The Responsibility of the Academy
A Call for Doing Homework

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Look, you're an academic. Do your homework. If I weren't supposed to teach you some-thing, why are you in the class?

(Spivak, 1990, p. 93)

RESPONSIBILITY IS A CONCEPT often heard in academic discourse and regularly employed by a variety of individuals and sectors ranging from those who challenge the neoco-lonial, hegemonic structures of the academy to administrators who are seen as representatives of those structures and paradigms. Very rarely, however, one hears an elaboration of what is actually meant by the concept or what is expected and envisioned when we speak of responsibili-ty. Besides the rhetoric of responsibility, there has emerged, since the early 1990s, a relatively new trend of demanding accountability of universities to the government and society at large.[1] This includes new schemes and models of accountability, performance indicators and task forces pushing forward a "trend that sees 'ultimate responsibility' for an institution to reside in a board of governors that monitors the universities' adoption of objectives set by outside political ap-pointees" (Emberley, 1996, p. 129). This kind of accountability, Emberley (1996) argues, "becomes little more than means to bring universities more under the direction of government" (p. 129). Articulated this way, accountability appears to be a code for further consolidation of the market solutions to the operation of universities.

In this paper, I argue for the responsibility of the academy toward other than 'mainstream,' modern epistemes, particularly toward indigenous epistemes. In this context, I employ the concept of 'episteme' to denote ways of knowing, understanding and relating to the world. Referring to worldviews or ontologies, episteme is, therefore, a broader concept than 'epistemol-ogy.' Calling for the responsibility of the academy to do its homework pertaining to indigenous epistemes is part of the larger project of shifting the attention from common institutional ap-proaches seeking to mainstream and 'acclimatize' indigenous students to the culture and conven-tion of the academy to investigating the role of the academy with regard to other than its own foundational epistemes in its production and politics of knowledge. In the contemporary acade-

my, there is very little awareness of indigenous epistemes beyond the occasional surface recognition of the existence of indigenous knowledge. What is more, the academy in general is very reluctant, in spite of its profession of knowledge, to expand its narrow and exclusionary epistemic foundations, and thus, to take its responsibilities in producing knowledge.

The objective of this paper, then, is to reconceptualize the term responsibility by examining how it is articulated in indigenous epistemes and to consider what the academy can learn from these 'new' perceptions of responsibility. There are several reasons why the notion of responsibility requires re-examination. I already referred to one of them—that the academy, as an institution of knowledge production, must take the responsibilities of its profession seriously. In other words, it cannot remain ignorant or indifferent toward epistemes other than its own, inscribed in the academy's European and androcentric roots and foundation. Second, urging the academy to reconsider its role and responsibilities toward indigenous epistemes is a necessary step in the processes of decolonization seeking to dismantle oppressive, hegemonic structures in society. This transformation is required not only for indigenous peoples and other marginalized peoples and groups but for the dominant society at large, in the name of social cohesion and sustainable, just futures. Third, considering the global context of deepening erosion of ecosystems and environment, human rights, social justice and communities, the need for embracing responsibility as part of being human is more urgent than ever and it must exceed the academy—according to Derrida, there is a pressing need to envision new ways of taking responsibility that is not limited to the academy.

At the end of the article, I contend that one of the first and most pressing responsibilities of the academy is that of doing homework. I elaborate Spivak's discussion of doing homework and consider what it may entail in contemporary academic contexts.

Re-examining the notion of responsibility in light of indigenous epistemes is embedded in an articulation of a different logic, what I call the logic of the gift. In this logic, central to many indigenous worldviews, the notion of responsibility reflects an understanding that recognizes the significance of relations and interdependence of human and natural worlds. LaDuke (1994) notes that in many indigenous worldviews and philosophies, "reciprocity or reciprocal relations define the responsibilities and ways of relating between humans and ecosystem" (p. x). These responsibilities and reciprocity are often enacted by gift giving practices to the land. In indigenous worldviews that foreground the multilayered and multidimensional relationships with the land, the gift is the means by which this order is renewed and secured. The gift is the manifestation of reciprocity with and responsibility toward others, whether other human beings or the natural environment.[2]

