

Southern Epistemologies - Thinking about the south beyond the empire: A reflection based on the ecology of knowledge

Sérgio Jeremias Langa* and António Cipriano Parafino Gonçalves

Faculty of Education, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique.

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to develop a reflection centred on the Ecology of Knowledge. The reflection arises from the growing need to expand the approaches to Southern Epistemologies - much in the perspective of sublimating the Ecology of Knowledge as an alternative to the production of knowledge. Methodologically, we resorted to Hermeneutics and the Epistemological Dialectic in parallel to interpret texts by various authors, concluding that, through the bleaching of History, the establishment of a monopolistic scientific community, through abyssal thinking, helped and excluded Epistemologies from the South, placing them on the other side, through the division that polarizes the world in North and South, the South is a product far beyond the Empire.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, abyssal thinking, knowledge ecology.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: circlemz2@yahoo.com.

INTRODUCTION

This text seeks to reflect on the Epistemologies of the South, focusing on the Ecology of Knowledge. It starts from a conceptual approach to Multiculturalism, whose scientific dialogue between Stuart Hall and other authors such as Homi Bhabha; Antonio Gramsci; Peter Caws; Barnor Hesse; David Goldberg, P. McLaren; among others is expanded, to flow into the discussion about the abyssal thought proposed by Santos and Meneses (2009).

Methodologically, we use hermeneutics that deal with the problems that arise when dealing with human actions endowed with meaning and with products of these actions, mainly texts, as Maximiliano (2003) observes. We understand that hermeneutic consistency, especially the contemporary one, brings with it the methods of interpretation that sublimate the creative role of the interpreter. They provide coherence in the analysis of texts and offer lenses to interpret texts and other significant materials, although they submit us to the field of speculation, similarly to what Barroso (2009) refers to

when stating that it is a theoretical, speculative domain, whose object is the formulation, study and systematization of principles and rules of interpretation.

Along with contemporary hermeneutics, Epistemological Dialectic was part of the lens we used to carry out our reflection on the Epistemologies of the South, in a perspective of thinking about the South far beyond a product of the Empire - focusing our gaze on the Ecology of Knowledge from the approaches to Stuart Hall's critical dialogue with contemporary currents of thought about culture; Cultural identities and mediations: (i) Multiculturalism; (ii) How Multiculturalism arises; (iii) Dissemination in society - the British example; (v) When was the post-colonial and its limit; (vi) Why privilege a discussion on the Post-colonial and (vii) Understand the discussion beyond the abyssal thought: from global languages to an Ecology of Knowledge in the light of Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

However, it is important to clarify that our analytical exercise went far beyond the literature review. We

adopted the Epistemological Dialectic in parallel when we present a discussion in our article that comprises three axes, namely: (i) presentation of the phenomenon (thesis), (ii) the search for the essence (antithesis) and (iii) the concrete in thought (synthesis). We exposed the THESIS inherent to the establishment of a monopolistic scientific community in the northern hemisphere. We also exposed the ANTITHESIS referring to the epistemologies of the south as alternatives to those of the north and we made the SYNTHESIS where we proposed the ecology of knowledge as the unfolding of the epistemologies of the south.

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN STUART HALL AND OTHER AUTHORS ON IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL MEDIATIONS

Multiculturalism

Displacement is the name that Stuart Hall gives to the relationship that is established between culture and the social structures of power. For Hall (2008), pressures can be made through cultural policies in a war of positions, but the absorption of such pressures into the hegemonic power relations makes the pressure result in displacement and not in transformation as it was supposed to be. From the displacement arises the new position that gives rise to new pressures. Using his essay, called what is this black person in black culture? Stuart Hall explains that dominant ethnicities are underpinned by a specific class identity. In this sense, there is no guarantee of "purity" in African thought, especially if we consider the plurality of antagonism and differences that today seek to destroy the unity of black politics due to the complex way in which structures of subordination shaped how Africans were inserted into the diaspora black.

