I work with my students and what we have done is to bring some of this knowledge back from the inner city to the university and demanded that they teach different kinds of courses. How do we change the transportation logic of the city, how do we change what we teach in horticulture, in nutrition so that the kind of things we do can make a difference in the lives of the people whom we

are dealing with. So what we are doing is integrating teaching, research and we practice what we call service learning.

> Indian Health Systems

Mira Shiva (médecin, Inde)

My name is Mira Shiva. Mira was a princess. She walked out of the palace. She danced and she sang and in the oral tradition her songs are still today found in Rajasthan. She did not write books but she was a tremendous inspiration for women and she also represents, for many of us, the basic element for the spiritual dimension of our life.

Now when we talk about reappropriating knowledge in what context are we talking today ? I have been working with voluntary associations in India for the last 23 years. My inspiration has shifted from clinical medicine to public health. You do not hear anyone talking any more of comprehensive primary health and the social, economic and political roots of ill health. All this has shifted : it is more and more the bio-medical model.

The aggressiveness of the medical industrial complex is so great that, in spite of all the information and knowledge that exists in terms of ethical marketing practices and in spite of the regulations that exist here and there, its control over national and global policy-making is absolutely unprecedented.

In 1995 the World Health report « Bridging the Gap » mentioned a new international disease category : 59.5. It stood for extreme poverty and it categorically stated that extreme poverty is increasing and because of that there was an increase in the diseases of poverty. Unfortunately the poverty of compassion, of caring, of conscious functioning of contentment : these are not categories. And to what extent the deficiency in all these that is taking place in our society has not yet been recorded. Probably if it were it would be worse than what has been found for nutrition and anemia, etc.

We have gone through more than 200 years of colonization. Talking about traditional medicine, it was asphyxiated, totally asphyxiated. Their practice was made illegal. Of our own medicine I was not taught for even 10 minutes. If I learnt anything about it, it was much, much later. I did not know that we had had smallpox vaccination and that it was made illegal in 1804. I did not know that we did plastic surgery, especially for the reconstruction of the nose, etc. I did not know about judo and karate. In Kerala there was a traditional dance and martial art : they were all made illegal. And then the National College of Medicine was started. Any doctors who collaborated with, or practiced Indian systems of medicine would be unregistered from the court of medical doctors, which we had imported. We got Independence in 1946 and the talk was of primary health centers, long before the Alma Ata Charter which basically spoke of primary health care. But as the minds of the policy makers in medical care

have been so colonized, Indian systems did not have a place in our health policy and programming. There was a committee – I am just mentioning this because of what it does and how people have to struggle – and then, on top of it, you have industry and trade. There is not much space for traditional systems to bloom and grow. In that committee it was said you should set up a chair in the medical institute for the study of the history of the Indian systems – but not even for the practices.

The long and short of it was that as a medical community we got totally alienated. We never understood, we never practiced: looking down on others because the arrogance of the Western medical world was very much internalized. At this particular point in time we have the onslaught, the extremely aggressive onslaught of what we call commercialization and pharmaceuticalization of health care, the bio-medical model – of which, by the way, the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Indian Council for Social Science Research said, in 1981, that if we followed this curative care model which is doctor and drug dependent we will not be able to meet the health needs of our people and we will make any possibility of alternatives impossible. This was said in 1981 !

Dr. Haldan Mahler called this onslaught of increasing pharmaceuticalization, neocolonialism. When he said this, at that time there was no World Trade Organization, there were no TRIPS, the question of intellectual property rights over knowledge controlled and owned by corporations, had not yet taken place. We were not in debt and why we took out loans is another story. Most of the national health programs – a lot of them with World Bank loans – are based on vertical programs. We call it the allopathic system. All the Western systems are pharmaceutical: there is no space for Indian systems of medicine in the loans we are taking today – and they constitute a very large amount – we are basically in this framework.

In 1986 I was part of the HAI International lobby team. We were pushing for a strong resolution on the rational use of drugs at the WHO Assembly. At that time the US threatened to walk out if there was a strong resolution on rational drug use. I do not think anyone in their senses would think that if people asked for essential drugs of quality at reasonable prices which are safe, with unbiased information, are making an unreasonable demand. If pharmaceuticals have to do with health and not with trade, these demands would be very legitimately fulfilled. So when you are threatened with a walk-out, a very weak resolution was passed. I happened to be there. We could not believe it because we thought that WHO was there to protect public health.

