

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

**THE END  
OF THE  
COGNITIVE  
EMPIRE**

THE COMING OF AGE  
OF EPISTEMOLOGIES  
OF THE SOUTH

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Boaventura de Sousa Santos

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## Preface

We live in a period in which the most morally repugnant forms of social inequality and social discrimination are becoming politically acceptable. The social and political forces that used to challenge this state of affairs in the name of possible social and political alternatives seem to be losing steam and, in general, appear to be everywhere on the defensive. Modern ideologies of political contestation have been largely co-opted by neoliberalism. There is resistance, but it is less and less credible as a bearer of a realistic alternative. It occurs increasingly outside institutions and not through the modes of political mobilization prevalent in the previous period: political parties and social movements. Dominant politics becomes epistemological when it is able to make a credible claim that the only valid knowledge available is the one that ratifies its own dominance. In such an epochal *Zeitgeist*, it seems to me that the way out of this impasse is premised upon the emergence of a new epistemology that is explicitly political. This means that the reconstruction or reinvention of confrontational politics requires an epistemological transformation.

Writing in 1845, Karl Marx ends the *Theses on Feuerbach* with the famous thesis eleven: “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.”<sup>1</sup> This thesis would become the cornerstone of Western-centric critical thinking, claiming the centrality of the concept of praxis as the synthesis between theory and practice. Almost two hundred years later, it is imperative that we return to interpretation, to reinterpret the world before trying to change it. The critical theories developed during this period with the specific objective of transforming the world failed to transform it according to what was predicted. Instead, they gave rise to an immense historical frustration made of perverse effects, dreams sliding into nightmares, hopes ending up in deeper fear, and revolutions betrayed; civilizational gains deemed

irreversible ended up undone, and positive expectations were turned into negative ones. Moreover, modern conservative thinking, all along dedicated to preventing the types of changes called for by critical thinking, seems to have been much more successful—so much so that the gradual narrowing down of the alternatives laid out by progressive critical thinking has reached such an extreme in our time that it becomes possible to say what in the last two hundred years was considered too patently wrong to be said: there is no alternative. Once political theory and practice, the domain par excellence for engaging alternatives, credibly claims that there is no alternative, it then assumes an epistemological value. The political becomes epistemological when any political alternative to the current state of affairs is credibly framed in the same way as fancy against fact or as falsehood against truth.

This state of affairs would dictate the end of—or at least the end of the need for—any form of transformative critical thinking, if there were no social groups unsatisfied with the status quo, if there were no social groups fighting against oppression and domination across the globe. But this is patently not the case. How to account for this? How to expand whatever is embryonically present in a present not totally hijacked by this past? To account for such struggles by resorting to the same or to variations of the same critical thinking seems impossible or, if not impossible, self-defeating. After all, why did Eurocentric critical thinking surrender so much for so long? The argument of this book is that in order to answer this question, it is imperative to go beyond the truly magnificent and brilliant body of theories generated by such thinking and to question their epistemological foundations. The core problem is that the epistemological premises of both Eurocentric critical thinking and Eurocentric conservative thinking have strong (and fatal) elective affinities. They represent two different versions of what I call in this book the epistemologies of the North.

An epistemological shift is necessary in order to recover the idea that there are alternatives and indeed to recognize, as the bearers of potential alternatives, the struggles against oppression that continue to be fought in the world. The argument of this book is that such a shift lies in what I call the epistemologies of the South. It amounts to a call for a twelfth thesis: we must change the world while constantly reinterpreting it; as much as change itself, the reinterpretation of the world is a collective endeavor. Six corollaries derive from this thesis. First, we don't need alternatives; we need rather an alternative thinking of alternatives. Second, the constant reinterpretation of the world can only be possible in the context of struggle and, therefore, cannot be conducted as a separate task disengaged from the struggle. Third, as much as struggles mobilize multiple kinds of knowledge, reinterpretation cannot be provided by any sin-

gle body of knowledge. Fourth, given the centrality of social struggles against domination, if, by an absurd hypothesis, the oppressed social groups ceased to struggle against oppression, either because they didn't feel the need or considered themselves utterly deprived of the conditions necessary for struggle, there would be no room, and indeed no need, for the epistemologies of the South. George Orwell's *1984* is the metaphor of the social condition where there is no room for the epistemologies of the South (Orwell 1949). Fifth, we don't need another theory of revolution; we need rather to revolutionize theory. Sixth, since constantly reinterpreting the world while changing it is a collective work, there is no room for philosophers conceived of as vanguard intellectuals. Instead, the epistemologies of the South call for rearguard intellectuals, intellectuals that contribute with their knowledge to strengthening the social struggles against domination and oppression to which they are committed.

In a time characterized by so much desertification of alternatives, it is as difficult to imagine the end of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy as to imagine that they will have no end (Santos 2014: 19–43). The imagination of the end is being corrupted by the end of imagination. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, global capitalism got rid of a potentially fatal threat that had confronted it throughout the twentieth century—socialism. In the process, it also got rid of a less serious threat, a threat that, while not questioning the possibility of capitalism reproducing itself indefinitely, would affect its drive for concentration of wealth. I have in mind European-style social democracy. Having gotten rid of these two threats, global capitalism seems to be thriving in spite of (or because of) being permanently in crisis. A permanent crisis is a new type of crisis. Instead of demanding to be explained and calling for its overthrow, it explains everything and justifies the current state of affairs as the only possible one, even if it involves the imposition of the most grotesque and unjust forms of human suffering that were supposed to have been thrown into the dustbin of history by the progress of civilization. The slogan “capitalism or barbarism,” proclaimed by such mid-twentieth-century apostles of free trade and the minimal state as von Hayek, is sliding into “capitalism and barbarism.”<sup>22</sup> In the meantime, and not by coincidence, the original cry of “socialism or barbarism” by Rosa Luxemburg is conspicuously absent. Under the logic of permanent crisis, people are led to live and act in crisis but not to think and act critically.

In such a time, those who struggle against domination cannot rely on the light at the end of the tunnel. They must carry with them a portable light, a light that, however shaky or weak, provides enough light to recognize the path as one's own and to prevent fatal disasters. Such is the type of light that the epistemologies of the South propose to generate.



