With and Beyond Epistemologies from the South:
Ontological Epistemology of Participation, *Multi-topial* Hermeneutics and the Contemporary Challenges of Planetary Realisations

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Abstract

Our contemporary moment is a moment of crises of epistemology as part of the wider and deeper crises of modernity and the human condition. The crises of epistemology emerge from the limits of the epistemic as it is tied to epistemology of procedural certainty and closure. The crises of epistemology also reflect the limits of epistemology closed within the Euro-American universe of discourse. It is in this context the essay discusses Boaventura de Sousa Santos' Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide. The essay also discusses some of the limits of de Sousa Santos' alternatives, especially his lack of cultivation of the ontological in his exploration of epistemological alternatives beyond the Eurocentric canons. It then explores the pathways of ontological epistemology of participation which bring epistemic and ontological works and meditations in transformative and cross-cultural ways for a fuller realisation of going beyond both the limits of the epistemic as well as Eurocentrism. It also explores pathways of multi-topial hermeneutics and transpositional subjectobjectivity which involves foot-walking and foot-meditative interpretation across multiple cultures and traditions of the world.

Keywords: Epistemologies from the South; Boaventura de Sousa Santos; ontological epistemology of participation; post-positivism; multi-topial hermeneutics; planetary realisations

Epistemology is normative. It concerns what people ought to think and why. So recognizing the normativeness of central epistemological notions is crucial.

<div align="right">– Catherine Z. Elgin (1996), Considered Judgment, p. 5.</div>

On close examination, mainstream sociology turns out to be an ethno-sociology of metropolitan society.

<div align="right">– Raewyn Connell (2011), Southern Theory, p. 226.</div>

For all the fact that 'the global south' has replaced 'the third world' as a more or less popular term of use, the label itself is inherently slippery, inchoate, unfixed. [..] In the upshot, 'the south,' technically speaking, has more complex connotations than did the World formerly known as Third. It describes a polythetic category, its members sharing one or more—but not all, nor even most—of a diverse set of features. The closest thing to a common denominator among them is that many were once colonies [..] 'Postcolonial,' therefore, is something of a synonym, but only an inexact one. What is more, like all indexical signs, 'the global south' assumes meaning by virtue not of its content but of its context, the way in which it points to some other things. Of these, the most significant, obviously, is its antimony with 'the global north,' an opposition that carries a great deal of imaginative baggage congealed around the contrast between centrality and marginality, capitalist modernity and its absence. [..] But it obscures as much it describes.

<div align="right">– Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (2012), Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa, p. 45.</div>

If there is indeed, as the Indian tradition claims, a knowledge that can be apprehended directly from within without the necessary mediation by the senses, then this has major consequences for the choice of optimum methodology in Psychological. There where such direct inner knowledge refers to phenomena in the external world, one can indeed decide on the accuracy of the inner knowledge 'objectively' by comparing the symbolic rendering of that inner knowledge with the symbolic rendering of sense information about the external events. But where the inner knowledge refers to inner states or processes, this may not be the appropriate way of verifying such knowledge. What we need there is not objectivity, but reliable subjectivity.

In our study of outer world, progress is to a large extent made by using better and better instruments [..] In the inner domain the

instruments of choice is self-observation, which includes knowledge by intimate direct contact, knowledge by identity, and the pure witness consciousness (*sakshi*). Just as in the physical domain, the quality of the results in the inner domain can be ascertained on the one hand through corroboration by equally or better qualified observers, and on the other hand by the intrinsic quality of the instrument. The latter can in its turn be ascertained by what that specific instrument delivers in comparatively well-established fields of inquiry. The only difference is that in the inner domain, the instrument is not some physical instrument, but the inner instrument of knowledge, the *antakarana*, of the researcher. The quality of this instrument depends on things like the amount of immixture and improper functioning; its freedom from ego, vital desires, mental preferences and physical limitations; its sensitivity, flexibility and ability to move at will through different inner worlds and centers of consciousness; etc. Yoga, in its widest sense of spiritual discipline, is the method of choice to perfect the inner instrument of knowledge. It leads to a more comprehensive, impartial and harmony enhancing understanding of reality not only through its purification of the inner instrument, but also by raising the observing consciousness above its ordinary, corrupting and limiting involvement in the processes and entities that psychology is supposed to study. That it can indeed deliver is attested to by the incredibly rich Indian heritage in the psychological field.

> – Matthjis Cornelissen (2013), What is Human Knowledge? A
> Reflection Based on the Work of Sri Aurobindo, p. 105.

[..] There is no way of knowing the world better than by anticipating a better world. Such anticipation provides both the intellectual instruments to unmask the institutionalized, harmful lies that sustain and legitimate social injustice and the political impulse to struggle against them.

> – Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), *Epistemologies of the South:*
> *Justice Against Epistemicide*, p. viii.