Again, WTO had not yet appeared. But WHO is not a supra-national body – let the countries decide. And the countries have no information on what is going on and what kind of products are being sold. But how many drugs that were not even allowed to be manufactured and sold were being aggressively pushed. Now, under GATS, the agreement on trade and services, what will happen? We have an idea, with

the privatization of health insurance, of what will happen because we have seen that traditional knowledge, especially long-distance knowledge and not published in different medical journals, is not considered knowledge at all. So here comes the question: what is knowledge, what is science and what is information?

Ayurveda is a science of life. It is not just an alternative health care system. Ayurveda is a very sophisticated science. They say that you can have alternative musical cultures, different food cultures and clothes cultures, but this does not apply to science. Science should not and cannot be under the control of those who wear white hoods. Who decides what is science? In the Indian system of medicine we have people's health culture and then we have sashtras, which are systems of medicine, Ayurvedic and others. It is a totally different paradigm and it has taken me a very long time, even for me, to understand that today Ayurvedic medicines, which were meant to be diagnosed for individuals, are now standardized medicines. Because allopathization has taken place, because you have to compete in the market.

On the other hand, many medicines like Vicks Vapour Rub are sold as Ayurvedic medicines so that excise duty can be bypassed. In reappropriating knowledge there are four or five things that need to be done. I shall give some examples. One is the need to resist the appropriation of knowledge, the patenting of genes, attempting to patent tumeric, blackberries, for example – patenting of things that have been part of traditional knowledge for centuries. Second is the support for the practice of traditional systems. Many people feel if you can keep medicinal plants and germ plasm, it is safeguarded and I know that in the traditional system knowledge is going to be propagated by regenerating the plants.

Traditional knowledge is part of the culture, but what if the practitioners cannot survive in the social and cultural context? Both plants and practices have to be supported. There are many policies that prevent the application of traditional medicine: policies that marginalize and negate traditional knowledge. It may be forest policy, economic policy, the policy of building dams for the energy sector, which displace so many. And of course there is the challenge of irrationality and unscientificity by the so-called scientific community which has a very reductionist approach and is today becoming the mainstream. The medical health system is like monoculture – thrusting aside and trampling upon anything in its way.

On the question of biopiracy I want to mention the neem. We use it with rice and grains. We use it against mosquitoes and neem is also used as a contraceptive. In many of the prayers neem is being used. The question of patenting neem, people do know about it because there was a whole hue and cry. It was patented by W.R. Grace – you must know the hymn « Amazing Grace ». Do you know who wrote that? It was an ex slave trader, after he realized that trading in slaves was not a very good thing to do and probably God would not be too

happy about the kind of activities he was engaged in. The properties of the neem have been known for thousands of years. Then there is the question of turmeric, which makes the food yellow and has always been used in prayers and when someone comes to eat, also in marriage ceremonies.

Unless there is a certain amount of challenging of the appropriation of indigenous knowledge it will continue to take place. At the same time there is a need for us to understand ourselves that what we call people's health culture has to be supported. Today it is not that we have to introduce it, people are practicing it. We are talking about the appropriate use of health systems, not only about using this system instead of that system. The Indian health systems have a spiritual root. They were service oriented. They were never meant to be profit oriented as medical practice is becoming today.

Two years ago, 2,000 people died after the cyclone hit Maharashtra and Orissa. They died of heat stroke. People used to know what to do to prevent heat stroke in the summer months. Coca cola and pepsi cola cannot be alternatives. So the question is, what Helena was saying, that these things that are part of our folk culture and part of our health systems : are they going to be totally marginalized ? Is this knowledge not going to be recognized ?

Thousands of housewives have kept the traditional

knowledge about health alive. The traditional birth attendants have been involved in facilitating birth and taking care of the mother until the child is born. The system they used was good for the mother and good for the child, unlike the lithotomy position which is what all of us were taught. But there is a great need to strengthen the information that promotes traditional health. India has 16 languages and hundreds of dialects so any information has to be brought out in these languages. And this is what some people are doing.

As for the diversity of health systems, the one Hippocrates basically founded which was practiced by the Greeks and later taken up by the Arabs, in our country we now have more and more practitioners and more researchers in this field. It is one of the systems of medicine and the other is sita, which is from Tamil and dates from pre-Vedic times. In the traditional health systems the men and women who were practicing had risen above their own personal interests. It was not for profiteering. They were practicing because there was a belief that the body was the temple of God. If the body was the temple of God then you needed to take care of it. These were the three formal systems of medicine. To round up, what are the challenges that are being faced in terms of commercialization of health care and the appropriation of knowledge in terms of patents ? All this has to be handled simultaneously.