In theorizing, Stuart Hall assumed that he had to answer riddles and deal with the impact of new social movements. Two facts to remember: (i) diasporic identities have a hybrid nature; (ii) another fact is awareness of position, that is, attention between the narrator and what is narrated in critical and theoretical work - at this point Hall refers to the need to problematize the messenger in terms of his position. In this, Hall criticizes the relatively small space allotted to culture as Marx's capital and social theory as an epistemological product of the North. He criticized the eurocentrism implicit in the model of capitalist transformation also proposed by Marx. Stuart Hall criticizes Marx for ignoring the fact that the metropolitan powers-imposed capitalism on the colonies, not allowing it to evolve organically from its transformation (Hall, Idem).

Our reflective approach starts from the conceptual distinction between multiculturalism and multiculturalism.

For some authors, such as Goldberg (1994), Multicultural is above all a qualifying word, referring to social characteristics and governance problems. While multiculturalism will refer to the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage problems of diversity and multiplicity generated by multicultural societies. Also, multiculturalism is commonly used in the singular and means the specific philosophy that supports multicultural strategies. Multicultural is by definition plural and such pluralism is due to the existence of many types of multicultural societies whose heterogeneity is the object that makes them common although it means distinction.

For Caws (1994), multiculturalism presents some specific difficulties. It names a variety of articulations, ideas and social practices, but it tends to convert multiculturalism to a political doctrine and reduce it to a formal singularity and fix it in an immobile condition. Once this is done, the heterogeneity that characterizes Multiculturalism and, therefore, makes them common, is reduced to an easy and irrelevant doctrine. It so happens, however, that multiculturalism does not characterize political strategy and does not represent a state of affairs already achieved. It is not a disguised way of endorsing ideas or utopias. It describes a series of unfinished political processes and strategies.

However, understanding the concept of multiculturalism involves understanding its typification. McLaren (1997) lists types of multiculturalism: Conservative multiculturalism, which consists of assimilating the difference in the traditions and customs of the majority, while Liberal multiculturalism seeks to integrate different cultural groups as quickly as possible into the majority society based on individual citizenship. universal, tolerating certain particular cultural practices only in the private domain. Here, a possibility of individual rupture with these practices opens up because of this liberalism, in this category of multiculturalism. Pluralistic multiculturalism allows for differences in cultural groups and grants rights to different communities within a communitarian or more communal political order. Commercial multiculturalism advocates that knowing the adversity of individuals from different communities, public recognition, provides conditions to solve problems of cultural difference in private consumption, without the need to redistribute power and resources. Corporate and public or private multiculturalism seeks to manage the cultural differences of the minority, aiming at the interests of the center. Critical or revolutionary multiculturalism focuses on power, privilege, the hierarchy of oppression and resistance movements. It seeks to be that of multiple voices, different languages that arise.

Therefore, multiculturalism is, as May (1999) notes, a deeply questioned idea. It is contested by the conservative right, for the sake of purity and integrity. Multiculturalism is contested by liberals because the cult of ethnicity and the search for difference nullify the

universalism and neutrality of the liberal state, compromising personal autonomy, individual freedom and formal equality. Multiculturalism is also contested by modernizers of different political convictions. For them, the triumph of the universalism of Western civilization over the particularism of ethnic and racial roots established in the Enlightenment marked a decisive and irreversible transition from traditionalism to modernity.

Interculturality

Along with multiculturalism, it is important to draw a brief understanding of the presuppositions of Interculturality proposed by Catherine Walsh.

More than the simple idea of interrelation (or communication, as it is generally understood in Canada, Europe and the United States), interculturality points to and represents processes of construction of another knowledge, another political practice, or a social power (and state) another and from a company to another; another way of thinking related to and against modernity/coloniality, and another paradigm, which is thought through political praxis. Interculturality, as it was referred to and understood by the movement until 1990, questions the sociopolitical reality of neocolonialism reflected in the models of State, democracy and nation. It also invites discussion about these models, as part of a process of decolonization and transformation (Walsh, 2002b).

Interculturality is not understood as a simple new concept or term to refer to contact with and conflict between the West and other civilizations (as some often understand it). Nor does it suggest a new politics that, originating in "an emancipatory practice, derives from a responsibility towards the Other". It represents, on the contrary, a conceptual configuration, an epistemic rupture that is based on the past and the present, lived as realities of domination, exploitation and marginalization, which are simultaneously constitutive, as a consequence of what Mignolo called modernity/coloniality. A conceptual configuration that, while constructing a social, political, ethical and epistemic response to these realities that occurred and still occur, does so from a place of indigenous enunciation (Walsh, 2007).