In contrast, in the worldview of individualism and the notion of the Cartesian subject, dependency on others is considered a burden.[3] According to the desired norm of the individualist subject, dependency on other people is met with trepidation—the common attitude of 'no strings attached' or 'even steven' supports the existence of separate, self-contained individuals with minimal responsibilities toward the other (Tyler, 2002, p. 78). This worldview considers dependency and responsibility as negative—these characteristics are an obligation and a duty external to oneself imposed by others, whether individuals or society at large.

It is important to note that when we talk about indigenous peoples' relationship with their lands, it is not a question of whether an individual may or may not have a relationship with her or his environment. Obviously, it is important to distinguish between a philosophy or a worldview and individual thinking and behaviour which may not always reflect or comply with the former. Moreover, my intention here is not to evoke the stereotype of 'ecological Indian' or any other

variety of the Noble Savage, but to consider how certain aspects of indigenous life philosophies can inform our rethinking the notion of responsibility and how that could be applied in endeavours aimed at decolonizing and transforming the hegemonic academy characterized by sanctioned epistemic ignorance. In the context of rapid corporatization of the academy, there is a pressing need to envision alternatives that oppose the destructive agendas affecting all of us. The pervasive nature of neoliberal corporate mentality is also reflected in the (willy-nilly) adoption of its values such as the externalization of social responsibility by many academics. It seems that the ethos and values of corporations and consumer culture are increasingly influencing the academy. In the former, social responsibility is considered a distortion of business principles (Bakan, 2004, p. 35), whereas in the latter, "we are actively prevented from exercising care and living in ecologically-embedded and responsible ways" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 16). As a result, we have academics, including many 'revolutionary scholars,' who prefer to point fingers rather than start examining their own roles in espousing new forms of social responsibility. As Grande (2004) contends:

> In this context, the voices of indigenous and other non-Western peoples become increasingly vital, not because such peoples categorically possess any kind of magical, mystical power to fix countless generations of abuse and neglect, but because non-Western peoples and nations exist as living critiques of the dominant culture, providing critique-al knowledge and potentially transformative paradigms. (p. 65)

What is more, elaborating a different logic—that of the gift—in and for contemporary contexts is different from the trend of evoking (often undefined) 'traditions' and formulating action plans grounded on cultural authenticity, nationalism or separatism. An uncritical reinscription of tradition is problematic for many reasons but particularly because of the real dangers of further excluding already marginalized groups such as indigenous women (Green, 2004; LaRocque, 1997).

However, the reality is that contemporary indigenous peoples generally continue to be culturally, socially, economically and spiritually more directly dependent on their lands and surrounding natural environments. This thinking is still a central part of indigenous philosophies while for many other peoples, this previously existing connection and relationship with the physical surroundings started to erode generations ago as a result of modernization, colonization and other developments since the Renaissance and Enlightenment which continue today in the form of neocolonialism and patriarchal global capitalism.

In cultures and societies that foreground reciprocity, individuals are brought up with an understanding and expectation of acting for others. In other words, the notion of responsibility is an integral part of being human and an inseparable part of one's identity. Armstrong (1996), an Okanagan writer and educator, articulates her identity and thus, her responsibilities, as follows:

> I know the mountains, and by birth, the river is my responsibility: They are part of me. I cannot be separated from my place or my land. When I introduce myself to my own people in my own language, I describe these things because it tells them what my responsibilities are and what my goal is. (p. 461)

By recognizing her responsibilities, Armstrong knows her location and her role in her community; in short, she knows who she is. This notion of responsibility stems from a perception of

interrelatedness of all life forms—that it is her responsibility to ensure the well-being of the mountains and river because it is directly related to her personal as well as to her community's well-being. Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary whaling chief and the founding Chair of the World Council of Whalers, Happynook (2000), elaborates this understanding as follows:

> When we talk about indigenous cultural practices we are in fact talking about responsibilities that have evolved into unwritten tribal laws over millennia. These responsibilities and laws are directly tied to nature and are a product of the slow integration of cultures within their environment and the ecosystems. Thus, the environment is not a place of divisions but rather a place of relations, a place where cultural diversity and bio-diversity are not separate but in fact need each other. (n.p.)[4]

In western philosophical tradition, responsibility is considered a complex concept discussed and theorized by numerous scholars. Gasché (1995), for example, argues that "[t]here is perhaps no theme more demanding than that of 'responsibility'" (p. 227). A normative definition in this tradition views responsibility "as a mechanical application of a framework of rules that simultaneously relieves the subject of the onus of decision and, hence, of all liability" (Gasché, 1995, p. 227). On the other hand, however, responsibility implies a responsible response which can take place "only if the decision is truly a decision, not a mechanical reaction to, or an effect of, a determinate cause" (Gasché, 1995, p. 227). Gasché (1995) further notes that considering responsibility involves a number of risks and thus, "[a] responsible discourse on responsibility can indeed only assert itself in the mode of a 'perhaps'" (p. 228).

For Heidegger, responsibility is "a response to which one commits oneself" (as cited in Gasché, 1995, p. 228). This idea of responsiveness or respondence is further explicated by Spivak whose notion of responsibility reflects Bakhtin's articulation of 'answerability.'[6] Spivak (1994) proposes that response:

> involves not only 'respond to,' as in '*give* an answer to,' but also the related situations of 'answering to,' as in being responsible for a name (this brings up the question of the relationship between being responsible for/to ourselves and for/to others); of being answerable...(p. 22)

Responsibility signifies the act of response which completes the transaction of speaker and listener, as well as the ethical stance of making discursive space for the 'other' to exist. For Spivak, "ethics are not just a problem of knowledge but a call to a relationship" (Spivak, Landry, & Maclean, 1996, p. 5). If responsibility cannot be merely mechanical expectation to answer, what does it mean, then, to call for a willingness to give a response and for ability to response (i.e., response-ability)?

Responsibility necessitates knowledge. It requires knowing how to respond but also act in a responsible manner. Derrida (1992) suggests that "not knowing, having neither a sufficient knowledge or consciousness of what being *responsible* means, is of itself a lack of responsibility" (p. 25). If knowledge is a prerequisite for responsibility, ignorance presents a serious threat to responsible, response-able behaviour and thinking. Moreover, responsibility demands action:

> If it is true that the concept of responsibility has, in the most reliable continuity of its history, always implied involvement in action, doing, a *praxis*, a *decision* that exceeds sim-

ple conscience or simple theoretical understanding, it is also true that the same concept requires a decision or responsible action to answer for itself *consciously*, that is, with knowledge of a thematics of what is done, of what action signifies, its causes, ends, etc. (Derrida, 1992, p. 25)

Responsibility as action beyond theorizing poses a possibility of an interruption: "there is no responsibility without a dissident and inventive rupture with respect to tradition, authority, orthodoxy, rule, or doctrine" (Derrida, 1992, p. 27). Responsibility as a rupture of tradition may sound at odds with indigenous perceptions and practices of responsibility which emphasize the *continuance* of tradition. However, no tradition is static, remaining unchanged throughout history, as indigenous people also repeatedly stress, particularly when confronted by irresponsible demands for authenticity. There has always been a rupture, both inventive (usually from within) and intrusive, and interventionist (usually from without).[6] In the context of the academy, responsibility with an inventive rupture implies, first and foremost, the ability of interrupting the self, of moving beyond the 'I' as the ethical subject (Derrida, 1997, p. 52).

Although the academy is prone to list its responsibilities in its lofty vision statements and to call for the responsibilities of students and researchers, we frequently witness the unwillingness of the institution *itself* to respond, to be answerable and take action. Instead of opening up toward the other, the representatives who feel implicated become defensive or remain silent. As Derrida notes in the above quote, responsibility links consciousness with conscience. It is inadequate to merely know one's responsibilities; one also has to be conscious of the consequences of one's actions. Without conscience, there is a risk of the arrogance of a 'clean conscience.'