Introduction and Invitation

Our contemporary moment is a moment of crises of epistemology as part of the wider and deeper crises of modernity and the human condition. The crises of epistemology emerge from the limits of the

epistemic as it is tied to epistemology of procedural certainty and closure. Works such as Theodore Adorno's (1983) *Against Epistemology* help us realise the limits of the epistemic as is imprisoned within a dualism between mental and manual labour and divorce of the epistemic from the lived experiences of the world. But this limit is 'rooted to a great extent in ignoring the need for the mutually necessary tasks of epistemology, ontology and metaphysics' (Valone 1988: 96). The limits of the epistemic needs to be understood in the context of crises of positivism as well as emergence of post-positivist turns and movements which help us go beyond the crises of science, especially European sciences, and society. In his *Beyond the Crises of European Sciences: New Beginnings*, R. Sunder Rajan (1998) draws our attention to movements and turns such as ecological, linguistic and feminist which represent post-positivist moves. However, critiques of positivism in these movements do not necessarily realise the limits of the primacy of the epistemic in modernity and the link between unreflective epistemology and violence (Patomaki and Wright 2000). Similar is the limits of Jurgen Habermas' (1972) critique of positivism, which do not realise the limits of the modernist primacy of the epistemic and its neglect of the ontological and its Euorcentric closure. The limits of the epistemic is also here related to sidelining of 'perspective of otherness' (Fricker 2007) – epistemic perspectives from many traditions of living and thinking around the world – in many streams of dominant Euro-American modernity which made Foucault himself to make this remark: 'The crisis of Western thought is identical to the end of imperialism [..] For it is the end of the era of Western philosophy. Thus if philosophy of the future exists, it must be born outside Europe [..]' (Foucault 1999: 113) which resonates with this earlier requiem of Franz Fanon: 'Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different' (Fanon 1963; also see Escobar 2018).

Against this background of the wider and deeper crises of epistemology, modernity and the human condition, we can appreciate the significance of the critique of modernist epistemology in Boaventura de Sousa Santos' *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (de Sousa Santos 2014; also see de Sousa Santos 2017, 2018). de Sousa Santos is a friend of the world and he collaborates with many seeking souls

and social movements to give birth to a new world, a different world of beauty, dignity and dialogues as is evident in his participation in the World Social Forum since its inception (see Guilherme and Dietz 2017). He has also offered foundational critiques of contemporary systems of production and knowledge (see de Sousa Santos 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2010). His work on alternative knowledge is a deep invitation for us to explore new methods and ways of living which contribute to realisation of a good life. As he writes in his preface to *Epistemologies of the South*: 'Critical theory is therefore meaningless without a search for truth and healing, even in the end there is no final truth or definitive cure' (de Sousa Santos 2014: viii). In this quest for Truth and healing, de Sousa Santos pleads for not only a new epistemology, which 'contrary to hegemonic epistemologies in the West, does not grant *a priori* supremacy to scientific knowledge' but calls for a new politics of not only revolutionary change but also of everyday resistance and creativity. As he tells us, 'Radicalization consists of searching for the subversive and creative aspects of the everyday, which may occur in the most basic struggle for survival. The changes in the everyday have thus a double valence: concrete improvement in the every day and the signals they give for larger possibilities' (ibid: 114). de Sousa Santos also calls for a 'new relationship between epistemology and politics' (ibid: 72).

An important aspect of this new epistemology and politics is a practice of limits and realisation of one's own limitations as a creative impetus for a new ecology of knowledge and self-critical political action which, unlike the dominant, is not just an act of valorization of *a priori* certainty – ideological or otherwise. de Sousa Santos here challenges us to cultivate a sociology of absence and destabilising subjectivity which has a spiritual dimension:

> The knowledge that does not know is the knowledge that fails to know other ways of knowing that shares with the infinite task of accounting for experiences of the world. [..] One of the main dimensions of the sociology of absences is the sociology of absent ways of knowing, that is to say, the act of identifying the ways of knowing that hegemonic epistemology reduces to non-existence (2014: 111).

de Sousa Santos urges us to realise ecology of knowledges in our present-day world going beyond the epistemicide of modern scientific knowledge where modern scientific knowledge annihilates other kinds of knowledges such as spiritual knowledge.[1] As against modernist epistemology of procedural certainty and mastery, de Sousa Santos, drawing inspiration from Nicolas of Cusa's inspiring strivings and *sadhana* of learned ignorance where to know is to know that one does not know, tells us how being engaged in epistemic work is to be a 'learned ignorant' and to realise that 'the epistemological diversity of the world is potentially infinite and each way of knowing grasps it in a limited manner' (ibid: 111). But the 'impossibility of grasping the infinite epistemological diversity of the world does not release us from trying to know it; on the contrary it demands that we do' (ibid). This demand which is different from construction of Truth only as a product of existing discourse and configuration of knowledge and power is what de Sousa Santos calls 'ecology of knowledges.' In a Gandhian spirit *par* excellence, de Sousa Santos thus writes: '[..] if the truth exists only in the search for truth, knowledge exists as an ecology of knowledges' (ibid: 111). To be engaged with knowledge is to be ever wakeful to this demand and practice of attentiveness and responsibility to other knowledges in a relational mode of co-learning and mutual questioning going beyond the familiar prisons of Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism, universalism and relativism. Translation, especially inter-cultural translation, becomes a companion in this path of engagement. In his *Epistemologies of the South*, de Sousa Santos thus presents us two inter-linked visions and practices of ecology of knowledges and inter-cultural translation as pathways with the present towards a different future of knowledge, human liberation and world transformations.