In Walsh's understanding, interculturality represents a logic, not simply a discourse, constructed from the particularity of difference. The objective is not the blending or hybridization of forms of knowledge, nor a way of inventing the best of both possible worlds, it is the construction of a new epistemological space that incorporates and negotiates indigenous and western knowledge (and both it is theoretical and experimental). Therefore, a politics and a thought tend to the construction of an alternative proposal of civilization and society; a policy from and for the confrontation of power,

but which also proposes another logic of incorporation (Walsh, 2007).

In summary, Walsh understands that the coloniality of power is not a homogeneous entity that is experienced in the same way by all subaltern groups and that interculturality is not an isolated concept from the complex imbrications of difference and local histories. On the contrary, it is conceived nationally and internationally by an "indigenous" Andean nation, the standards/patrons of power, to which they continue to be the differential marks of ethnicity and race (Ibdem, 2007).

Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that, among other presuppositions of Interculturality, it emphasizes the dimension of this being a kind of "diplomatic proposal" that privileges epistemological alternatives.

How does multiculturalism (emergency conditions) arise?

The genesis of multicultural societies is secular. Already in the 1400s, they manifested before the expansion of Europe. Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1996a) converge on the factors that condition multicultural societies. For these authors mentioned above, multicultural societies are conditioned by natural disasters, ecological and climate change, wars, conquests, labor exploitation, colonization, slavery/slavery, semi-slavery, political repression, civil war, and economic underdevelopment. It is observed that the empires that result from conquest and domination are multicultural. A failed or perhaps not successful work of colonialism was to try to insert the colonized into the empty homogeneous time of global modernity, without abolishing the profound differences and disjunctures of time, space and tradition. As a result, all people today fit the multicultural description. In this part, it is worth emphasizing that any exercise that aims to homogenize culture, in addition to being counterproductive, must be compared or equated with the plundering of human rights, which are legally defended today.

The agreement of Bhabha and Hall extends to the thought according to which from the Second World War to this part, multiculturalism has increased and intensified and leads the position of political contestations. It is observed that the end of empires in Europe and the frantic struggle for decolonization and national independence, resulted in the strategic reconfiguration of forces and social relations across the globe. This reconfiguration gave rise to new, multiethnic and multicultural nation-states that, to this day, continue to reflect on their conditions of deprivation in the colonial era – a part often ignored in the "Nortenha" epistemological production. It so happens that these new states are fragile, or if you like, they were weakened throughout the period of oppression, given the deprivations they were subjected to. Its fragilities observe several prisms to

consider: economy and military, an incipient civil society dominated by the imperatives of the first nationalist movements. They are not inclusive enough to provide the basis for a new national or civic culture. There is widespread poverty. Characterized by underdevelopment in a context of global inequality. Crises are intensifying, even taking on a multicultural or ethnic character. It should be noted that this is a part of the South that politically and economically results from the Empire.

Hall (1996) goes on to mention that there is a relationship between the emergence of the multicultural issue and the post-colonial phenomenon. Postcolonial does not imply that the problems of colonialism were resolved by a conflict-free phase. The problems persist, however, they took on a new format. In the past, they were seen as unequal in terms of power and expression between colonizing and colonized societies. Currently, these relationships are seen as struggles between native social classes as internal contradictions and sources of destabilization within the decolonized society. One factor to bear in mind, according to Hall, is the continuing problems of legitimacy and political stability in Afghanistan, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, which have clear origins in their recent imperial histories. This post-colonial era takes place in a global context where the direct administration, control, or protectorate of imperial power has been replaced by an asymmetric or globalized power system whose character is post-national and post-imperial. Its main features are structural inequality within a deregulated system of a free market and free flow of capital dominated by the first world and structural readjustment programs, in which Western interests and models of control prevail. Economically, we are facing a product of the Empire.

The subaltern proliferation of difference and the homogenization of culture

Contemporary globalization brings with it a paradox, that is, it presents itself in a homogenizing tendency and at the same time in a subaltern proliferation of difference. Stuart Hall uses the expression Americanization of culture to refer to the tendency to homogenize culture aided by its media force spread throughout the world. This part coincides with studies by theorist Noam Chomsky on the flood technique or media distraction theory. Noam Chomsky advocates the idea that the world is inserted in a context of pure distraction, referring to one of the ten strategies of media manipulation that consist of keeping the public distracted, away from real social problems, seduced by topics of no real importance; keep the public busy with no time to think about matters of capital social importance.