Derrida further calls for "new ways of taking responsibility" in the academy which are critical of the professionalization of the university (Derrida, 1983). These new ways would signify rethinking the university institution, examining its disciplinary structures and in particular, "a new way of educating students that will prepare them to undertake new analyses" (Derrida, 1983, p. 16). Moreover, Derrida (1983) notes:

> New responsibilities cannot be purely academic. If they remain extremely difficult to assume, extremely precarious and threatened, it is because they must at once keep alive the memory of a tradition and make an opening beyond any program, that is, toward what is called the future. (p. 16)

New ways of taking responsibility in the academy are linked to the question: What constitutes a 'good' university? If the new responsibilities cannot be purely academic, the answers cannot always be found there either. One has to make an opening beyond the academy. I suggest considering the Okanagan concept of *En'owkin* that signifies a process of group commitment to find the most appropriate solutions through a respectful dialogue. *En'owkin* is a collective process that seeks to find ways to include those voices that are in a minority. *En'owkin* recognizes that these voices are most needed and that understanding these voices is critical for meaningful, good governance. Practiced in community and extended family circles, the idea of *En'owkin* is not to make decisions but to hear all the voices. The premise of *En'owkin* is that nobody alone can have the answers and that if somebody is arguing for his or her point, there is no need to listen. The most important aspect is not to stage an argument but to ensure that every perspective is being heard. In other words, *En'owkin* implies that one is not participating in the process in order to debate or enforce one's own agenda but to try to understand the most oppositional

thinking to one's own and recognize its importance so that the difference becomes diversity. If these aspects of listening and dialoguing are not taken into account and followed, there are no rational outcomes and as a result, people are taking serious risks for the next generations (Armstrong,1996).[7] As with the logic of the gift and gift giving practices, it is not difficult to see how the principles of *En'owkin* could be practiced in the academy in the name of a 'good' university that is ready to take its responsibilities in a new way, beyond the academy.

Scholarly 'Give Back'

A central principle of indigenous philosophies, that of 'giving back,' forms the backbone of current research conducted by many indigenous scholars and students. It expresses a strong commitment and desire to ensure that academic knowledge, practices and research are no longer used as a tool of colonization and a way of exploiting indigenous peoples by taking (or as it is often put, stealing) their knowledge without ever giving anything back in return (Smith, 1999, p. 1). After centuries of being studied, measured, categorized and represented to serve various colonial interests and purposes, many indigenous peoples now require that research dealing with indigenous issues has to emanate from the needs and concerns of indigenous communities instead of those of an individual researcher or the dominant society.[8] Indigenous research ethics assert the expectations of academics—both indigenous and non-indigenous—to 'give back,' to conduct research that has positive outcomes and is relevant to indigenous peoples.[9]

The principle of 'giving back' in research—whether it is reporting back, sharing the benefits, bringing back new knowledge and vital information to the community, or taking the needs and concerns of the people into account when formulating research agendas—is part of the larger process of decolonizing colonial structures and mentality and restoring indigenous societies. Other central elements of scholarly responsibilities include distribution and sharing of the research results in an appropriate and meaningful way while recognizing that the process of sharing knowledge is a long-term responsibility involving more than sending the final report back to the community. Smith (1999), makes a critical distinction between 'sharing knowledge' and 'sharing surface information' and points out the necessity of sharing "the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented" (p. 16).

The participation of the community, acknowledgment of traditional genealogical and other organizing structures, relevance of research and culturally appropriate research practices and codes of conduct, capacity building as well as the commitment to eradication of the detrimental structures and elements resulting from colonization have become the hallmarks of what is today commonly known and recognized as 'indigenous research.'[10] Today, the majority of methodologies and theories elaborated and established by indigenous people are constituted in the principles of reciprocity and responsibility which derive from cultural protocols and traditional values of some indigenous societies, and often incorporated into formal guidelines of ethical research.