This book is divided into three parts. Part I lays out the foundations for the epistemologies of the South. Part II deals with the methodological issues that arise from doing research consonant with the epistemologies of the South. Part III focuses on the pedagogical challenges posed by the epistemologies of the South. In the introduction, I summarize my argument. The epistemologies of the South occupy the hegemonic conceptions of epistemology, which I call the epistemologies of the North. In spite of resorting to the North-South dichotomy, the epistemologies of the South are not the symmetrical opposite of the epistemologies of the North, in the sense of opposing one single valid knowledge against another one. In chapter 1, I explain the key concepts of the epistemologies of the South: the abyssal line and the distinction between abyssal and nonabyssal exclusions, the sociology of absences, the sociology of emergences, the ecologies of knowledges, intercultural translation, and the artisanship of practices. In chapter 2, I deal with the responses given to the most common objections raised by the epistemologies of the North. I select three of them: the concepts of science, relativism, and objectivity. In chapter 3, I begin an inquiry into the epistemological issues that are specific to or autonomously raised by the epistemologies of the South. In this chapter, I deal with the questions of knowledge authorship and written and oral knowledge. In chapter 4, I deal with two concepts that lie at the core of the ways of knowing in accordance with the epistemologies of the South: the concept of struggle and the concept of experience. In chapter 5, I argue for the corporeality of knowledge, thereby challenging the quintessential mind/body distinction and going beyond Merleau-Ponty's conception of the embodiment of knowledge. I focus on three experiences of embodiment particularly akin to the epistemologies of the South: the dying body, the suffering body, and the rejoicing body. I also deal with what I call the warming-up of reason, the existential point where reasons and emotions meet in order to nurture the will and the capacity to struggle against domination and oppression.

In chapter 6, I introduce the main issues concerning the development of methodologies of research for social struggles consonant with the epistemologies of the South, that is, methodologies of postabyssal research. I argue for the need to decolonize the social sciences and for the search for nonextractivist methodologies, methodologies grounded on subject-subject relations rather than on subject-object relations. Such methodological work requires much epistemological imagination. I identify some of the markers of this imagination. In chapter 7, I analyze in greater detail the existential context in which the methodologies guiding postabyssal research must be conducted. In chapter 8, I focus specifically on the sensory and emotional dimensions of postabyssal

research. The deep experience of the senses lies at the antipodes of the epistemologies of the North, and, as such, it has been demonized, ignored, and oftentimes even suppressed. In chapter 9, I continue to lay out further methodological issues, namely the ways to demonumentalize written knowledge and how to conceive of the counterhegemonic use of the archive as a sociology of emergences.

In chapter 10, I start addressing the pedagogical implications of the epistemologies of the South. I focus on the pedagogy of intercultural translation developed by Mahatma Gandhi and examine the ways in which such a pedagogy may contribute to generate and strengthen transnational articulations among social struggles and movements, thus building counterhegemonic globalization, one of the main goals pursued by the epistemologies of the South. Chapter 11 highlights two radical pedagogies, the pedagogy of the oppressed of Paulo Freire and the participatory action research of Orlando Fals Borda, to which the epistemologies of the South are much indebted. More than anything else it is the context of our *Jetztzeit*, our historical here and now, that accounts for the specificities of the epistemologies of the South in relation to such a brilliant and rich heritage. Chapter 12 deals with the challenges and tasks involved in decolonizing the Western or Westernized university, which has been the nursery and lately the nursing home of the epistemologies of the North. It also addresses the key issue of popular education and illustrates some of the paths through which the university may flourish as a pluriversity and as a subversity.

Most of those to whom I owe this book will not be able to read it. They are the activists and leaders of social movements that have shared their knowledge with me on numberless occasions and in numberless circumstances, at the meetings of the World Social Forum, in retreats and seminars, on marches, and most recently in the workshops of the Popular University of Social Movements. Most particularly, I owe this book to my friends and comrades living in the favela of Jacarezinho in Rio de Janeiro, and to those in Barcouço, a small village close to my hometown, Coimbra, peasants who for more than a decade shared with me the dream of organizing a cooperative, the COBAR (Cooperativa de Barcouço).

In recent years I directed two large international research projects that allowed me to collaborate very closely with a large number of scholars: *Reinventing Social Emancipation: Towards New Manifestos* (1999–2001), funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Gulbenkian Foundation (see chapter 9); and *Alice—Strange Mirrors, Unsuspected Lessons: Leading Europe to a New Way of Sharing the World Experiences* (2011–2016), funded by the European Research Council.<sup>3</sup> This book reflects the research and

scientific debates carried out in the context of these two projects, particularly the more recent one. I want to express my most sincere gratitude to my colleagues that shared with me the scientific coordination of the Alice project (by alphabetical order of first name): Bruno Sena Martins, João Arriscado Nunes, José Manuel Mendes, Maria Paula Meneses, Sara Araújo, and Teresa Cunha. Even though all of them took an active role in the preparation of one or more of the chapters of this book, I owe special thanks to Maria Paula Meneses, whose research support was particularly time consuming and diversified. I would also like to thank the whole research team: Alice Cruz, Aline Mendonça, Antoni Aguiló, Cristiano Gianolla, Élide Lauris, Eva Chueca, Francisco Freitas, José Luís Exeni Rodríguez, Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Luciane Lucas dos Santos, Mara Bicas, Maurício Hashizume, Orlando Aragón Andrade, Raúl Llasag Fernández, and Tshepo Madlingozi. A research project of this magnitude could not be carried out without the dedicated and competent collaboration of two staff members, Rita Kacia Oliveira, executive secretary; and Inês Elias, research assistant.