Chomsky goes further, stating that the strategy aims to draw the public's attention away from important problems

and changes dictated by political and economic elites, through the technique of the "flood" of distractions and insignificant information. This strategy is also indispensable so that the public does not feel interested in the essential knowledge in the areas of science, economics, psychology, neurolinguistics, and cybernetics. Chomsky's thinking (distraction) leads us to the discussion of Gramsci (2002) when he looks at Globalization as something commanded by cultural hegemony.

TRANSRUPTIVE EFFECTS

Dissemination in society - the British example

The narratives about Great Britain inform us about a homogeneous and unified culture until the post-war migrations from the Caribbean and Asian subcontinents took place. Hall (1999) understands this to be a simplistic version of a History that carries a complex load. Although this narrative is not sublimated, Davies (1999) and Hall (1999) state that Great Britain is the product of a series of conquests, invasions and colonizations that only in the 18th century came into existence as a nation-state – resulting from the union of distinct cultures of Wales and Scotland. It became what Hesse (2000) called "transruptive forces" in Western societies. Thus the margins in the center appear.

Disturbing the language of race and ethnicity

The emergence of multiculturalism produced the differentiated racialization of central areas of British life and culture. Among the two largest post-migratory non-white communities in Britain, the term "race" is generally applied to Afro-Caribbeans and "ethnicity" to Asians. Race is thought to best translate the Afro-Caribbean experience because of the importance of skin color, an idea derived from biology. Asians are by no means a race or ethnicity. For Hall (2008), the category of race is not scientific, but a social-political construction. It is the discursive category around which a system of socio-economic power of exploitation and exclusion, that is, racism, is organized.

On the other hand, "ethnicity" generates a discourse in which difference is based on cultural and religious characteristics. In these terms, it is often opposed to race. Ethnicity is constructed by physical characteristics, and distinguishable entities (Parekh, 1999).

Destabilizing the culture

As a result of globalization, many cultures have become

hybrids. For Scott (1999), in this process, the traditional cultures colonized remain distinct and, inevitably, become “recruits of modernity”, being inside a continent without being its own. In this sense, Stuart Hall uses Hybridity to characterize increasingly mixed and diasporic cultures. This term has been misinterpreted by mentioning “a reference to the mixed racial composition of a population” or “hybrid individuals”. For Bhabha (1997), it is not simply appropriation or adaptation, it is a process through which cultures are required to review their reference systems, norms and values, by distancing themselves from their usual or inherent rules of transformation. Ambivalence and antagonism accompany every act of cultural translation. Dealing with the other's differences reveals a radical insufficiency of our systems of meaning and signification. In short, we understand cultural hybridism as an overlapping of cultures without devaluation of the first, that is, both compete as character traits in the same individual.

Destabilizing the foundations of the liberal constitutional state

The third disruptive effect of the multicultural issue is its questioning of the dominant discourses of Western political theory and the foundations of the liberal state.

When was the post-colonial? Thinking about the limit

The central objective, of this sub-theme, is to discuss the following series of questions raised around the post-colonial and the idea of a post-colonial era: what should be included and excluded from its limits? Where is the invisible border that separates you from your “others” (colonialism, neocolonialism, the third world, imperialism)? If the postcolonial moment is the one that comes after colonialism, which is defined in terms of a binary division between colonizers and colonized, why is the postcolonial also a time of difference? What kind of difference? Its implications for politics and the formation of subjects?

The search for answers to these questions forces us to know the meaning of the “post-colonial” concept. Shohat (1992) criticized the term for implying a variety of conceptual errors in the case of theoretical and political ambiguity, the dizzying multiplicity of positions, their universalizing and ahistorical shifts and their depoliticizing implications. For this author, the postcolonial is politically ambivalent because it obscures the sharp distinctions between colonizers and colonized hitherto associated with the paradigms of colonialism, neocolonialism and the third world. Like the other “posts” with which the post-colonial is aligned, it fuses different histories, temporalities and racial formations into the

same universalizing category. This view is shared by McClintock (1992) when criticizing the concept for its linearity and its rapturous suspension of history. The “post” for Shohat means the “past”, something completed and closed. For another author, this is also part of its ambiguity, since the concept does not clarify whether this periodization is epistemological or chronological.