Responsibility for Doing Homework

Spivak, who has discussed the necessity of doing one's homework in various contexts, links it with unlearning one's privilege and the notion of 'unlearning one's learning.' Spivak (1993) urges academics to learn "how to behave as a subject of knowledge within the institution of neocolonial learning" (p. 25). This requires, first and foremost, addressing one's privilege and the prevailing 'ideology of know-nothingism' in a way that would make various forms of elite racism visible. It necessitates critically examining one's beliefs, biases and assumptions and understanding how they have risen and have become naturalized in the first place. Unlearning one's privilege also implies an analysis of the commonplace 'moves of innocence' which claim the right to *not* know.

With regard to indigenous epistemes, the critical examination of one's assumptions remains largely undone, even among some of the most savvy advocates of critical pedagogy and theory. If the 'indigenous' has entered in their analytical consciousness at all, it usually lingers in the margins almost like an afterthought, raised perhaps only after somebody in the audience points out its absence. Therefore, the academic responsibility for doing homework on indigenous epistemes has to begin from an even more elemental level than examining one's beliefs, biases and assumptions. It has to start from acknowledging the existence of 'the indigenous' whether the peoples, their epistemes or how they are configured in the geo-political past and as well as its present. This necessarily includes recognizing how the global political economy is fuelled by accumulation of capital extracted from indigenous peoples' territories.

It is remarkable how, even in most academic circles, uttering the word 'indigenous' regularly elicits either audible gasps of silence, averted gazes or elusive responses so obvious in their ignorance and indifference that they would be better left unsaid. Despite the radical shifts that have taken place in the field of anthropology in the past several decades, the persistent anthropological bias (supported by popular culture and media representations) continues to link 'indigenous' to the past only, or worse, nostalgia for the past. The present is conveniently ignored although, or perhaps because of, our current global political economy acutely needs those indigenous territories and although in many places of the world (certainly in the entire Americas), we inhabit, live, walk and talk on and from those lands. If it is literally the ground beneath our feet, why is it so difficult to acknowledge it? The recognition of how this represents ignorance and indifference at its worst, and how it is sanctioned not only in the academy but in society at large, generation after generation, thus represents the very first and most urgent step in doing one's homework.

Instead of disavowing responsibility by simplistic breast-beating that allows business to go on as usual, Spivak (1990) urges 'the holders of hegemonic discourse' to "de-hegemonize their position and themselves learn how to occupy the subject position of the other rather than simply say, 'O.K., sorry, we are just very good white people, therefore we do not speak for the [other]'" (p. 121). Instead of taking a position of the 'politically correct' dominant who argue that they can no longer speak, one has to examine the historical circumstances and articulate one's own participation in the formation that created this and other forms of silencing (Spivak, 1990). One simply has to take a risk since "to say 'I won't criticize' is salving your conscience, and allowing you not to do any homework" (Spivak, 1990, p. 62–63).

The sense of responsibility is and must be grounded in the academics' commitment to their profession (Derrida, 2002, p. 260). Instead of considering hospitality and the gift of indigenous epistemes as threats to the foundations of the university, they should be conceived as in full agreement with the commitment of the academy to its inquiry for knowledge (Smith, 2000). If the academy assumes the role of the host as it appears to do, it must do it properly, appropriately.

It cannot claim to be a host without unconditionality and responsibility for the other—this is the very subjectivity of the host (Derrida, 1997, p. 55). Flax (1995) suggests:

> To take responsibility is to situate ourselves firmly within contingent and imperfect contexts, to acknowledge differential privileges of race, gender, geographic location, and sexual identities, and to resist the delusory and dangerous recurrent hope of redemption to a world not of our own making (p. 163)

For Spivak (1996), doing homework is a continuous practice that includes, for example, finding out as much as possible about the areas where the academic takes risks. In teaching, this would mean knowing the field as well as possible and familiarizing oneself with the main texts and arguments of the area (Spivak, 1996).[11] While absolutely necessary, familiarizing oneself with the areas one knows little about, it, however, remains deficient if we do not engage in the 'home' part of the homework.