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## Introduction

### WHY THE EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH? ARTISANAL PATHS FOR ARTISANAL FUTURES

The epistemologies of the South concern the production and validation of knowledges anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. The vast and vastly diversified field of such experiences I designate as the anti-imperial South. It is an epistemological, nongeographical South, composed of many epistemological souths having in common the fact that they are all knowledges born in struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. They are produced wherever such struggles occur, in both the geographical North and the geographical South. The objective of the epistemologies of the South is to allow the oppressed social groups to represent the world as their own and in their own terms, for only thus will they be able to change it according to their own aspirations. Given the uneven development of capitalism and the persistence of Western-centric colonialism, the epistemological South and the geographical South partially overlap, particularly as regards those countries that were subjected to historical colonialism. But the overlap is only partial, not only because the epistemologies of the North also flourish in the geographical South (I mean the imperial South, the epistemological little Europes that are to be found and are often dominant in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Oceania) but also because the epistemological South is also to be found in the geographical North (Europe

and North America) in many of the struggles waged there against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

The epistemologies of the South concern the knowledges that emerge from social and political struggles and cannot be separated from such struggles. They are not, therefore, epistemologies in the conventional sense of the word. Their aim is not to study knowledge or justified belief as such, let alone the social and historical context in which they both emerge (social epistemology is a controversial concept as well). Their aim, rather, is to identify and valorize that which often does not even appear as knowledge in the light of the dominant epistemologies, that which emerges instead as part of the struggles of resistance against oppression and against the knowledge that legitimates such oppression. Many such ways of knowing are not thought knowledges but rather lived knowledges. The epistemologies of the South occupy the concept of epistemology in order to resignify it as an instrument for interrupting the dominant politics of knowledge. They are experiential epistemologies.<sup>1</sup> There are epistemologies of the South only because, and to the extent that, there are epistemologies of the North. The epistemologies of the South exist today so that they will not be necessary someday.

### Occupying Epistemology

The term *epistemology* corresponds roughly to what in German is designated as *Erkenntnistheorie* or *Erkenntnislehre*. Focusing initially on the critique of scientific knowledge, epistemology today has to do with the analysis of the conditions of identification and validation of knowledge in general, as well as justified belief. It has, therefore, a normative dimension. In this sense, the epistemologies of the South challenge the dominant epistemologies on two levels. On the one hand, they consider it a crucial task to identify and discuss the validity of knowledges and ways of knowing not recognized as such by the dominant epistemologies. Their focus is thus on nonexistent knowledges, deemed as such either because they are not produced according to accepted or even intelligible methodologies or because they are produced by absent subjects, subjects deemed incapable of producing valid knowledge due to their subhuman condition or nature. The epistemologies of the South have to proceed according to what I call the sociology of absences, that is to say, turning absent subjects into present subjects as the foremost condition for identifying and validating knowledges that may reinvent social emancipation and liberation (Santos 2014). As stated below, the epistemologies of the South necessarily invoke other ontologies (disclosing modes of being otherwise, those of the oppressed and silenced

peoples, peoples that have been radically excluded from the dominant modes of being and knowing). Since such subjects are produced as absent through very unequal relations of power, redeeming them is an eminently political gesture. The epistemologies of the South focus on cognitive processes concerning meaning, justification, and orientation in the struggle provided by those resisting and rebelling against oppression. The question of validity emerges from this strong presence. The recognition of the struggle and of its protagonists is an act of preknowledge, an intellectual and political pragmatic impulse implying the need to scrutinize the validity of the knowledge circulating in the struggle and generated by the struggle itself. Paradoxically, in this sense, recognition precedes cognition.

On the other hand, the subjects that are redeemed or disclosed, or brought to presence, are often collective subjects, which completely changes the question of knowledge authorship and, therefore, the question of the relation between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. We are facing processes of social and political struggle in which a kind of knowledge that often does not have an individualizable subject is lived performatively. The knowledges redeemed by the epistemologies of the South are technically and culturally intrinsic to certain practices—the practices of resistance against oppression. They are ways of knowing, rather than knowledges.<sup>2</sup> They exist embodied in social practices. In most cases they emerge and circulate in a depersonalized way, even though certain individuals in the group have privileged access to them or formulate them with more authority (more on this below). While knowledges appropriate reality, ways of knowing embody reality. That is why the English *know-how* is translated into Romance languages as “knowing how to do” (in French, for example, *savoir-faire*).

This distinction between ways of knowing and knowledge was stressed by Foucault (1969), but here it is understood differently. According to Foucault, a way of knowing implies a collective, anonymous process, something unsaid, a historical-cultural a priori accessible only through the archaeology of ways of knowing. However, the ways of knowing that concern the epistemologies of the South are not the cultural a priori, that is, the unsaid of Foucault. At most, they are the unsaids of those unsaids, meaning unsaids that emerge from the abyssal line dividing metropolitan and colonial societies and sociabilities in Western-centric modernity. Such an abyssal line, the most fundamental epistemological fiat of Western-centric modernity, was ignored by Foucault. Foucault’s disciplines are as based on the experiences of the metropolitan side of modern sociability as their Foucauldian cultural unsaids. The disciplines are falsely universal not just because they actively forget their cultural unsaids but rather

because they, as much as their cultural unsaids, do not consider the forms of sociability existing on the other, colonial, side of the line. Thus, the Foucauldian unsaid is as falsely common to modernity and as Eurocentric as Kant's idea of rationality as emancipation vis-à-vis nature. This very same form of rationality linked to nature the peoples and sociabilities existing on the other side of the line, in the colonial zone. Of course, both Kant's and Foucault's philosophies are important advancements in relation to the Lockean *tabula rasa*, according to which knowledge gets inscribed starting from nothing. But, in the place of *tabula rasa*, they both put forward presuppositions or a *prioris* that, according to them, condition all contemporary human experience. They were unaware that all that experience was an intrinsically truncated experience, for it had been constructed to disregard the experience of those that were on the other side of the abyssal line—the colonial people. If we wanted to formulate the epistemologies of the South in Foucauldian terms, which is not my purpose here, we would say that they aim at the archaeology of the archaeology of ways of knowing.

Throughout the twentieth century, North-centric feminist epistemologies performed an early occupation of the dominant versions of the epistemologies of the North. They showed that the idea of knowledge conceived of as independent of the experience of the subject of knowledge, on whose basis, especially after Kant, the distinction between epistemology, ethics, and politics was established, was the epistemological translation, and consequent naturalization, of male political and social power. A God's-eye view was the other side of the view from nowhere. Heavily indebted to Foucault, such feminist epistemologies argued, rather, for the situatedness and positionality of knowledge, as well as for the reciprocal implicativeness between the subject and the object of knowledge. However, the said occupation was, in general, only partial, since it did not contest the primacy of knowledge as a separate practice. Not surprisingly, the North-centric feminist epistemologies put pressure on the epistemologies of the North to the latter's limits, but they themselves remained within such limits. They provided, therefore, an internal critique like several others that I mention in this book. They were, however, of crucial importance to open up the space for the emergence of South-centric feminist epistemologies, which broke said limits and performed external critiques of the epistemologies of the North. In doing so, they became a constitutive component of the epistemologies of the South, as shown below.