In his contribution to the debate, Dirlik (1994), not only cites and approves the criticisms of authors Shohat and McClintock, but also considers that the concept is a celebration of the so-called end of colonialism. However, it presents two criticisms: (i) the post-colonial is a post-structuralist and post-foundationalist discourse employed mainly by third-world intellectuals who are doing well in American universities and who use the language in vogue of linguistic and cultural turn to reformulate Marxism; (ii) the post-colonial grossly belittles the capitalist structuring of the modern world.

On the one hand, Hall (2008) considers Dirlik's position that postcolonial criticism “reflects the conceptual needs” of global relationships caused by changes in the world capitalist economy to be reductionist, which, according to him, explains the reason for a concept, destined to be critical, “seems to be complicit in the consecration of hegemony”. On the other hand, his attack on post-structuralism does not fit the concept of McClintock's work, which is profoundly post-functional. For Hall, the fact “post-colonial” is a confusingly universalized concept, due to its extensive use, therefore, some carelessness and homogenization have occurred. The author problematizes: is Great Britain post-colonial in the sense of the USA? Would it be convenient to consider the US as a post-colonial nation? Should the term be applied equally to Australia, a white-settled country, and India? In his article, Shohat effectively explores this deficiency, making it clear that those who use the concept should pay more attention to its discriminations and specificities or establish more clearly at what level it is being used. Mani and Frankenberg (1993) apud Hall (2008) warn that not all societies are post-colonial in the same sense, and that, in any case, the term does not operate in isolation. For Hall, the term postcolonial is not restricted to describing a particular society or time. It re-reads colonization as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural global process, producing a decentered, diasporic, or global rewriting of the nation-centered imperial narratives of the past.

Why privilege a discussion on the Post-colonial?

The post-colonial, according to Hall (2008), signals the proliferation of histories and temporalities, the instruction of difference and specificity in the great generalizing narratives of Eurocentric post-enlightenment,

multiplicities of lateral and decentered cultural connections, the movements and migrations that make up the world today, often bypassing former metropolitan centers. Still in the author's perspective, the postcolonial provokes a critical interruption in the great historiographical narrative that, in liberal historiography and Weberian historical sociology, as well as in the dominant traditions of Western Marxism, reserved for this global dimension a subordinate presence in a history that could be told from within its European parameters.

THINKING ABOUT THE SOUTH MUCH BEYOND THE EMPIRE: THE ECOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Beyond abyssal thinking: from global languages to an ecology of knowledge in the light of Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, begins his approach by stating that Western thought is abyssal and its main characteristic is the impossibility of co-presence on both sides of the line. Beyond these sides of the line, the nonexistence, invisibility and non-dialectical absence of thought prevail. Concerning the origin of the abyssal lines, the author states that the first modern global line was probably the Treaty of Tordesillas, signed between Portugal and Spain (1494) but the true abyssal lines emerged in the mid-16th century with the amity lines. Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues that "abyssal modern thinking stands out for its ability to produce and radicalize distinctions. However radical these distinctions are, and however dramatic the consequences of being on one side or the other of these distinctions, they have in common the fact that they belong to this side of the line and combine to become invisible the abyssal line on which they are founded".

The other characteristic of abyssal thought, according to the author, is knowledge and modern law, which represent the manifestations of this thought. They give us an account of two main global abyssal lines of modern times. Of these lines, each creates a subsystem of visible and invisible distinctions and the invisible ones become the foundation of the visible ones.

The author emphasizes that "in the field of knowledge, abyssal thinking consists in granting modern science the monopoly of the universal distinction between the true and the false, to the detriment of two alternative knowledge: philosophy and theology". These tensions between science, philosophy and theology have always been highly visible, but as the author argues, they all take place on this side of the line. Its visibility is based on the invisibility of forms of knowledge that do not fit into any of these forms of knowing.

Santos refers to popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, or indigenous knowledge on the other side of the line.

