

# Justice Against the Epistemicide Towards a *brief* Critique of Modern Western Reason

João M. Paraskeva

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

- **THE GREAT REGRESSION**

*I suggest that we learn to think about capitalism coming to an end without assuming responsibility for answering the question of what one proposes to put in its place.(Streeck, 2014, p. 44)*

- **GAME OVER!**

*Let's go comrades, the European game is definitely finished, it is necessary to find something else (Fanon, 1963, p. 239).*

- **Open Up the Western Eurocentric Methodological Canon**

*The Epistemicide is the Killing of Knowledge. Every knowledge is 'co-knowledge' (Santos, 2018).*

- **Itinerant Curriculum Theory as Peoples Theory**

*ICT consciously aligns with the need for an epistemology of liberation that requires the liberation of the epistemology itself. ICT is an epistemological declaration of independence. (Paraskeva, 2017)*

# THE GREAT REGRESSION

Once upon a time, a cook decided to gather all the birds in the world and asked the birds what kind of seasoning that they would like to be marinated in when they are cooked and eaten. The cooker was all of democracy, so it was claimed. One of the chickens replied: “But we the birds don’t want to be eaten whatsoever period.” The cook replied: “That is out of the question.” Democracy doesn’t go that far. (Galeano, 2010)

# THE GREAT REGRESSION

- What we are facing is indeed the reboot of mankind's ideological revolution, one that frames the current Modern Western Eurocentric time, a paradoxical time.

On the one hand our current time is marked by huge developments and thespian changes, an era that is referred to as the electronic revolution of communications, information, genetics and the biotechnological. On the other hand, it is a time of disquieting regressions, a return of the social evils that appeared to have been or about to be overcome. The return of slavery and slavish work; the return of high vulnerability to old sicknesses that seemed to have been eradicated and appear now linked to new pandemics like HIV/AIDS: the return of the revolting social inequalities that gave their name to the social question at the end of the nineteenth century; in sum, the return of the specter of war, perhaps now more than ever a world war, although whether cold or not is as yet undecidable (Santos, 2005, p. vii).

# GAME OVER!

- Modernity is under the gun due the impossibility of perpetual submission from the ‘the other.’ That is, “the exclusion and cornering into poverty [better say, quasi extermination] of African, Asian, and Latin American and other non-Western otherness and their indomitable will to survive” pushed modernity to an unsustainable point (Dussel, 2013). Modernity got lost irremediably between the real(ity) and representations of the real(ity). For all practical purposes, the Western Cartesian modernity model, as a hegemonic matrix, with its arrogant claim to address global social issues, is not just moribund, it is dead (Paraskeva, 2016). Modernity, was/is a “misleading dream” (Harding, 2008, p. 23).

# GAME OVER!

- Modern Western Eurocentric thinking “is an abyssal thinking, a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line”. (Santos, 2007b, pág. 45). Such abyssal lines constitute the very core of “the epistemological foundation of the capitalist and imperial order that the global North has been imposing on the global South” (Santos, *et al.* 2007, pág. ix).

# Open Up the Western Eurocentric Methodological Canon

- What we need is to think about alternative ways to think about alternatives (Santos, 2014) that will help to move towards a non-abysal thinking. We need to recognize the legitimacy of a rich multiplicity of non-Western non-Eurocentric knowledge, research and science forms within and beyond the Modern Western Eurocentric epistemological platform, forms that have been historically and belligerently imposed by the Global-North. This is a social justice issue, and there is no social justice without cognitive justice (Santos, 2014).

# Open Up the Western Eurocentric Methodological Canon

- Postabyssal thinking implies a radical break with modern Western ways of thinking and acting. Postabyssality “is always cknowledge emerging from process of knowing-with rather than knowing-about” (Santos, 2018, p. 147).
- A commitment to an ecology of knowledges:

a call for the democratization of knowledges that is a commitment to an emancipatory, non-relativistic, cosmopolitan ecology of knowledges, bringing together and staging dialogues and alliances between diverse forms of knowledge, cultures, and cosmopologies in response to different forms of oppression that enact the coloniality of knowledge and power. We need actually to learn from the South [since] the aim to reinvent social emancipation goes beyond the critical theory produced in the North and the social and political praxis to which it has subscribed. (Santos et al., 2007, p. xiv).

# Itinerant Curriculum Theory as Peoples Theory

- ICT confronts and throws the subject to a permanent unstable question of “what is there to think?” ICT pushes one to think in the light of the future as well as to question how “we” can actually claim to really know the things that “we” claim to know, if “we” are not ready specifically to think the unthinkable, to go beyond the unthinkable and master its infinitude. ICT is to be (or not to be) radically unthinkable. ICT is a metamorphosis between what is thought and nought and unthought, but it is fundamentally about the temerity of the colonization of the non/un/thought within the thought. (Paraskeva, 2017)

This is an old joke that circulated in the defunct East Germany. It is about a German worker who found work in Siberia. Aware that all of his letters will be read by censors, he explains to his friends:

“We will establish a code. If you receive a letter from me written in blue ink it means that I am telling the truth. If the letter is written in red ink, it means that I am lying.” A month later his friends received the first letter written in blue ink: Here everything is beautiful, the shops are full of goods, the food is plentiful, the rooms spacious and well heated, the cinemas show Western movies, there are many girls available. The only thing missing here is the red ink.” (Žižek, 2006 p. 17)