Débat

Un intervenant

Je suis reconnaissant au dernier orateur parce que ce qu'il dit confirme précisément mon expérience de vingt ans dans un pays très pauvre. Rien ne marche là bas si cela ne commence pas d'en bas. Une Française me disait récemment que j'avais une mauvaise conception du terme de développement. En France, il est vu comme un développement industriel. Dans le reste de l'Europe, c'est une conception beaucoup plus large. Le bon développement nous manque, il ne faut pas le détruire. Il ne faut pas défaire les mouvements solidaires de base qui obtiennent des succès comparés au développement proposé par les multinationales. Le développement par le bas, par ceux qui ont la volonté de faire quelque chose par eux-mêmes, avec leurs propres idées, avec des idées Sud/Sud et, avec quelques fois une petite aide extérieure, peut fonctionner.

Pierre Johnson (en anglais)

I work on a variety of topics, one of them being fair trade. The comment I have is on the panelist's intervention. I agree with a lot of what he says but I don't think it is sufficient to talk about appropriate knowledge and needs, you also have to talk about values. Culture is constructed around values that orient education and action. So if you build knowledge where values have been lost and other values have been injected, you don't rebuild culture and education around values, your knowledge - which is only practical - will be oriented towards the same kind of development. I agree with Helena about food security but I have been to a conference on food sovereignty in Cuba and I think we should be careful even if it seems only a question of language. The World Bank says we are going to give security, but food sovereignty means that each com-

munity, each country, should have control over what they produce and what they want to eat, which is not just protein but also part of their culture. So I think we should spread this idea of food sovereignty and not only food security. Referring to Professor Shanin's remarks, when you talk about the elite and not the colonizers, I think this is a tremendous reflection on what is happening in much of the South today. Uganda became what it was because of the internal colonizers - Idi Amin and his friends. There are despots all round the South : we have a nomenclatura in the South. Now, given this kind of political philosophy which was used by the elite so devastatingly - and is still being used in the South - in the name of the Revolution or the name of Socialist development, where do you think is the way out for a lot of people in the South to counter such elite misuse of State power ?

Helena Norberg-Hodge

I'd like to say first of all to Mr. Shanin that when I spoke about colonization, globalization, I was completely aware of what was happening in Communist and Socialist countries. Perhaps not completely but I grew up in Sweden, so I know socialism very well and also I am completely aware that local elites have been exploiting their own people so that the analyses we are talking about is not disregarding this. I think that there are people who indulge in a type of self-flagellation. I hope it is clear from what I have been saying that we ourselves have been colonized.

It is a very different analysis and I think it ultimately coincides closely with yours because what we are talking about is how knowledge is centralized, how power is centralized, how the colonials did that for the South, creating elites and centralized power and of course the socialists and communists did exactly the same. So the reason why we may not be discussing Russia is because Russian expansionism hasn't caused this. Russia itself is now being shaped more by American capitalism and the corporate model of centralization and expansion. So that is now the big threat for Eastern Europe and Russia, because there too there is tremendous colonization through corporate control.

And as for the gentleman who talked about development from the bottom: again, I think we have always to look beyond the words and be careful not to believe that if we define terms like development and food security, that if we have defined them to our satisfaction, it does not mean that they are not going to be used in another way. Now most of our critique of the development that we are talking about is the development that takes up 99 per cent of the money.

We are saying that the activities that march under the banner of development need to be countered. However, local people in their own local area, using local knowledge, can in fact enrich,

empower and recover knowledge – that, too, can be called development. I am not so sure that it should be called development because this causes confusion. It is exactly the same thing as when people say to me « We mustn't criticize the local decisions. » Because there is in fact a very vital and important internationalization, which is essential today if we are going to make changes. It may sound paradoxical but we are advocating the same thing: the local economy worldwide and improved international collaboration, starting with grassroots, but also even at an international level. But that is another story that will have to be dealt with in greater detail elsewhere. However, we have to be aware that terms like food security and development are being co-opted all the time. I would suggest we could call it « bottom-up activity » or « bottom-up development » even, but we need to distinguish between that activity and the development that takes up 99 per cent of the money.