These thoughts disappear as relevant or measurable knowledge because they are beyond the universe of the true and the false. It is unimaginable to apply to them not only the scientific distinction between true and false but also the unverifiable truths of philosophy and theology that constitute the other acceptable knowledge on this side of the line.

On the other side of the line, there is no real knowledge; there are beliefs, opinions, magic, idolatry, and intuitive or subjective understandings, which, at best, can become objects or raw materials for scientific inquiry.

According to Santos, the exclusive character of the monopoly is concentrated in the modern epistemological dispute between scientific and non-scientific forms of truth, with the universal validity of scientific truth being recognized.

Returning to the visible and invisible lines of knowledge, the author emphasizes that the visible line that separates science from its other modern knowledge is based on the invisible abyssal line that separates science, philosophy and theology on the one hand, and on the other, knowledge considered incomprehensible for not obeying neither the scientific criteria of truth nor those of knowledge recognized as an alternative of philosophy and theology.

Santos speaks of the two great domains in the field of knowledge which are science and law, that, in each of them, the divisions carried out along global lines are abysmal in the sense that they definitively eliminate any realities that are on the other side of the spectrum. Regarding the other side of the line, the author points out that "the other side of the line comprises a vast range of wasted experiences, made invisible, like their authors, and without a fixed territorial location". The author also mentions that originally there was a territorial location and this historically coincided with a specific social territory: the colonial zone. Everything that could not be thought of in terms of true or false, legal or illegal, took place in this colonial zone. For abyssal thinking, the colonial zone is, par excellence, the universe of incomprehensible beliefs and behaviors that in no way can be considered knowledge, being, therefore, beyond the true and the false. Santos goes on to refer to the exclusionary view of the North according to which the other side of the line only harbors incomprehensible, magical or idolatrous practices.

In the abyssal lines, the author approaches a subject of extreme relevance, the question of appropriation and violence. He emphasizes that appropriation and violence take different forms in the legal abyssal line and the epistemological abyssal line. But, in general, appropriation involves incorporation, cooptation and assimilation, while violence implies physical, material, cultural and human destruction. In practice, the interconnection between appropriation and violence is profound. In the field of knowledge, appropriation ranges

from the use of local inhabitants as guides and of local myths and ceremonies as instruments of conversion, to the looting of indigenous knowledge about biodiversity, while violence is exercised through the prohibition of the use of their languages in public spaces from the forced adoption of Christian names, from the conversion and destruction of symbols and places of worship and all forms of cultural and racial discrimination”.

Santos highlights dual cartography: legal cartography and epistemological cartography. The other side of the abyssal line is a universe that extends beyond legality and illegality, beyond truth and falsehood. Together, these forms of radical negation produce a radical absence, the absence of humanity, modern sub-humanity. Thus, exclusion becomes both radical and non-existent, since sub-human beings are not even considered candidates for social inclusion.

The other side of the line arose against radical exclusion as peoples who had been subjected to the paradigm of appropriation, violence, organized themselves, and claimed the right to be included in the paradigm of emancipation regulation. For some time, the paradigm of violent appropriation seemed to have come to an end, and so did the abyssal division between this side of the line and the other side of the line.

The author emphasizes that western modernity will only be able to expand globally to the extent that it violates all the principles on which the historical legitimacy of the paradigm of regulation and emancipation on this side of the line rests. In this way, human rights are violated in order to be defended, democracy is destroyed to guarantee their protection, and life is eliminated in the name of its preservation. Abyssal lines are drawn both literally and metaphorically. In the literal sense, these are the lines that define borders as fences and death camps, dividing cities into civilized zones (gated communities, in ever-increasing numbers) and wild zones, and prisons between places of legal detention and places of brutal destruction and without the law of life.

Post-abyssal thinking can be summarized as learning from the South using an epistemology of the South. It confronts the monoculture of modern science with ecology of knowledge. It is an ecology because it is based on the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledge (one of which is modern science) and on sustainable and dynamic interactions between them and the world, not only are there different forms of knowledge of matter, society, life and spirit, but also many and diverse concepts about what counts as knowledge and the criteria that can be used to validate it. In the transition period that we have begun, in which the abyssal versions of totality and unity still resist, we probably need, in order to move forward, a residual or negative general

epistemology.