de Sousa Santos' pathways of engagement in *Epistemologies of the South* invite us to walk and meditate with him as well as the themes he has so patiently cultivated over the decades. At the same time, his book as well his wider *oeuvre*, raise important questions which call for deeper co-walking and transformative planetary dialogues. In my essay, I engage myself with some of these issues. The first issue deals with the language of global South that de Sousa Santos uses which can be used to uncritically reproduce, despite de Sousa Santos' inspiring nuanced

and non-dual handling of it, the current discourse of the global South which is a production of the so-called North itself. de Sousa Santos' engagement with epistemology also does not explore the limits of the epistemic itself when it is not accompanied by appropriate ontological engagement. The limits of the epistemological are not overcome by proliferating epistemologies themselves such as from North to South but by transforming epistemologies which include simultaneously epistemic and ontological engagement which I call ontological epistemology of participation (Giri 2006; 2017a). His engagement with epistemology needs to be part of an ontological epistemology of participation which involves not only epistemic and ontological engagement but also cross-cultural and planetary realisations of these themes, modalities of being and understanding. Ontological epistemology of participation also involves transformation of subjectivity and objectivity as we know and a cultivation of what I call transpositional subjectobjectivity (Giri 2018). While de Sousa Santos challenges us to realise a new epistemology and a new politics and a new relationship between the two, I, sharing this concern, bring the challenge of a new ontology and spirituality and strive to cultivate a new relationship not only between epistemology and politics but also between epistemology and ontology, epistemology and aesthetics,[2] epistemology and spirituality and epistemology and deeper cross-cultural and philosophical dialogues which is part of what can be called planetary conversations and planetary realisations (Arif 2015; Chimakonam 2017; Giri 2013). Planetary realisations challenge us to realise that we are children of Mother Earth and as children we have an inborn debt and responsibility to learn about each other, and our cultures. Planetary conversations across borders help us in this planetary realisation. This is a process of meditative verb of co-realisation which involves both action and meditation. I suggest that at this stage, de Sousa Santos' project of alternative epistemology and politics does not include meditation as part of an integral *sadhana* (strivings) and struggle for transformation. In the succeeding pages of this essay I elaborate theses critiques and concerns. As part of planetary conversations, I present different epistemologies from the South that are not covered in de Sousa Santos' *Epistemologies of the South* such as from Vedanta, Buddhism and *Tantra*.

With and Beyond Epistemologies from the South: Transcending Dualism and Transforming Area Studies into Zones of Pregnant Thinking and Becoming

Neither North and South for de Sousa Santos are mere geographical locations nor are they fixed, impermeable boundaries. They are multi-dimensional complex interpenetrating realities in our world historically and contemporaneously and they raise important issues of facts and norms of life. de Sousa Santos tells us how these, as language and realities, also raise fundamental and profound normative questions. For de Sousa Santos, while the Global North becomes associated with production of suffering and reductive and killing epistemologies such as positivistic science in modernity, the Global South is a multidimensional spring of alternative ways of living, thinking and being. But there are thinkers and movements in the so-called Global North who also embody such alternative modes of living and thinking. de Sousa Santos himself writes about this and urges us to go beyond the dualism of North and South.

For example, de Sousa Santos talks about Lucian of Samosata, Nicholas of Cusa and Blaise Pascal as cultivating alternative pathways of thinking and being from Western tradition. But realising this calls for creative memory work and recovery of forgotten traditions. For example, de Sousa Santos tells us how Cusa's mode and method of learned ignorance is of crucial significance in going beyond the pathology of epistemology and method in the modern West where both the epistemic and the methodological are imbued with so much certainty. For him, 'In Nicholas of Cusa there are two kinds of ignorance: ignorant ignorance, which is not aware that it does not know, and learned ignorance, which knows it does not know what it does not know' (2014: 110). Cusa's method of learned ignorance may seem just like an elaboration of the Socratic method of knowing that one does not know with one crucial distinction that Socrates 'is not aware of the idea of the infinitude [..] but in Nicholas of Cusa infinitude is accepted as such, as consciousness of a radical ignorance' (ibid: 110). Thus Cusa cultivates knowing and being with a consciousness of integral infinitude which is different from the way hegemonic rationality of modernity and its

accompanying epistemology treats the infinite with a spirit of conquest and triumphalism. Similarly, for de Sousa Santos, Pascal helps us wage battles against predominant forms of rationality. Thus de Sousa Santos writes: 'The traditions created by Nicholas of Cusa and Pascal are South of the North as it were, and are thus better prepared than any other to learn from the global South and collaborate with it towards building epistemologies capable of offering credible alternatives to orthopedic thinking' (ibid: 109).