Before identifying the different degrees of separation between the epistemologies of the South and those of the North, the following questions must



be answered: Are there any mirror games between the epistemologies of the South and of the North to be avoided? Can we build an expanded commons on the basis of otherness?

### The Danger of Mirror Images

In contrasting the epistemologies of the South and of the North, we may easily fall into image mirroring, a temptation much akin to the dualistic, binary structure of Western imagination. The dominant currents in the epistemologies of the North have focused on the privileged validity of modern science that has developed predominantly in the global North since the seventeenth century. These currents are based on two fundamental premises. The first one is that science based on systematic observation and controlled experimentation is a specific creation of Western-centric modernity, radically distinct from other sciences originating in other regions and cultures of the world. The second premise is that scientific knowledge, in view of its rigor and instrumental potential, is radically different from other ways of knowing, be they lay, popular, practical, commonsensical, intuitive, or religious.

Both premises contributed to reinforcing the exceptionalism of the Western world vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and by the same token to drawing the abyssal line that separated, and still separates, metropolitan from colonial societies and sociabilities. Both premises have been critically scrutinized, and such criticism actually has gone hand in hand with scientific development since the seventeenth century. To a large extent, it has been an internal criticism, carried out within the Western cultural world and its assumptions. An early and remarkable case is undoubtedly that of Goethe and his theories of nature and color. Goethe was as interested in scientific development as his contemporaries, but he thought that the dominant currents, with their origin in Newton, were totally mistaken. Goethe contrasted the artificial empiricism of controlled experiments with what he called delicate empiricism (*zarte Empirie*), “the effort to understand a thing’s meaning through prolonged empathetic looking and seeing grounded in direct experience” (Seamon and Zajonc 1998: 2).<sup>3</sup>

I have analyzed elsewhere different dimensions of internal criticism of modern Western science that was carried out during the last century by the different currents of critical epistemology and by sociology of science and social science studies (Santos 2007c). The epistemologies of the South move beyond internal criticism. They are not so much interested in formulating one more line of criticism than in formulating epistemological alternatives that may

strengthen the struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. In this regard, the idea that there is no social justice without cognitive justice is followed, as mentioned above, by the idea that we do not need alternatives; we need rather an alternative thinking of alternatives.

As in the case of the epistemologies of the South, rather than a single epistemology of the North there are several, though they all tend to share some basic assumptions: the absolute priority of science as rigorous knowledge; rigor, conceived of as determination; universalism, conceived of as a specificity of Western modernity, referring to any entity or condition the validity of which does not depend on any specific social, cultural, or political context; truth conceived of as the representation of reality; a distinction between subject and object, the knower and the known; nature as *res extensa*; linear time; the progress of science via the disciplines and specialization; and social and political neutrality as a condition of objectivity.<sup>4</sup>

From the standpoint of the epistemologies of the South, the epistemologies of the North have contributed crucially to converting the scientific knowledge developed in the global North into the hegemonic way of representing the world as one's own and of transforming it according to one's own needs and aspirations. In this way, scientific knowledge, combined with superior economic and military power, granted the global North the imperial domination of the world in the modern era up to our very days.

The epistemologies of the North are premised upon an abyssal line separating metropolitan societies and forms of sociability from colonial societies and forms of sociability, in the terms of which whatever is valid, normal, or ethical on the metropolitan side of the line does not apply on the colonial side of the line.<sup>5</sup> As this abyssal line is as basic as it is invisible, it allows for false universalisms that are based on the social experience of metropolitan societies and aimed at reproducing and justifying the normative dualism metropolis/colony.<sup>6</sup> Being on the other, colonial, side of the abyssal line amounts to being prevented by dominant knowledge from representing the world as one's own and in one's own terms. Herein lies the crucial role of the epistemologies of the North in contributing to reproducing capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. They conceive of the Eurocentric epistemological North as the only source of valid knowledge, no matter where, in geographic terms, that knowledge is produced. By the same token, the South, that is, whatever lies on the other side of the line, is the realm of ignorance.<sup>7</sup> The South is the problem; the North is the solution. On these terms, the only valid understanding of the world is the Western understanding of the world.

The alienation, self-estrangement, and subordination of the mind that this state of affairs effects on non-Western people, including non-Western social scientists, is eloquently formulated by J. Uberoi, an Indian sociologist. His words deserve a long citation; they were written in 1978, but I wonder if the situation has dramatically changed today from what he described then:

By the same application of such means it is made to seem that there is only one kind of science, modern Western science, left to rule in the world today. This modern scientific and rational knowledge is the self-existent storehouse of truth and it is *sui generis*, the only one of its kind. The rest is charmingly called “ethnoscience” at best, and false superstition and darkest ignorance at the worst. The relentless logic of this general situation of spiritual travail, which has prevailed steadily over the non-Western world ever since 1550 or 1650 or some similar historical date, inevitably produces in me for one a shameful inferiority complex which I can never hope to overcome alone or in good company. It is a false situation wholly destructive of all scientific originality. With one stroke it kills all the inward joy of understanding, individual and collective, that is the sole truthful sustenance of local intellectual labour. Surely there is no reason in the nature of things why such a subordinate and colonial relation, more or less broken in politics by 1950 or so, should still persist in science. The situation is not at all improved, as I am assured, when it is supposed that there are two different sorts of theories, the imported and the inherited, somehow held together, the one sort for scientific and the other for non-scientific purposes. This seems to me merely to substitute the problem of intellectual self-estrangement for that of subordinate mind; and I do not know which is the worse. As I see it, this is the chief problem of all intellectual life in modern India and in the non-Western world. (Uberoi 1978: 14–15)

However, the anti-imperial South, the South of the epistemologies of the South, is not the reversed image of the North of the epistemologies of the North. The epistemologies of the South do not aim to replace the epistemologies of the North and put the South in the place of the North. Their aim is to overcome the hierarchical dichotomy between North and South. The South opposing the North is not the South constituted by the North as victim, but rather the South that rebels in order to overcome the existing normative dualism. The issue is not to erase the differences between North and South, but rather to erase the power hierarchies inhabiting them. The epistemologies of the South thus affirm and valorize the differences that remain after the hierarchies have

been eliminated. They aim at a bottom-up subaltern cosmopolitanism. Rather than abstract universality, they promote pluriversality. A kind of thinking that promotes decolonization, creolization, or *mestizaje* through intercultural translation.