Teodor Shanin

It has been said, rightly, that knowledge is rooted very often in values and in this sense you cannot speak of knowledge totally separate from values. I would like to suggest that in rural societies, as well as in urban societies, there is a considerable amount of established values on which one can count. When I spoke about education as the main interest of families, this interest is not derived from a market economy. It has to do with specific values on the one hand related to knowledge and on the other, to loyalty to your family. If you have to work on these matters, you have to define the values which do exist and see if they correspond with your knowledge. I think on the whole that they do.

The second thing is the question of what does one do in the condition of the nomenklatura being powerful in so many countries, not only in Russia, and their capacity to hold a grip on power. I think there is no simple answer, because if there were we would have answered it already and the people in those countries

would have answered it. There is no simple answer, but the non-simple answer is building up autonomy – the capacity for autonomous action from below. It is an extremely slow process, but it is a process that is taking place. In Russia, too, but not only in Russia – all over the world. If there is something that has a perspective, people will say you are optimistic, my answer is « possibly ». If I am optimistic then there is no future. If I am realistic as well and not only optimistic, then that is the future.

The third and last thing has to do with what happens then. Helena has said that we have heard less about Russia, but this is not true, we haven't heard anything about Russia, nor of Albania, nor of Ukraine, nor of China, nor of Uzbekistan – one-third of mankind, in fact. As I said, the significance of that is that you have to know more than one set of mankind and through that model you see better what is happening in other parts of the world.

Un autre intervenant

I have twice visited Ladakh recently. Referring to what Helena said, it is not politically part of India: it is an autonomous body within Indian territory. She said that Ladakh escaped colonialism, which is true, but it was a great pity for me when I was there last year and, intending to purchase a cassette of Ladakhi folk songs, I visited maybe 20 cassette shops but did not find a Ladakhi song. For me, it was typical, there were all the pop songs, the volume, etc. and I thought « What is happening here? Because I had heard about these people being so traditional, so untouched, and when I saw the students coming out of college and in the newspapers and on television, they were dressed in jeans. Again, typical. This kind of westernization is going on in Ladakh. What will be the future for them and their culture? The young people have even ceased speaking their mother tongue. This also is typical. What steps can be taken so that such an ancient language, or at least most of it, can be revived?

Frédérique Appfel-Marglin :

I would like to make a comment to Teodor Shanin. My reading of the centralized State, the new knowledge, the scientific knowledge that he opposes to what he calls *mentis* is precisely – what he shows so brilliantly – the tight, necessary link between the centralized nation State and that knowledge. They are born about the same time, after the Treaty of Westphalia in the late 17th century. He shows how science is indispensable to the centralized State, starting with forestry. And it is precisely that link that destroys *mentis* and is exported worldwide, both to the South and to Russia through various means. In the South it is exported through, first, trade and then colonization, but what he shows is that science is indispensable to the State and what I think one learns, what I have learnt, that what is similar between communism, socialism and capitalism is precisely that necessary conjunction. And so we can learn about *mentis* in Russia, but we can also learn about other types of knowledge that are the equivalent of *mentis* in Southern countries.

Une autre intervenante

Je suis chercheur auprès de la petite enfance. Je voudrais apporter quelques échos concernant les systèmes de représentation qui apparaissent chez l'enfant et qui ne sont pas forcément de bonnes nouvelles. Se construisent très tôt dans la tête des jeunes enfants des universaux, comme la division fort-faible, actif-passif, bien-mal, riche-pauvre, et même si les anciens dans l'antiquité avaient cent vingt-quatre définitions du bien, les enfants s'arrangent aussi pour les gérer. Le deuxième point important est ce que nous appelons la théorie de l'esprit, c'est-à-dire : comment construire l'autre ? Qu'est-ce que je crois que croit l'autre ? On observe que certains enfants, comme le contexte ambiant, déconstruisent l'autre, le fissurent en permanence. Un autre point important concerne la différence et le déficit : c'est étrange comme nous amalgamons tout et comme les enfants se plaisent comme nous à amal-

gamer et à prendre une différence pour un déficit et un déficit pour une différence. Quatrième point, ils sont aussi soumis à la langue d'état et à la langue de conseil. Ils y voient un peu plus clair lorsque la langue d'état ordonne et qu'elle correspond à une logique formelle. Ils sont beaucoup plus perdus à propos de la langue de conseil, celle que je mets au cœur des dynamiques de développement, c'est une langue très dialectique et qui produit l'absence de repère. On constate aussi l'absence d'autonomisation, même si on observe une autonomie apparente, et une compétition altruiste. On pourrait penser que la compétition n'existe que par rapport à la guerre, mais elle existe aussi pour le bien.