Thus for de Sousa Santos, the discourse of Global South is already part of an effort to go beyond a facile dualism between South and North. To fully appreciate his project, we need to situate such a striving in the context of limits and transformation of an earlier mode of area studies. After the Second World War, area studies approach continued the geopolitical division of the world. It became subservient to geopolitical production of the world and became an uncritical and often times a slavish bearer of Northern Epistemologies and North Atlantic theoretical imperialism and universalism while considering areas in area studies as *tabula rasa* (Dirks 2015; Trouillot 2003). But now we need to transform area studies into study of creative global studies where areas are not empty plates for application and testing of so-called epistemologies and theories coming from the North but are zones of thinking, being and becoming. Each of our areas, whether in North or South, is a locus of thinking as well as regions of connections and disjunctions with the world. These are pregnant cosmopolitan zones of thinking as they embody communication across boundaries in life worlds and worlds of thoughts (Bose and Manjapra 2010). Areas as locations of life and thinking are zones of inheritance, communication, emergence and divergence; they bear brunt of colonisation as well as processes of resistance and transformation.

de Sousa Santos' project calls for transformation of area studies into creative global studies bordering on study of our world as multidimensional visions and processes of planetary realisations. Our engagement with the world, South or North, is part of a dynamics of planetary realisations where our locations are invitations for us to realise that we are children of Mother Earth as well as local cultures

and societies which go beyond the dominant logic of ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, nation-state-centred rationality and anthropocentrism. As children of Mother Earth, we have an inborn responsibility to other children of Mother Earth, non-human forms of life such as animals, plants and Nature. Planetary realisations also challenge us to realise that our loci of living are also zones of thinking and our different zones of living and thinking are interconnected in a complex dynamics of communication and disjunction. In this context, to realise ourselves – both our reality as well as potential – taking part in rooted planetary conversations across borders in a spectrum of human finitude and infinitude is an imperative of life.[3]

But relating our engagement with the world with this imperative of planetary realisations as rooted planetary conversations across borders also needs to understand the limits of the existing language such as Global South. The Global South has become a fashionable word in the last decades and interestingly it is used much more in the Global North by scholars and activists in a missionary and self-valorising way rather than in other parts of the world. There is an epochal need to go beyond this word and create a new language of our identity and aspiration as part of transformation of our world. This is a challenge for de Sousa Santos and all of us concerned to realise the foundational limits of a word such as Global South and to create a new language and reality of our zones of living and thinking, resistance and struggles in our world.

With and Beyond Epistemologies from the South: The Calling of Ontological Epistemology of Participation

de Sousa Santos, in his writings, talks about the need for a new epistemology. He also calls for creative epistemological pragmatics where one pragmatically grapples with an existing hierarchy of knowledge and strives to transform this in the direction of liberation. However, de Sousa Santos never talks about the accompanying need for appropriate ontological transformation though ontology as self-change is also at the heart of his project as he himself writes with so much passion and commitment: 'We know that the first of our struggles is against

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ourselves. [..] there is no change without self-change [..]' (2014: 10). It needs to be borne in mind that modernity privileges the epistemic to the complete neglect of the ontological (Connolly 1995). de Sousa Santos' silence on the ontological is part of a long neglect of this in dominant traditions of critique. For example, in critical theory of Jurgen Habermas as well as critical sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, there is a neglect of the ontological which is justified because of the political ontology of Heidegger, namely Heidegger's early association with Nazism and his continued baffling silence on this after the Holocaust (Habermas 1972). Bourdieu (1991), like Habermas, does not cultivate an appropriate ontological mode as both of them look at ontology primarily from the point of view of limitations of political ontology of Heidegger. But ontological is a multidimensional journey of reality and realisation and we need to cultivate it further drawing inspiration from both critical philosophy and spiritual traditions. The ontological is not exhausted in Heidegger though in Heidegger himself ontology is not only an ontology of mastery as in early Heidegger, there is an ontology of wandering, wondering and pathos of shakenness in the later phase of Heidegger (Dallmayr 1993; Heidegger 1995). In a related way, the ontological is cultivated creatively as manifold paths of self-expansion, deepening and world transformation in two other exemplary savants of our times, Roy Bhaskar (2002) and Fred Dallmayr (2013, 2017). de Sousa Santos' epistemic break needs to cultivate the ontological as part of a move to go beyond the limits of both the epistemological as well as ontological. It needs to be part of a movement of what may be called an ontological epistemology of participation (see Giri 2004, 2006, 2017a).