The epistemologies of the South aim to show that the dominant criteria of valid knowledge in Western modernity, by failing to acknowledge as valid kinds of knowledge other than those produced by modern science, brought about a massive epistemicide, that is to say, the destruction of an immense variety of ways of knowing that prevail mainly on the other side of the abyssal line—in the colonial societies and sociabilities. Such destruction disempowered these societies, rendering them incapable of representing the world as their own in their own terms, and thus of considering the world as susceptible to being changed by their own power and for their own objectives. Such a task is as important today as it was at the time of historical colonialism, since the disappearance of the latter did not imply the end of colonialism as a form of sociability based on the ethnocultural and even ontological inferiority of the other—what Aníbal Quijano (2005) calls coloniality. The coloniality of knowledge (as of power) continues to be fundamentally instrumental in expanding and reinforcing the oppressions caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

Retrieving the suppressed, silenced, and marginalized knowledges requires engaging in what I have been calling a sociology of absences, a procedure aimed at showing that, given the resilience of the abyssal line, many practices, knowledges, and agents existing on the other side of the abyssal line are in fact actively produced as nonexistent by the dominant ways of knowing on this side of the abyssal line, and all the more so when they are engaged in resistance against the abyssal exclusions caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Identifying the existence of the abyssal line is the founding impulse of the epistemologies of the South and the decolonization of knowledge that is their main objective. Identifying the abyssal line is the first step toward overcoming it, whether at the epistemological or political level. Identifying and denouncing the abyssal line allows for the opening of new horizons regarding the cultural and epistemological diversity of the world. At the epistemological level, such diversity translates into what I designate as an ecology of knowledges, that is, the recognition of the copresence of different ways of knowing and the need to study the affinities, divergences, complementarities, and contradictions among them in order to maximize the effectiveness of the struggles of resistance against oppression.

## Can We Build an Expanded Commons on the Basis of Otherness?

The epistemologies of the South reject epistemological or political ghettos and the incommensurabilities they feed on. I would like to bring into consideration some concepts that emerged in the struggles of resistance against Western-centric domination during the last seventy years, and most particularly during the last forty years. Such concepts have been formulated in noncolonial languages and, in spite of that or just because of that, they have gained a specific political weight. Such concepts include *ubuntu*, *sumak kawsay*, *pachamama*, *chachawarmi*, *swaraj*, and *ahimsa*.<sup>8</sup>

During the past forty years, one crucial impulse for the epistemologies of the South has come from the peoples that suffered most harshly the epistemicide provoked by modern science and the genocide resulting from European colonialism. I mean the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Oceania. These were the peoples rendered most invisible or discardable by Eurocentric political thinking, including critical theory. Against such erasure, their struggles have been giving shape to proposals that greatly expanded the political agenda of some countries, thus contributing to reveal new facets of the diversity of the social, political, and cultural experience of the world, as well as new repertoires of social emancipation. Such rich experience will be wasted unless it is grasped and valorized by an epistemological turn capable of grounding an adequate politics of knowledge. Such waste will be as much an intellectual loss as a political loss to the world. It will amount to trivializing or making invisible otherwise important social struggles, thus blocking the possibility that such struggles contribute to expanding and deepening the global horizon of social emancipation—the very idea that another world is possible. The epistemologies of the South are the expression of the struggle against a possible double waste: an intellectual as well as a political waste.

Here are some examples, among many others, of the ways in which the emancipatory scripts of the world have been expanding and enriching beyond the confines of Western-centric politics and knowledge. In some cases they invoke practices and ideas that are foreign to Western-centric politics and knowledge and are accordingly expressed in the languages in which they originated; in other cases, they constitute hybrid, non-Eurocentric renditions of Eurocentric concepts, such as law, state, or democracy, and are accordingly expressed in a colonial language usually qualified by an adjective (e.g., communitarian democracy, plurinational state).

The concept of ubuntu, a southern African idea that calls for an ontology of co-being and coexisting (“I am because you are”), exerted a decisive influence on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that dealt with the crimes of apartheid; it has also exerted some influence on South Africa’s constitutional jurisprudence after 1996, besides remaining a topic of major debate in the field of African philosophy.<sup>9</sup> The concept of *sumak kawsay*, in Quechua, or *suma qamaña*, in Aymara, was included in the constitutions of Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009) in order to designate an emancipatory horizon, that is, the idea of a *buen vivir* / good living that dispenses with the concepts of both development and socialism. Pachamama, also included in the Constitution of Ecuador, designates a non-Cartesian, non-Baconian conception of nature, that is to say, nature not as a natural resource but rather nature as a living being and source of life, to which rights are ascribed as to humans: nature rights side by side with human rights, both having the same constitutional status (chapter 7, article 71, of the Ecuadorian Constitution). The Quechua idea of *chachawarmi* has become a key concept in the liberation struggles of indigenous women in some countries of Latin America. It designates an egalitarian, complementarian notion of gender relations while dispensing with the patterns and languages underlying Eurocentric feminism.

Long before the struggles that brought the above-mentioned concepts into political agendas, Gandhi was resorting to Hindi to express key concepts in his struggle against British colonialism. One example is *swaraj*, understood as the quest for deep self-determination, which has recently been recovered in the party politics of India. There is also *ahimsa*, an important concept in Hindu texts that Gandhi transformed into the crucial principle of resistance as non-violence, which was adopted by social groups in India and elsewhere.