Knowledge and ignorance

The cultural context in which the ecology of knowledge is situated is ambiguous. On the one hand, the idea of the sociocultural diversity of the world has gained momentum in the last three decades and favors the recognition of epistemological diversity and plurality as one of its dimensions. On the other hand, if all epistemologies share the cultural premises of their time, perhaps one of the best-consolidated premises of abyssal thinking is, even today, the belief in science as the only form of valid and rigorous knowledge. What is characteristic of our time is the fact that modern science belongs simultaneously to the field of ideas and the field of beliefs. Belief in science far exceeds what scientific ideas allow us to accomplish. Thus, the relative loss of epistemological trust in science that spanned the entire second half of the 20th century went hand in hand with the growing popular belief in science.

Modern science as part of an ecology of knowledge

As a product of abyssal thinking, scientific knowledge is not equitably distributed socially, nor could it be, since its original purpose was to convert this side of the line into a subject of knowledge and on the other side of the line into an object of knowledge. In the ecology of knowledge, as a post-abyssal epistemology, the search for credibility for non-scientific knowledge does not imply discrediting scientific knowledge. It simply implies its counter-hegemonic use. It is, on the one hand, to explore the internal plurality of science, that is, the alternative scientific practices that have become visible through feminist and post-colonial epistemologies, and, on the other hand, to promote interaction and interdependence between scientific knowledge and other non-scientific knowledge.

One of the basic premises of the ecology of knowledge is that all knowledge has internal and external limits. The innates concern the limits of interventions in the real they allow. The external ones stem from the recognition of alternative interventions made possible by other forms of knowledge.

Ecology of knowledge, hierarchy and pragmatics

The ecology of knowledge does not conceive knowledge in the abstract, but rather as knowledge practices that enable or prevent certain interventions in the real world. An epistemological pragmatism is, above all, justified by the fact that the life experiences

of the oppressed are intelligible to them through an epistemology of consequences. The ecology of knowledge is based on the pragmatic idea that a reassessment of interventions and concrete relationships in society and the nature that different types of knowledge provide is necessary. It focuses, therefore, on the relationships between pieces of knowledge, on the hierarchies that are generated between them, since no concrete practice would be possible without these hierarchies. However, instead of subscribing to a single, universal and abstract hierarchy between knowledge, the ecology of knowledge favors context-dependent hierarchies, in the light of the concrete results intended or achieved by the different forms of knowledge.

Ecology of knowledge, incommensurability and translation

From the perspective of the abyssal epistemologies of the global North, policing the frontiers of relevant knowledge is far more decisive than discussions about internal differences. As a consequence, massive epistemicide has been taking place in recent centuries, and an immense wealth of cognitive experiences has been wasted. To recover some of these experiences, the ecology of knowledge resorts to its most characteristic post-abyssal attribute, intercultural translation. Embedded in different Western and non-Western cultures, these experiences use different languages and different categories, different symbolic universes and aspirations for a better life.

The profound differences between knowledge raise the question of incommensurability, a question used by abyssal epistemology to discredit the mere possibility of an ecology of knowledge. An example helps to illustrate this point. Is it possible to establish a dialogue between Western philosophy and African philosophy? Formulated in this way, the question only seems to allow for a positive answer, since they share something in common: they are both philosophies. However, for many Western and African philosophers, it is not possible to refer to an African philosophy because there is only one philosophy, whose universality is not called into question by the fact that until now it has developed mainly in the West. In Africa, this is the position of the so-called modernist philosophers. For other African philosophers, the traditionalist philosophers, there is African philosophy, but as it is embedded in African culture, it is incommensurable with Western philosophy and its autonomous development must arise. Among these positions, some defend that there are many philosophies and that dialogue between them and mutual enrichment is possible.

Ecology of knowledge, mythos, and clinamen

The ecology of knowledge does not only occur at the level of logos. It also occurs in the mythos. Ernst Bloch's idea of emergence or 'Not Yet' is essential here (Bloch, 1995: 241). The intensification of the will result from a potentiating reading of objective tendencies, which lend strength to an auspicious but fragile possibility, resulting from a deeper understanding of human possibilities based on the knowledge that, unlike scientific knowledge, privileges inner strength rather than external force, *natura naturans* instead of *natura naturata*. Through this knowledge, it is possible to feed the intensified value of a commitment, which is incomprehensible from the point of view of the positivist and functionalist mechanism of modern science.