Ontolocial epistemology of participation involves both epistemological and ontolgoical engagement in a mutually implicated and transformative way where epistemic engagement is nurtured by appropriate ontological cultivation such as ontological committment to understanding reality and not be deluded by illusions and delusions, and where ontology itself emerges out of complex and creative epistemic practices of learning. Epistemology here becomes practical with an aesthetic dimension which resonates with a practical turn in ontology animated by love, labour and learning (Dallmayr 1987; 1991; Schenk 2006; Wickman 2006) and both transform themselves from a logic

of mastery to one of seeking, servanthood and mutual blossoming.[4] Practical epistemology and practical ontology dance together in ontological epistemology of participation but they also bring the mystical dimension of both epistemology and ontology to this dance. Thus ontological epistemology of participation is simultaneously practical as well as mystical – the mystical dimension pointing to the dimension of beyond which is at work in the world of practice but, at the same time, is beyond it. Ontological epistemology of participation is a movement and is a multidimensional meditative verb of co-realisation in which the epistemic and the ontological realise together in an act of learning, collaboration, contestation, confrontation and compassion (more about the theme of meditative verb of co-realisation in the later section of the essay). This resonates with what Foucault (1986) talks about as an ontology of the present[5] and Vattimo (2011) an ontology of actuality which can also be realised as an ontology of actualization, mutualisation and meditative verbs of co-realisations where we move not only towards solidarity but with and towards charity and *karuna* (compassion).[6]

Realities and Realisations: With and Beyond Epistemological Direct Action and the Calling of *Satyagraha*

In his work, de Sousa Santos challenges us to go beyond realism as an apology of status quo of domination and falsification: '[..] we have lost the capacity for rage and amazement vis-à-vis the grotesque realism of what is accepted only because it exists' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 89). He also challenges us to go beyond facile opposition between realism and constructivism:

> The ecology of knowledges is constructivist as concerns representation and realist as concerns intervention. We do not have direct access to reality since we do not know reality save through the concepts, theories, values, and language we use. On the other hand, the knowledge we construct upon reality intervenes in it and has consequences. Knowledge is not representation; it is intervention. Pragmatic realism focuses on intervention rather than on representation. The credibility of the cognitive construction

is measured by the kind of intervention in the world it provides, assists, or hinders. As the evaluation of such intervention always combines the cognitive and the ethicopolitical, the ecology of knowledges starts from the compatibility between cognitive and ethicopolitical values. Therein resides the distinction between objectivity and neutrality (2014: 207).[7]

To appreciate de Sousa Santos' approach, we can here cultivate the accompanying path of thinking and being.[8] Reality is multilayered and multidimensional; it is simultaneously existence as well as potential. Ontological epistemology of participation, as a movement of transformation in knowlege, self, culture and sociey plays a role in the realisation of potential of reality. Knowledge emerging from crtical realism as well as constructivism also plays a role in realising the existing structures of bondage of reality and its accompanying transformative realisations. For example, critical and creative research on reality can help us realise many structures of exploitation and domination that obstruct realisation of potential of reality, for example the self-realisation and co-realisation of reality itself and people who inhabit such reality. Ontological epistemology of participation can help us realise many structures of domination and illusion such as caste, class, gender and absolutism which turn our institutions into what Habermas (1990: 108) calls 'instances of problematic justice'. Reality as realisation helps us not only realise these structures of social and epistemic domination but also transforms these so that reality becomes a companion in the self-realisation and co-realisation of individuals and social institutions. The movement of critical realism as initiated by Roy Bhaskar does capture some of these approaches to reality and realisation where approaches to reality do involve both science and spirituality and de Sousa Santos' project can builld alliance with this creative movement of thought of our times. Similarly, creative literature also does help us go beyond a naive empirical construction of reality and suggest radical possibilites in the real by exploring alternative realities with creative and critical imagination[9] as in movements such as magic realism.[10] de Sousa Santos does refer to the mode of *clinamen* as a way of knowing and being which brings a poetic approach to reality. A poetic approach to reality can contribute to realisation of potential in reality which is

usually constructed through the epistemology of modernist prose and social sciences devoid of the spark of the poetic.[11]

Realisation has multiple connotations and challenges as the language of reality itself. It also refers to both realising the reality of reality as well as realising its potential. The first task of realisation is to understand and uncover the nature or our reality, self as well as social, and ask the primordial and perennial question, who am I? Who are we? It is also to ask the question whether the reality that we have deludes or covers our true reality or presents us a false view or a false consciousness. Realisation thus involves processes of realising our self, other selves and the world as a part of co-realisations. Co-realisations involve working with both appearance and reality, *Maya* and beyond.[12] Self-realisation, realisation of the other and realisation of the world, are here part of a multiplex process of co-realisations which include both action and meditation, what I have elsewhere called meditative verbs of co-realisations (Giri 2012). Co-realisation involves realisation of the fact that reality is simultaneousy real and constructed embodying a dynamic interpenetration of realism and constructivism in an open and spiralling way. In this context, co-realisation also involves the realisation that reality as well as self and society have both an objective and subjective dimension. Ojectivity is not just objectivity, it also involves the subjective as the subjective also has an objective dimenison and an aspiration for objectivity. Co-realisation with simultaneous work of transforming the subjective and the objective thus helps us in realising what can be called transpositional subjectojbectivity (Giri 2018). de Sousa Santos' alternative knowledge creation can relate to this vision, practice and challenge of meditative verbs of co-realisations and pathways of transpositional subjectobjectivity.