Several examples of hybrid, non-Eurocentric renditions of Eurocentric concepts could also be given. Indigenous, communitarian democracy is included in article 11 of the Bolivian Constitution as one of the three types of democracy recognized by the political system, the other two being representative and participatory democracy. Communitarian democracy envisages forms of democratic deliberation totally different from those of representative or participatory democracy, the two types usually considered in Eurocentric debates on democracy. Another example is the plurinational state, as enshrined in the constitutions of both Bolivia (article 1) and Ecuador (article 1), which combines the modern Western civic nation with an ethnocultural nation, and which calls for an asymmetrical, nonmonolithic, and intercultural administrative structure.<sup>10</sup> Finally, a social and solidarity economy can express the various forms of grassroots, peasant, indigenous, and communal economy and the kinds of

property associated with them, different among themselves but, as a rule, anti-capitalist and anticolonialist (and often also antipatriarchal), based on principles of reciprocity and relationality at the antipodes of capitalist and colonialist logics.

We should not exaggerate the cultural strangeness of the concepts referred to above. They should be understood as hybrid cultural entities, cultural and conceptual *mestizajes* bringing together Western and non-Western elements. On the one hand, the fact that some of them are included in a hypermodern and Western text, such as a constitution, changes their nature profoundly, if for no other reason than because it requires the transition from an oral culture to a written culture, a transition whose complexity I address below. Besides, the formulations that allow them to enter broader political agendas are necessarily hybrid. For example, the concept of the rights of nature (as established in the Constitution of Ecuador) is a hybrid one, combining Western and non-Western cultural elements.<sup>11</sup> According to indigenous cosmovisions or philosophies, it makes no sense to attribute rights to nature, for nature is the source of all rights. It would be like a monotheistic religion recognizing God's rights. The concept of the rights of nature is a hybrid construct combining the Western notion of rights with the indigenous notion of nature/*pachamama*. It is formulated in this way to be intelligible and politically effective in a society saturated with the idea of human rights.

It should also be emphasized that a careful and nonmonolithic review of modern Western tradition, that is to say, a review that includes both dominant and marginalized conceptions, will identify in this tradition a complementarity or correspondence with some of these non-Western concepts. For instance, there are affinities between the idea of *pachamama* and *natura naturans* (as opposed to *natura naturata*) in Spinoza, even if the Spinozan conception was an object of inquisitorial prohibition (the accusation of pantheism) and was submerged under the weight of the Cartesian conception of nature as *res extensa*, which was to become the commonsensical Western conception of nature. The same undercurrent of Western modernity can be traced through the following centuries, from Goethe's conception of nature to the philosophy of Aldo Leopold and the deep ecology of Arne Naess.<sup>12</sup>

The quest for the recognition and celebration of the epistemological diversity of the world underlying the epistemologies of the South requires that these new (actually, often ancestral and newly reinvented) repertoires of human dignity and social liberation be conceived of as being relevant far beyond the social groups that caused them to emerge from their struggles against oppression. Far from leaving them stuck in identitarian essentialisms, they must be seen as contributing to the renewal and diversification of the narratives and repertoires of

the concrete utopias of another possible world, a more just world (*just* in the broadest sense of the word), as regards relationships not only among human beings but also between human beings and nonhuman beings. Such a renewal is all the more needed because the Eurocentric concepts that designated such utopias in modernity seem to have exhausted their mobilizing efficacy, whether the concept of socialism or even of democracy. Hence, the African idea of ubuntu or the Andean ideas of pachamama and sumak kawsay, once inscribed in the world by the voices of oppressed African or Latin American social groups, became potentially relevant to the struggles against oppression and domination in the world at large. Far from being an idiosyncrasy or eccentricity, they are rather constitutive of a pluriversal polyphony, a polylectal, rather than ideolectal, conception of cultural and political imagination. That is why the vicissitudes these ideas undergo in their originary context do not rob them of their epistemological and political legitimacy. Quite the opposite, they may be sources of inspiration for other struggles in other times and contexts.

Today it is already quite evident that many of the above-mentioned intercultural and plurinational innovations, such as those introduced in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, are not being carried out in practice, but are rather being subverted and undermined by the dominant political practices; indeed, in recent years, governmental policies and national legislation have been contradicting, often explicitly, what is stated in the constitutions of both countries, a process that has been designated by constitutional lawyers and political sociologists as deconstitutionalization. However radical this process may be, it will not succeed in erasing the inscription of new narratives of dignity and justice that these ideas brought into world struggles against oppression. For example, young ecologists all over the world have been including in their repertoires of struggle the Andean ideas of pachamama and sumak kawsay. They don't have to ask permission of the Andean indigenous peoples, nor need they be experts in Andean cultures. They just have to identify and agree with the overall political and philosophical orientation of those ideas in order to integrate them into the ecologies of knowledges to which they resort in order to give a deeper sense to their struggles, thereby strengthening them.

### Degrees of Separation: Building New Homes for Thinking and Acting

The epistemologies of the South raise epistemological, conceptual, and analytical problems, issues, or challenges. Indeed, they raise new questions and seek out new answers, new problems for new solutions. They call for much



methodological critique and innovation. However, some of the problems are bound to be formulated in terms that are to a large extent provided by the dominant epistemologies of the North. Some problems are thus more predictable than others. I identify the following layers of problems, advancing from the most to the least predictable, representing the successive degrees of separation between the epistemologies of the South and of the North. The first layer concerns the problems that directly confront the epistemologies of the South with the epistemologies of the North. They are the foundation upon which the theoretical and methodological issues raised by the epistemologies of the South must be examined. Among them, I mention the following:

- 1 *The problem of relativism.* Since the ecologies of knowledges consist of the copresence of different kinds of knowledges, how are we to establish their relative validity?
- 2 *The problem of objectivity.* How is objectivity to be distinguished from neutrality, a distinction at the core of the epistemologies of the South?
- 3 *The problem of the role of science in the ecologies of knowledges.* Even if modern science is not the only kind of valid knowledge, it is certainly recognized as one of the most important ones. How is scientific knowledge to be articulated with nonscientific knowledge in the ecologies of knowledges?
- 4 *The problem of authorship.* Most knowledges that emerge from social struggles are collective or operate as such. Rather than having authors, they are authors. Nonetheless, superauthors frequently emerge in the struggles. How does one understand this?
- 5 *The problem of orality and writing.* Since most of the knowledges present in the ecologies of knowledges circulate orally and some have no written version, how can knowledges in such an evanescent and even imperceptible flux be validated?
- 6 *The problem of struggle.* Since the knowledge privileged by the epistemologies of the South is born in struggle, what is a struggle and what is its specific epistemological potential or content?
- 7 *The problem of experience.* Where is the territory where practical relations of struggle are planned, opportunities calculated, risks measured, and pros and cons weighed?
- 8 *The problem of the corporeality of knowledge.* The epistemologies of the South are about knowledges embodied in concrete bodies, whether collective or individual. Body, as a living entity, is the body that suffers oppression and resists it, that mourns with defeat and death and

rejoices with victory and life. Can an epistemology account for this powerful presence of individual and collective bodies?