Je voudrais aussi commenter brièvement vos apports à travers ce que j'appellerais la nécessité des limites. Il est non seulement fortement question de travailler nos systèmes de représentation, mais de le faire aussi auprès de l'enfant et de ne pas se présenter en lui faisant croire qu'il est tout puissant, mais gérer le principe d'insuffisance, et accepter que nous soyons doués d'ignorance.

J'espère enfin beaucoup en l'intelligence distribuée, en l'intelligence en réseau, là où l'un perturbe l'autre, comme aujourd'hui, mais lui apporte aussi beaucoup.

Pour terminer, concernant rêves, savoirs et folies, je voudrais rappeler qu'autrefois nos sociétés étaient des sociétés oniriques et qu'elles s'étaient privées de Freud qui avait individualisé les rêves et, c'est fort dommage, qui les avait culpabilisés.

Et concernant les idées fausses du savoir, je voudrais dire qu'Hippocrate n'avait pas inventé la colique à plomb, c'était une rumeur. Les savoirs sont souvent faux et il y a des généralisations abusives et des rumeurs. Un petit clin d'œil à la Nef des Fous, aujourd'hui la question est moins de savoir pourquoi cet homme et cette femme sont-ils fous que de dire pourquoi cet homme et cette femme sont-ils trop raisonnables et n'ont-ils décidé pas assez confiance en eux ?

Un autre intervenant

Teodor Shanin a présenté l'autonomie, la réappropriation des savoirs et le lien avec les valeurs. Est-ce que vous pourriez en dire un peu plus par rapport à votre objet sur la paysannerie russe dans la période de l'empire soviétique et dans la période précédente de l'empire tsariste ? Pendant ces deux périodes, des communautés existaient déjà avec un certain nombre de valeurs. Une deuxième question à Teodor Shanin et à Diogène : concernant le problème des valeurs, n'y a-t-il pas deux chemins relativement différents : soit reposant sur des valeurs liées à l'Histoire, soit reposant sur des valeurs plus ou moins artificielles non liées à l'Histoire ? Une troisième question posée aux trois orateurs : les chemins de l'autonomie que vous avez présentés sont liés à un certain mode de comportement. Je voudrais retourner la question concernant les critiques souvent faites par rapport à l'État et par rapport au principe de la redistribution. Considérez-vous que la redistribution est un système révolu ? Ou alors, peut-on en faire autre chose ?

Teodor Shanin

What was said about values : I think that the values of the Russian peasants are still very much alive and kicking – surely in the villages, but also in the towns. When the American advisers tried very hard to disconnect the social services from factories and hand them over to the State, they ran into so much opposition that they had to give way. Fundamentally the peasant's attitude to the factory is his attitude to the peasant commune, which was responsible for everything, so the factory had to be responsible for everything – for his children, for his health, and so on. I think it is because these are communistic values and these communistic values still operate after all these periods of politicization and are very strongly felt. The only group that is practically out of it is the elite and the intelligentsia but that is a very thin layer that moved out of it a long time ago and in a sense they accepted Western values.

Helena Norberg Hodge

With respect to the schema of local autonomy, what is the way to create local autonomy ? I think it is again very important that we spend some time reflecting on what we can do with the constraints that we have now, not only for knowledge, but also for protest, and again I think that if we really analyze what is happening, local food as the path towards autonomy is one of the most strategic. As someone has said, the knowledge of the Russian peasantry is paralleled by the knowledge elsewhere in the world, particularly of those on the land. I think that, as a subject that I hadn't time to address earlier and would just like to mention here, there is a direct parallel between the global forces destroying the local economy and the urbanization destroying rural livelihoods and rural life.

So we in our institute are trying to promote the notion of a shift from global to local and from urban to rural, and to reflect on what that means in terms of knowledge and how it relates to science. This is an important activity. One thing I would also like to say that the forces of globalization are concerned with centralization, the suppression of local knowledge, the suppression of nature and the suppression of the feminine. The feminine qualities, the feminine principles worldwide have been systematically repressed as part of this process.

A lot of this has been said many times, but I don't agree, one thing I don't agree on with Mr. Shanin, is that we all know it. I think that in the last twenty years the co-optation of knowledge has prevented us from understanding just how the system operates. And a final word. I would like to say that we not only need to recover local knowledge and to regain autonomy, we need to create activity that counters development – that is, development from above.