Co-realisation here also means realising different aspects and *gunas* or qualities of self, science and society for example the *sattvic*, *rajasik* and *tamasic* dimensions (Nadkarni 2017). While the *sattvic* self helps us search for Truth as a perernnial journey and not compromise with many illusions and constructions of it, the *rajasik* self can easily be satisfied with visible worlds of division and the *tamasik* self can easily live in a world of darkness, for example take part to be whole without proper self-

understanding, understanding of reality as well as ecology of knowledge which permeates it. Finally, co-realisation means realising that language and reality have simultaneously a noun and verb dimenion. Co-realisation here involves realising the noun-verb dynamics of language and reality[13] and cultivate meditative verbs of pluralisation (Giri 2012; 2013).

Co-realisation as part of ontological epistemology of participation, among others, calls for collaborative imagination, improvisation and imagination as it also involves what de Sousa Santos calls 'epistemological direct action'. This epistemological direct action can be linked to a creative epistemological and ontological *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* is not only a political action but also an epistemic action as any epistemic engagement can benefit by embodying a *Satyagrahic* mode of knowing and being. *Satyagraha* is a quest for Truth but Truth here is neither merely epistemological nor ontological. It exceeds both epistemology and ontology has a demand quality to it. Truth is not only a product of the existing discourse and constellation of knowledge and power. Truth is not only a point but part of a landscape of reality and realisation. In fact, de Sousa Santos' idea of ecology of knowledge needs to be linked to an ecological view of Truth where it is a landscape of reality and realisations, multiple locations of viewing and engagement and multiple perspectives on Truth reflect different dimensions of it rather than necessarily contradict each other. An ecological perspective and realisation of Truth is related to a multi-valued logic of Truth and life as different from the dualistic logic of an either or approach (more on this later). Thus both epistemological Satyagraha as part of an ontological epistemology of participation and ecology of knowledges challenge us to realise Truth and cultivate knowledge as ecological which is different from Truth as egological and one-dimensional.[14]

Satyagraha as quest for Truth faces the challenges internal as well as external. Following earlier discussion about *trigunas* – three qualities of Sattva, Raja and Tama, in Indic tradition, there is a complex understanding of Truth existing in dynamic relation with what are called *Rajas* (power) and *Tamas* (darkness). Epistemological direct action as Satyagraha, quest for Truth, needs to work and mediate with both *Rajas* (power) and *Tamas* (darkness) and in the way transform these.

Ontological Epistemology of Participation and the Challenge of Transforming the Subjective and the Objective and the Calling of Transpositional Subjectobjectivity

As has been suggested in the preceding sections, ontological epistemology of participation not only challenges us to transform epistemology and ontology but also subjective and objective, subjectivity and objectivity. In fact, de Sousa Santos calls for a new subjectivity which questions conventional production of subject and affirms a new way of being, thinking and becoming. He calls it destabilising subjectivity but this can cultivate further the needed dimension of egolessness and post-conventional moral, political and spiritual development in subject formation and formation of appropriate sociality (Habermas 1990; Giri 2013).

Subjectivity has a dimension of ego as well as self as in both critical theorising and spiritual awakening as Habermas himself makes a distinction between ego-identity and self-identity and highlighting the need for the cultivation of a post-conventional self (Habermas 1990). Our subjective has also a reality and possibility of post-conventional which is not bound to existing conventions of ego, self, culture and science and this becomes a helpful companion in our striving for objectivity. In a related way, Sri Aurobindo also challenges us to understand that subjective is not reproduction of the typal conventions of society nor is it a case of reproduction of one's egotistic standpoint. In his *Human Cycles*, Sri Aurobindo (1962) characterises the modern age as the rise of the subjective which goes beyond the typal conventions of society, not only of traditional social order but also of the modern ones which is dominated by conventions of science and society. The subjective in both Sri Aurobindo and Habermas is animated by a post-typal and post-conventional movement which also finds a creative resonance in the work of Alain Touraine who looks at the subjective in terms of a process of critique, creativity and transformation what he calls *subjectivation* (Touraine 2000). *Subjectivation* in Touraine is different from looking at subjects as just subjected to regimes of subjection, as it happens sometimes with Michel Foucault and Judith Butler; it is characterised by the desire, aspiration, capacity and creativity to say no

to existing conventions of self, science and society which hinder fuller self-realisation. Thus the subjective as subjectivation of saying no to taken-for-granted idols of method, science, epistemology and ontology[15] is crucial for our striving towards objectivity which is not a fixed *a priori* formula but also a dynamic formation. Both objectivity and subjectivity are multidimensional formations and verbs of co-realisations and as verbs they are not only activistic but also meditative; they embody meditative verbs of co-realisations (Giri 2012; 2013). de Sousa Santos' quest for alternative epistemology can draw resources, strength and inspiration from these visions and practices of subject formation which touch both inner life and public spheres going beyond conventional facile dualism between inner and outer, private and public.