- 9 *The problem of unjust suffering.* We live in a time of war, a time of declared and nondeclared, regular and irregular, internal and imperialist wars. Most of the victims of violence are not actively involved in the conflicts and are therefore innocent. The layers of factors causing such widespread suffering are multiple, thus obscuring the dichotomy between oppressors and oppressed and the ethical and political judgments of suffering. Starting from the consequences rather than from the causes is one possible way of addressing suffering.
- 10 *The problem of warming up reason, or corazonar.* Inspired by Ernst Bloch, in my previous work I have distinguished between warm reason and cold reason. Warm reason is the reason that lives comfortably with emotions, affections, and feelings without surrendering its reasonableness. In the context of struggle, particularly of struggles that involve personal risks, reason must be warmed up in a very specific way. How can we do it?
- 11 *The problem of how to relate meaning to copresence.* The centrality of the struggles against oppression in the epistemologies of the South invites engagement with the issue of the possible immediacy of copresence prior to meaning. In struggles, particularly in those involving greater risks, copresence is a thingness that often comes before meaning. Can recognition precede cognition? Can we account for forms of unmediated copresence such as those occurring in struggle?

The second layer of problems concerns the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual reconstructions called for by the epistemologies of the South:

- 12 *How to decolonize knowledge as well as the methodologies by which it is produced?* Since colonialism is a cocreation, decolonizing entails decolonizing the knowledge of the colonized as much as the knowledge of the colonizer. Does this entail developing hybrid concepts or theories, along the lines of a decolonized mestizaje in which the mix of knowledges, cultures, subjectivities, and practices subverts the abyssal line that grounds the epistemologies of the North?
- 13 *How to develop methodologies that are consonant with the epistemologies of the South, that is, nonextractivist methodologies?* Abyssal modern social sciences rely on methodologies that extract information from research objects in very much the same way as mining industries extract minerals and oil from nature. The epistemologies of the South,

on the contrary, by relying on knowing-with rather than knowing-about, that is, by relying on the cocreation of knowledge among cognitive subjects, must offer some guidelines as to the methodologies that can carry out such tasks successfully.

- 14 *What are the contexts for the mixes of scientific and artisanal knowledges in the ecologies of knowledges?* Different knowledges relate differently to the struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Their integration in the ecologies of knowledges raises different issues.
- 15 *What does it entail to be a postabyssal researcher?* The positionality of different knowing subjects (outsiders/insiders) is crucial to understanding how much unlearning and unthinking is involved in the construction of epistemic *mingas* (see chapter 7). As cognitive processes are embedded in contexts of struggle and resistance, the risks involved must also be considered, as well as the existing wounds and the healing processes.
- 16 *What is a deep experience of the senses?* To take seriously the idea that knowledge is embodied implies recognizing that knowing is a corporeal activity potentially mobilizing the five senses. For the epistemologies of the North, valorizing the senses as sources of knowledge is out of the question. Only the mind knows; only reason is transparent regarding what is known; hence, only reason is trustworthy. The epistemologies of the South are at the antipodes of such a stance, which raises issues that have been barely charted.
- 17 *How to demonumentalize written knowledge and promote authorship?* Written knowledge, in general, and scientific knowledge, in particular, is monumental knowledge. Being monumental, it is fatally inadequate to engage in dialogue or conversation with other knowledges, an objective that underlies the whole idea of the epistemologies of the South. Hence the methodological task of demonumentalizing.
- 18 *The problem of the archive.* How is it possible to retrieve the past experiences and memories of agencies and realities that were subjected to abyssal exclusion by Western-centric abyssal thinking? Through the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, the epistemologies of the South open up the archive of the present. But what about the archive of the past, without which no archive of the future is possible?

The third layer of problems concerns the postabyssal pedagogies called for by the epistemologies of the South, the ways in which the epistemologies of

the South are converted into a kind of new common sense for wider subaltern, counterhegemonic publics engaged in progressive transformative practices:

- 19 *The problem of intercultural translation.* How to articulate and entertain a conversation among different knowledges that, in some instances, are anchored in different cultures?
- 20 *The problem of popular education.* How to develop, proliferate, and sustain contexts for collaborative self-learning through which the ecologies of knowledges are practiced in light of commonly agreed-upon transformative practices?
- 21 *The problem of decolonizing the university.* How to refound the university on the basis of the primacy of the principle of cognitive justice?
- 22 *How to link popular education and the university through ecologies of knowledges and an artisanship of practices?* How to recognize knowledges born or present in social struggles while these are being fought and, once ended, irrespective of their outcomes?

The first layer of problems is dealt with in chapter 2 (1–3), chapter 3 (4 and 5), chapter 4 (6 and 7), and chapter 5 (8–11). The second layer of problems is dealt with in chapter 6 (12), chapter 7 (13–15), chapter 8 (16), and chapter 9 (17 and 18). The third layer of problems is analyzed in chapter 10 (19), chapter 11 (20), and chapter 12 (21 and 22).

## Notes

### Preface

- 1 More on this in Marx and Engels (1974: 121–23).
- 2 Friedrich August von Hayek was an Austrian economist and social theorist who saw the market as the sole way of coordinating human decisions and actions on a social basis that would secure both efficiency and freedom (see von Hayek 2011).
- 3 This book was developed in the context of the research project Alice—Strange Mirrors, Unsuspected Lessons, coordinated by the author at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra—Portugal. The project was funded by the European Research Council, 7th Framework Program of the European Union (FP/2007–13)/ERC Grant Agreement n. [269807] (<http://alice.ces.uc.pt/en>). This publication also benefits from the financial support of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, under the Strategic Program UID/SOC/50012/2013.