The call for scrutinizing the historical circumstances and articulating one's own participation in structures that created various forms of silencing (including self-censorship), represents a radical shift from fieldwork to homework. Whereas fieldwork is more often than not elsewhere and 'out there'—not least because for so many academics, it does not even cross their minds that universities and campuses are in fact physical places—homework starts from where we are, from our homes, academic and otherwise. In this context, home is a broader concept than just one's house or apartment (or office and classroom, for that matter).[12]

Setting to do homework thus compels us to look at that reality. What and where are our academic homes? What are their historical circumstances and our participation in them? The responsibility of academics cannot be limited to somewhat neutral description of who we are, as it has become the common practice at least in the more self-reflective, critical academic circles, but also link that in the concrete, physical locations of our enunciation. Fieldwork is not elsewhere but always starts from here, from one's homework.

Some indigenous scholars have criticized the tendency of universities to conveniently forget or ignore the fact that they, in many cases, are located on land which continues to belong to an indigenous people (Marker, 2000; Smith, 1992). There is also a paradox represented by the presence of those indigenous students on a university campus who are local to the area. As Michael Marker (2000) notes, these students have "a unique sense of the history of the institution and the community" (p. 404) but nevertheless remain the most profoundly problematic outsiders for and in the institution where "[t]he often unseen—or hidden—aspects to the history of Indian-white relations can present the most obstinate and puzzling barrier to both the Native student and the administrator striving for change" (p. 404).

In short, the academy's homework starts from examining its complicity in historical injustices that continue to create contemporary conditions of dispossession, political, economic and social marginalization and poverty. The questions that need to be asked include: What is the academy's responsibility in creating the conditions that are required to make the indigenous peoples' rights and self-government agreements meaningful? (Irlbacher-Fox, 2005) What is the academy's responsibility with regard to various forms of racism created by historical and existing power relations, including its own elite racism of 'studied ignorance and privileged innocence'? (McIntyre, 2000)

What is more, 'starting from here' involves a subtle but radical shift from 'knowing the other' to learning, and more specifically, learning to receive. Rather than assuming the possibili-

ty of knowing the other, we need to learn to think in a fundamentally different way. Instead of thinking that 'we must know' or even 'we are entitled to know'—positions that, by retaining the sense of ownership as well as distance, allow very little room for hospitality, the gift or reciprocity—we need to draw a difference, however provisional, between knowing and learning (Spivak, 1995). Spivak (1999) argues that the production of 'elite knowledge' effaces and forecloses the subaltern who is inscribed as the native informant by the West (p. 66-67). One of the results of this practice is that in the academy, indigenous people (among others) often become 'stand-ins' for contentious issues such as the colonial relations, economic marginalization, land claims, racism and cultural genocide. Once seen as 'representing' the 'traditionally marginalized,' the 'dominant' is let off the hook, and is no longer required to address these issues (Razack, 2001; Spivak, 1996, 1999).

The provisional difference between knowing and learning marks a departure from 'methodologies of disengagement' and 'the politics of neutrality and impartiality' associated with the conventional practices of knowledge production and characterized by the absence of care and respect for what is studied and 'known' to engagement and participatory reciprocity of learning that acknowledges that "knowledge is a social activity, not the passive and 'neutral' reception of raw, 'pure' observational data by presocial individuals" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 43). Insistence on the notion of disengagement creates 'a commitment vacuum' which is less resistant to economic forces. Plumwood (2002) further notes:

> [The] framework of disengagement is hegemonic, cloaking privileged perspectives as universal and impartial, and marking marginalised perspectives as 'emotional,' 'biased' and 'political.' The 'value-free stance will normally taken to involve accepting the effects of power, since the powerful have the advantage of inertia, whereas the oppressed must act to disrupt the *status quo* from a passion for change. (p. 43–44)