How do we strategically counter the forces of the top-down globalizing development ? These activities are quite different from the activities required to recover local autonomy. How can this happen faster ? It could happen from the top

down, in other words created by the forces of resistance in countering the media, using the alternative media to start with. This could have an enormous benefit in halting the monolith and the pressure. I don't know if it is clear from what I am saying, but it is something that is worth reflecting on : the difference between the counter development activities, the knowledge required, the speed with which this could happen versus the rebuilding of real local autonomy in a democratic fashion. Very different activities require different forms of knowledge, different ways of acting.

Diogène

Chez nous, la question ne se pose pas de la même manière parce qu'on n'a pas d'anciens savoirs, de savoirs à récupérer. Cela fait longtemps que les savoirs sont perdus, il faut donc les réinventer complètement.

Un autre intervenant

Je suis architecte au Centre Pompidou. A propos du thème de la réappropriation des savoirs traditionnels, populaires ou savants, ancestraux ou vernaculaires, il existe un domaine immense qui nous concerne tous (au Nord comme au Sud, à l'Est comme à l'Ouest) sur lequel l'éthique exprimée ici n'est plus un rêve, n'est plus un mythe, mais est en cours de se réaliser, c'est celui de l'habitat, de notre logement. L'habitat a été approprié par quelques professions : les architectes, les ingénieurs, les industriels du bâtiment, depuis un siècle, un siècle et demi. Ils sont objectivement les alliés d'une industrie qui s'est accaparé ce secteur en fournissant toutes les composantes industrielles : ciment, béton, acier, que ce soit dans les pays industrialisés ou dans les pays du tiers-monde où on a exporté les brevets. Et on a systématiquement cherché à anéantir toutes les traditions, le plus souvent admirables, d'architecture et d'habitat vernaculaires. Or, si on se réfère aux impératifs indispensables du développement durable, il est intéressant de rappeler les conclusions du *Wuppertal Institut* en

Allemagne, un des plus important en Europe pour les recherches économiques et écologiques. Une projection est absolument extraordinaire. Si l'Europe veut d'ici 2040 adopter les critères de base du protocole de Kyoto, il faudrait alors réduire de 80% la production de ciment, de 90% celle de l'acier et de 95% celle de l'aluminium. Or ce sont les trois matériaux de base de tout le mythe et de tout le monopole de l'architecture moderne et de l'habitat depuis un siècle. Certes l'alliance entre l'architecte, les bâtisseurs et les industriels est notoire. On sait depuis 1910 que l'amiante est un matériau hautement toxique. Cela n'a nullement empêché les architectes, les ingénieurs et les autres d'utiliser ce matériau pour l'habitat. Tout l'habitat de nos ancêtres, en tous lieux et de tout temps, s'est réalisé avec des matériaux naturels, non industrialisés : la pierre, le bois, le bambou, la terre crue. Aujourd'hui, les architectes commencent effectivement à redécouvrir ces matériaux et cela ouvre une alternative crédible.

Un autre intervenant

Les différentes interventions m'ont beaucoup intéressé et m'ont apporté beaucoup de connaissances. Après vous avoir quitté pour retourner dans ma région, dans mon environnement, dans la pauvreté, je vais me sentir très isolé. Ma question est simple, nous avons la chance de nous réunir aujourd'hui, auprès de personnes porteuses d'un grand savoir et soucieuses de le transmettre pour alléger les misères du monde. Maintenant, que faire de concret ? Beaucoup de savants sont utilisés par les multinationales pour construire un développement dont le résultat est l'enchaînement et de la misère. Sommes-nous capables d'utiliser les savoirs et de nous organiser pour aider les pauvres, les millions de personnes qui doivent abandonner leur région ? Après le colloque, serait-il possible de créer un réseau d'informations pour accéder à ces savoirs ?

Atelier 10 : Se réappropriier les savoirs

Une autre intervenante

Je remercie Mira Shiva pour son intervention. J'ai pratiqué la médecine chinoise traditionnelle avant d'être journaliste et je me suis battue pour qu'on maintienne la pharmacopée

chinoise. J'avais choisi comme spécialité la cancérologie et les Chinois avaient une spécificité dans ce domaine. Or, cette pharmacopée a été interdite au début des années 90 et j'ai dû arrêter mon activité. Des gens se battent ici en Occident, des

thérapeutes qui ont obtenu des résultats avec les médecines naturelles. Il faudrait créer des réseaux entre l'Inde et l'Europe car les problèmes existent des deux côtés. Comment créer un réseau, un partenariat avec la France ? •