The ecology of knowledge is a destabilizing epistemology in the sense that it engages in a radical critique of the politics of the possible, without yielding to an impossible politics. Central to an ecology of knowledge is not the distinction between structure and action, but rather the distinction between conformist action and what the author calls action-with-clinamen. According to the author, the clinamen is what makes the atoms stop appearing inert and reveal a power of inclination, that is, a power of spontaneous movement.

Its potential for post-abyssal thinking stems from its ability to cross abyssal lines. The occurrence of action-with-clinamen is in itself inexplicable, the role of ecology of knowledge in this respect will only be to identify the conditions that maximize the probability of such an occurrence and, at the same time, define the horizon of possibilities. in which the diversion will operate.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we can see, although Catherine Walsh understands that the look and pragmatism on the coloniality of power is not something homogeneous that is experienced and is not conceived in the same way by all groups considered to be subaltern, the need for clarification on History is great.

It is the basis that underpins a significant part of the epistemologies of both the North and the South. This presupposes that its whitening calls into question the knowledge produced by those who whitewash it. Multiculturalism, by itself, is an indication that the Epistemologies of the North are not enough to produce lenses capable of interpreting phenomena from all corners of the world. Cultural peculiarities demand the need to understand the other and break the North and South polarization so that the epistemological dialogue can be inclusive in the knowledge production community.

We also infer that the establishment of the scientific community presupposed the exaltation of abyssal thinking that led to the exclusion of one of the epistemologies as an alternative to knowledge, through the division that polarizes the world into North and South. History promoted the sublimation of the Epistemologies of the North and opened a precedent set to overcome the non-existence of neutrality. The whitening of History, as well as the concealment of the truth that one wants to be transposed, took into account the sensitivity of the epistemologist who proposed to build his "reason", ignoring evidence and privileging only narratives. In this sense, we understand that it is fair to replace the term "alternatives" with "deconstruction" of such narratives as a way to build a reason that takes into account the sensitivity to History, without intending to say that all epistemologies of the North ignore the History. However, there is evidence that the scientific community is commanded by a linguistic hegemony that dictated the current "northern" scientific hegemony that excludes a significant part of the "southern" epistemologies. In the face of this reality, the South's claim to space is fair. The incessant struggle for the sublimation of knowledge ecologies is fair, after all, the existence of the South as producers of knowledge is far beyond the Empire.

Although the struggle for the sublimation of ecologies of knowledge is not recent and began with African authors who preceded Boaventura Sousa Santos, its consolidation will take time. The epistemological construction of ecology of knowledge is not an easy task and, as we can see, Santos proposes a research program and raises a set of questions for the continuity of reflection on the ecology of knowledge that has been ignored by the epistemologies of the global North: (i) what is the perspective from which we can identify different types of knowledge? (ii) how can we distinguish scientific knowledge from non-scientific knowledge? (iii) how to distinguish between the various non-scientific knowledge? (iv) if there are several Western and non-Western knowledge, how can they be distinguished from each other? (v) what is the configuration of hybrid knowledge that aggregates western and non-western components? (vi) what kinds of relationships are possible between the different knowledge? (vii) how to distinguish incommensurability, contradiction, incompatibility and complementarity? (viii) where does the desire to translate come from? (ix) who are the translators? (x) how to choose translation partners and topics? (xi) how to form shared decisions and distinguish them from imposed ones? (xii) how to ensure that intercultural translation does not become a renewed version of abyssal thinking, a 'softened' version of imperialism and colonialism?

The other line of questioning concerns the nature and evaluation of real-world interventions. (xiii) how

can we translate this perspective into knowledge practices? (xiv) in the search for alternatives to domination and oppression, how to distinguish between alternatives to the system of oppression and domination and alternatives within the system or, more specifically, how to distinguish alternatives to capitalism from alternatives within capitalism? (xv) how to fight the abyssal lines using conceptual and political instruments that do not reproduce them? (xvi) what would be the impact of a post-abyssal conception of knowledge (as an ecology of knowledge) on educational institutions and research centers? If each of these questions had answers, we would certainly not put them in our reflection but the answers themselves. We are aware that it is not easy to answer, but the effort to try to answer them must be collective and civilizational.

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