Instead of disengaged multicultural 'appreciation of the other,' Spivak (1995) calls for ethical singularity and a recognition of the agency in others. This recognition of agency is different from a distorted version of liberal multiculturalism embedded in and determined by the demands of contemporary transnational capitalism. She elaborates:

> We all know that when we engage profoundly with *one* person, the responses—the answers—come from both sides. Let us call this responsibility, as well as 'answer'ability or accountability...Yet on both sides, there is always a sense that something has not got across. This is what we call the secret, not something that one wants to conceal, but something that one wants desperately to reveal in this relationship of singularity and responsibility and accountability. (Spivak, 1995, p. 384)

To establish ethical singularity with the subaltern requires painstaking effort that goes beyond speaking for the 'oppressed.' For Spivak, it is an intimate, individual engagement with the 'other' which occurs in non-essential, non-totalizing and non-crisis terms. I would add that it also has to occur in non-salvage terms—the responsibility toward the other must not emerge from hierarchical relations that assume 'rescuing' the 'other' or knowing what is best for the 'other.' In short, ethical singularity must remain vigilant of not being co-opted in the service of benevolent imperialism such as practices of native informant that characterize much of the academy.

Moreover, ethical singularity requires not only patience but acceptance that there will always be gaps, the 'other' can never be fully known. The scrupulous process of learning to receive seeks to avoid the temptations of the colonial containment—whether arrogant or benevolent—of the 'other' and remind the learners to guard against superficial and stereotypical cultural representations and constructions.

The idea of 'ethical singularity' is not new for indigenous people. It is embedded in some indigenous epistemes and takes place in various gift giving practices that are based on active participation and attending to one's relationships in the world. This world is not an abstraction or a location 'out there,' it is the concrete environment in which we find ourselves in our everyday lives. For academics, this concrete environment can be found, of course, in the academy itself and the relationships therein. What we are currently witnessing, however, is not engaging in forms of ethical singularity but a further alienation from any sense of academic community and intellectual relationships. Due to the pressures of a different kind of accountability, we can see an opposite development toward cut-throat individualism and academic anxiety for excellence that override the need for ethical singularity, a commitment to engage with one another in non-crisis terms. In other words, the values underlying the market-driven, hyper-competitive exchange paradigm simply does not allow ethical singularity to occur. The era of accountability looks very different depending on through which logic, the gift or the exchange, we define it. This is why we also need a new language, a language of possibility, and being aware how the same words can be understood in significantly different ways, depending on the lens through which we interpret them, and ultimately, on the way we relate ourselves in the world.

About the Author

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NOTES

1. Derek Bok discusses some of the social responsibilities the university is considered to have to the larger society and state. While the 'social activists' generally support the role of the university in providing services to society, traditionalists promote academic instead of social responsibilities and argue that "the wholesale effort to serve society's needs has exposed higher education to pressures and temptations that threaten to corrupt academic values" (Bok, 1982, p. 67). For Bok (1982), the academic responsibilities include basic scientific inquiry, humanistic scholarship, the analysis of society and its institutions; i.e., "contributions of lasting importance" (p. 69).

2. Mainstream analyses of responsibility in indigenous societies are often characterized by assumptions grounded on foreign worldviews and values, remaining blind to other ways of knowing and relating to the world. For instance, Pierre Bourdieu (1997) contends that the circulation of gifts is nothing more than "mechanical interlockings of obligatory practices" (p. 198). While it is not incorrect to suggest that giving to nature is one of the many forms of socialization whereby an individual learns to conform to certain cultural norms and rules, it is however extremely reductionist and dismissive to interpret indigenous (or any other) gift practices as merely rules which are blindly obeyed and conformed to out of duty. Such views lack an understanding of different ethics and ways of being in the

world and thus deny them also to other peoples and cultures. Instead of being mechanically observed practices, giving to the land is the basis of ethical behaviour and a concrete manifestation of worldviews which emphasize the primacy of relationships and balance in the world upon which the well-being of all is contingent.