### Introduction

- 1 To be distinguished from the experimental epistemologies introduced by neurosciences and cybernetics.
- 2 The distinction between knowledge and ways of knowing (in Portuguese, *conhecimento* and *saber*, in French *connaissance* and *savoir*) is, in itself, witness to the challenges facing intercultural translation, discussed below. The difficulty is that this distinction does not exist in English nor perhaps in some other languages as well.
- 3 On Goethe and modern science, see Uberoi (1984).
- 4 These assumptions are grounded on a set of beliefs and values that define what can be called the canon of Western philosophy. According to Warren (2015), this canon comprises the following: (a) a commitment to rationalism, the view that reason (or rationality) is not only the hallmark of being human—it is what makes humans superior to nonhuman animals and nature; (b) a conception of humans as rational beings who are capable of abstract reasoning, entertaining objective principles, and understanding or calculating the consequences of actions; (c) conceptions of both

the ideal moral agent and the knower as impartial, detached and disinterested; (d) a belief in fundamental dualisms, such as reason versus emotion, mind versus body, culture versus nature, absolutism versus relativism, and objectivity versus subjectivity; (e) an assumption that there is an ontological divide between humans and nonhuman animals and nature; and (f) universalizability as a criterion for assessing the truth of ethical and epistemological principles (see also Warren 2009).

- 5 More on this in Santos (2014: 118–35).
- 6 See below the distinction between abyssal and nonabyssal exclusions.
- 7 Non-Western colonial knowledge is to be acknowledged and retrieved only to the extent that it is useful to Western-centric domination, as was most notably the case in indirect rule, through which the colonial state resorted to traditional or indigenous law and government to guarantee the reproduction of colonial rule at the local level.
- 8 These concepts are analyzed in great detail in chapter 10.
- 9 In the words of Ramose:

*Ubuntu* is actually two words in one. It consists of the prefix *ubu* and the stem *ntu*. *Ubu* evokes the idea of being in general. It is enfolded being before it manifests itself in the concrete form or mode of existence of a particular entity. In this sense *ubu* is always oriented towards *ntu*. At the ontological level there is no strict separation between *ubu* and *ntu*. *Ubu* and *ntu* are mutually founding in the sense that they are two aspects of being as a oneness and an indivisible whole-ness. *Ubu* as the generalized understanding of being may be said to be distinctly ontological; *ntu* as the nodal point at which being assumes concrete form or a mode of being in the process of continual unfoldment may be said to be distinctly epistemological. Accordingly, *ubuntu* is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu-speaking people. The word *umu* shares the same ontological feature with the word *ubu*. Joined together with *ntu* then it becomes *umuntu*. *Umuntu* means the emergence of *homo loquens* who is simultaneously a *homo sapiens*. *Umuntu* is the maker of knowledge and truth in the concrete areas, for example, of politics, religion and law. (2001: 2)

According to Praeg, “Ubuntu is an exercise in power, a primordial attempt to get the fact and meaning of blackness, black values, traditions and concepts recognized as of equal value to the people for whom they matter” (2014: 14).

- 10 See the full texts of “Bolivia (Plurinational State of)’s Constitution of 2009” at [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bolivia\\_2009.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bolivia_2009.pdf); and the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2011) at <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html>.
- 11 This topic is discussed in detail in chapter 9.
- 12 Aldo Leopold was a conservationist, forester, philosopher, educator, writer, and outdoor enthusiast. His essay “Land Ethic” calls for moral responsibility vis-à-vis the natural world. “When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect” (1949: viii–ix; see also Leopold [1933] 1986). The concept of deep ecology, which calls for population reduction, soft technol-

ogy and noninterference in the natural world, was taken up by environmentalists impatient with a shallow ecology that did not confront technology and economic growth. It formed part of a broader personal philosophy that Naess (1973: 99) called *ecosophy T*, “a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium” that human beings can comprehend by expanding their narrow concept of self to embrace the entire planetary ecosystem. The term fused *ecology* and *philosophy* (see also Naess 1989, 2002).

#### 1. PATHWAYS TOWARD THE EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH

- 1 Notwithstanding the fact that some colonies still do exist. Aníbal Quijano coined the term “coloniality” to designate the forms of colonialism that have survived the end of historical colonialism. I have also used this term on occasion; however, as I argue in chapter 6, I prefer the term “colonialism” since there is no reason to reduce colonialism to a specific type of colonialism, that is, the historical colonialism based on territorial occupation by foreign powers. Even though capitalism has changed dramatically since the sixteenth or seventeenth century, we go on designating as capitalism the mode of domination based on the exploitation of labor power and nature.
- 2 This was noted very early on by the critics of European colonialism. Fanon is particularly aware of this; he quotes Marcel Pétju (1960) approvingly: “To make a radical difference between the building up of socialism in Europe and our relations with the Third World (as if our only relations with it were external ones) is, whether we know it or not, to set the pace for the distribution of the colonial inheritance over and above the liberation of the underdeveloped countries. It is to wish to build up a luxury socialism upon the fruits of imperialist robbery—as if, inside the gang, the swag is more or less shared out equally, and even a little of it is given to the poor in the form of charity, since it’s been forgotten that they were the people it was stolen from” (Fanon 1968: 103). Some years before, in 1958, Fanon had already denounced the ambivalence of the metropolitan working class and its leaders toward the anti-colonialist, nationalist struggle: “During the various wars of national liberation that have followed one another in the last twenty years, it is not uncommon to perceive a hint of hostility, or even hatred, in the attitude of the colonialists towards the colonized. This may be explained by the fact that the withdrawal of imperialism and conversion of the undeveloped structures of the colonial state were immediately accompanied by an economic crisis, which would have been felt first by the workers in the colonial metropolis” (Fanon 1967b: 144–45). Writing in 1965, Kwame Nkrumah offers the most lucid analysis of how the compromise between capital and labor in the developed world was made possible by the ruthless exploitation of the colonies.
- 3 In Santos (2014: 164–87), I explain the metaphorical use of the term “sociology” in this context.
- 4 On the concept of learned ignorance, see Santos (2014: 99–115).
- 5 In Hegelian terms, one would say that the negativity of the sociology of absences is a dialectical one, the negation of a negation, the identification of realities that were