de Sousa Santos' quest for alternative epistemology beyond the epistemology of modernist science and rationality also challenges us for realising objectivity in new ways, beyond what he calls 'orthopedic thinking'. Like a new subjectivity we also need new visions and practices of objectivity that can draw inspiration from following works on rethinking objectivity in some fundamental ways. For example, Pierre Bourdieu (2003) talks about 'participant objectivation' where the key question is how does an observer observe himself or herself. Though Bourdieu asks this question he does not really address this as he does not cultivate an appropriate subjectivity where one can simultaneously take part in an activity and observe with some kind of needed distanciation. In Indian spiritual traditions this has been spoken of as developing a witnessing consciousness which, while taking part in life, nonetheless has a capacity to witness with detachment as evident in the metaphor and realisation of two birds sitting on a tree, one eating fruits and the other witnessing. Bourdieu is silent about these issues as he is primarily within a valorised epistemological mode and does not feel the need to cultivate an appropriate ontological mode. In a related way, Amartya Sen also helps us to rethink objectivity with his perspective of what he calls 'positional objectivity' where '[..] positionally dependent observations, beliefs, and actions are central to our knowledge and practical reason' and where 'the nature of objectivity in epistemology, decision theory and ethics has to take note of the parametric dependence of observation and observation on the position of the observer' (1994: 126).

But the objectivity here is that of an observer but agents in fields of life as well as subjects and objects of understanding are not only observers but also participants. There is a privileging of the observer here in Bourdieu and Sen which is different from de Sousa Santos and similar to other positions such as that of Andre Beteille (2009), who also privileges the standpoint of an observer rather than explore pathways of emergent objectivity beginning with the experiential perspective of participants. Sen talks about the need for transpositional scrutiny, but transpositional scrutiny is not adequate for the challenges at hand, we need to cultivate transpositional movements. Sen talks about the need for positional objectivity but once the agents are not only observers but also participants the objectivity that emerges is not only objective but also inter-subjective and trans-subjective. So we need to explore transpositional subjectobjectivity – one which emerges out of pluralisation of the subjects, border-crossing transmutations among positions and transformative cultivation of the objective and the subjective including inter-subjective and trans-subjective. It calls for transformation of the subjectivity and objectivity as we know including transformation of these from nouns to verbs – meditative verbs of pluralisation. It also involves transformation of epistemological and the ontological as suggested above. de Sousa Santos would bring both critical observational as well as committed participative dimension to our work as agents, subjects and actors and his epistemological pragmatics, in collaboration with a new pragmatics of social and ensouled communication, social dialogues and contestations can help us realise transpositional subjectobjectivity as a dynamic movement. Transpositional subjectobjectivity here emerges out of both movements of transpositional subjectivation where subject formation involves moving across different subject positions as well as transpositional objectivation. This also involves communication of contested positions and the emergent subjectobjectivity that emerges from such sharing and struggle. In his reflections on spaces such as the World Social Forum, de Sousa Santos (2008) draws our attention to the rise of trans-conflictual processes of contestation and convergence in which participating individuals and movements agree on some issues, disagree on some others and with this also arrive at emergent space of a common

understanding. Our work for alternative epistemologies, objectivity and subjectivity needs to cultivate transpositional subjectivation and objectivation and the emergent transpositional subjectobjectivity which would enrich de Sousa Santos' quest for alternatives, is not just epistemological.

Multi-*topial* Hermeneutics

In de Sousa Santos' pathways of alternatives, ecology of knowledge integrally dances with the related movement of what he calls inter-cultural translation to go beyond epistemic closures such as Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism. But translation here does not happen in homes of certainty of one's culture, it involves the pathos and joy of walking and meditating with other cultures. Inter-cultural translation in de Sousa Santos is a part of a new hermeneutics of dialogue, what he calls *diatopical* hermeneutics. Building upon the seminal work of Raimundo Panikkar, de Sousa Santos thus tells us:

> The aim of *diatopical* hermeneutics is to maximize the awareness of the reciprocal incompleteness of cultures by engaging in a dialogue, as it were, with one foot in one culture and the other in another—hence its *diatopical* character. *Diatopical* hermeneutics is an exercise in reciprocity among cultures that consists in transforming the premises of argumentation in a given culture into intelligible and credible arguments in another (de Sousa Santos 2014: 92).

de Sousa Santos here talks about putting one's feet in cultures which resonates with my idea of footwork, footwork in landscapes of self, culture and society as part of creative research (Giri 2012). Hermeneutics does not mean only reading of texts and cultures as texts but also foot-walking with texts and cultures as foot walks and foot works resonating with Heidegger calls for a hermeneutics of facticity (Mehta 2004).[16] It also means walking and meditating with cultures and texts as foot-working meditation while, as Thoreau (1947) would suggest, we walk like camels and ruminate while walking (also see Mooney 2011-12). This transforms hermeneutics itself into a manifold act of democratic and spiritual transformation which involves related processes of root

works, route walks, root meditations, route meditations, memory work and cultural work.

de Sousa Santos urges us to realise 'inter-cultural translation' as a living process. He refers to Gramsci's concept of 'living philology'. Inter-cultural translation as a living process can be linked to a creative work of nurturing life worlds and living words (Giri 2015). Life words are not relativistic, they are relational. Translation as a 'living process' also involves the work of living words which reflect the creative movements of souls, co-souls and peoples across boundaries of cultures. Inter-cultural translation as a creative communication among life worlds through living words embody what Heidegger (2004) may call the way-making dimension of language, self, culture and society. Such living words through way-making and trans-positional movements bring the far nearer and the nearer far.