3. Here I refer to individualism as rooted particularly in Renaissance humanism and characterized by a strong emphasis on unique, self-sufficient, independent individuals whose possibilities and freedoms are viewed as limitless. Today, this individualism is manifested in the current economic ideologies with the focus on individual rights, freedom and choice which are in conflict with the recognition of collective solidarity, one of the fundamental values of indigenous peoples. This does not imply that the notion of individual is nonexistent in indigenous communities. As Emma LaRocque (1997) asserts, the question of collective vs. individual is more complex than generally perceived by many non-Natives and Natives alike. LaRoque (1997) argues that:

> The issue of 'individual' versus 'collective' rights is a perfect example of Natives resorting to a cultural framework when boxed in by western liberal democratic traditions that are associated with individualism. Perhaps unavoidably, Native leaders have had to overemphasize collective rights to make the point that such rights are even culturally feasible. However, the fact that native cultures were egalitarian in organization does not mean Native peoples acted on some instinct akin to a buffalo herd with no regard for the well-being of individuals! (p. 87)

4. Happynook (2000) observes how in the colonial context, these cultural responsibilities have been forced into a framework of 'Aboriginal rights' to be defended usually "in an adversarial system of justice." These rights are, however, at their root first and foremost responsibilities (Happynook, 2000, n.p.). Interestingly, Spivak (1999) also talks about the difference between right-based and responsibility-based ethical systems and the "constitution of the subject in responsibility." She notes: "When so-called ethnophilosophies describe the embedded ethico-cultural subject being formed prior to the terrain of rational decision making, they are dismissed as fatalistic" (Spivak, 1999, p. 18).

5. Bakhtin elaborates his philosophy of answerability in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and *Art and Answerability*. Bakhtin's concept is discussed, for instance, in Nielsen's *The Norms of Answerability*. Central to this concept is the creative dimension of action and the question, how should we act toward other cultures? Nielsen (2002) notes that for Bakhtin, "[a]ction is more than an intelligent reasoned response to a problem or situation. The act or deed has the two-sided form of answerability" (p. 136–137).

6. Especially, indigenous women have increasingly pointed out that there are patriarchal, oppressive, indigenous traditions that are in need of revision (Eikjok, 2000; Gutiérrez & Palomo, 2000; LaRocque, 1997; Martin-Hill, 2003).

7. This understanding of *En'owkin* is based on a talk given by Jeannette Armstrong at International Conference on the Gift Economy, on the 13th of November, 2004 in Las Vegas, Nevada. She has graciously allowed me to use the notion of *En'owkin* as an example in my work.

8. The objectifying colonial research discourse characterized by the salvage paradigm and practices of categorizations and measuring indigenous peoples alongside the flora and fauna or in zoological terms do not belong to the past (Allen, 1998, p. 12; Smith, 1999, p. 8, 59). Linda Smith (1999) outlines ten ways that indigenous peoples continue to be colonized by research (p. 100–103).

9. Beatrice Medicine (2001), however, problematizes the common ideal of 'wanting to help our people' by asking: "When we hear this utterance of benevolence, is it an echo of an often-articulated caveat of the expectations of members of the larger society, or do we truly believe that this is the most basic motivating factor in our lives?" (p. 84). Medicine suggests that this kind of benevolence might be a reflection of 'new ethnocentrism' based on tribal chauvinism and tribal rivalry which ultimately has a detrimental effect on Native education.

10. According to a commonly shared understanding within contemporary indigenous scholarship, 'indigenous research' refers to research conducted by indigenous people according to these principles while other types of research by indigenous scholars is often considered to fall outside this category. The main reference point of indigenous research is self-determination.

11. While this may sound obvious to teachers and educators, it should not be taken for granted. bell hooks (1994), for instance, argues that educators are poorly prepared to confront diversity, "This is why so many of us stubbornly cling to old patterns" (p. 41).

12. For example, the traditional Sami concept of home knows no walls but encompasses the surrounding environment with which one interacts on a regular basis and without which one would not be fully human (e.g., Valkeapää, 1994, 1998).

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