Translation, at the same time, is a work of a trigonometry of creativity consisting of travel, truth and translation.[17] Translation is facilitated by travel, especially modality of being such as walking where one travels and translates lightly. Inter-cultural translation thus can be linked to creative foot work as part of a cross-cultural memory work. This is also a truth work and meditation where one walks and meditates with Truth. This truth work is an aspect of Satyagraha and it has both an epistemic and ontological dimension. Translation as *satyagraha* is thus part of an alternative epistemology and ontology which is a creative dynamics in the work of ontological epistemology of participation in our lives.

de Sousa Santos talks about *diatopical* hermeneutics but this need not be confined to our feet only in two cultures; it needs to move beyond two cultures and embrace many cultures. Spiritual traditions also can help us realise that though we have physically two feet, we can realise that we have many feet. In the Vedas it is considered that the Divine has million feet and similarly we can realise that humans also have million feet and with our million feet we can engage ourselves with not only creative foot work but also heart work (*herzwerk* as it is called in German) in our acts of gathering of knowledge, self and the world. Supplementing Santos' *diatopical* hermeneutics, one can cultivate *multi-topial* hermeneutics which is accompanied by a multi-valued logic

of autonomy and interpenetration going beyond either-or logic, for example between North and South. We can then relate this to deeper planetary conversations and planetary realisations (Giri 2013) such as transforming the limits of the epistemic in Euro-American modernity by taking part in dialogues with traditions such as Tantra, Buddhism and Vedanta which are understandably absent in Santos' quest at this stage (this is explored in the later parts of this essay).

Multi-topial hermeneutics is accompanied by cultivation a new logic which can be called multi-valued logic and living. It goes beyond the binary logic of either-or and cultivates a new logic of both and. This helps us in creative translation and communication across borders. Philosopher J.N. Mohanty (2000) tells us how multi-valued logic can build upon creative dialogues across philosophical traditions such as the Jaina tradition of *Anekantavada*[18] which emphasises many paths of Truth realisation, Gandhian tradition of non-violence and the Husserlian phenomenology of overlapping contents. In the pregnant thought of Mohanty, which he crafts like a jewel:

> The ethic of non-injury applied to philosophical thinking requires that one does not reject outright the other point of view without first recognizing the element of truth in it; it is based on the belief that every point of view is partly true, partly false, and partly undecidable. A simple two-valued logic requiring that a proposition must either be true or false is thereby rejected, and what the Jaina philosopher proposes is a multi-valued logic. To this multi-valued logic, I add the Husserlian idea of overlapping contents. The different perspectives on a thing are not mutually exclusive, but share some contents with each other. The different 'worlds' have shared contents, contrary to the total relativism. *If you represent them by circles, they are intersecting circles, not incommensurable, [and it is this model of] intersecting circles which can get us out of relativism on the one hand and absolutism on the other* (Mohanty 2000: 24; emphasis added).

Such a pathway of multi-valued logic as it emerges from such diverse sources of seeking is a helpful companion to de Sousa Santos' quest for alternatives. Multi-*topial* hermeneutics does involve transpositional movements including dancing with threads amidst threats

across positions thus becoming what Molz and Edwards (2017) call integral hermeneutics.[19] We can here bring multi-*topial* hermeneutics, transpositional dancing and transpositional subjectobjectivity together and realise how all these also involve sacrifice and transformation of our clinging to our own ego and ideological standpoints and one-sided absolutist epistemology, ontology and metaphysics.[20]

Meditative Verbs of Co-Realisations: Disjunctions, Emergence and Compassionate Confrontation

Ontological epistemology of participation, transpositional subjectobjectivity and *multi-topial hermeneutics* involve both action and meditation. Building upon our earlier discussion, we can conceptualise and realise these as meditative verbs of co-realisations. While de Sousa Santos talks about critical social action in terms of not only politics of movements but also politics of inter-movements, there is little attention to meditation in his project though his engagement with critical reflections and his deep openness to traditions of indigenous spirituality in Latin America has the potential of embracing meditation as part of an integral project of transformation.

In his work, de Sousa Santos discusses the problem of nouns. He tells us how in our world critical thinking grapples with the problem of loss of critical nouns such as socialism. It is now reduced only to an adjectival mode such as alternative development. But an important challenge here is to realise the limits of nouns themselves as they embody a structure of fixity. Both the so-called critical nouns as well as nouns as personal names and collective names suggest a fixed form but in reality they embody flows of change through time. For alternative thinking, we need to transform nouns into verbs. In fact, we need to go beyond the dualism between noun and verbs and realise our language and action as simultaneously having a noun as well as verb dimension. And verbs embody simultaneously action and meditation. Meditative verbs of co-realisations bring nouns and verbs, action and meditation together in our language and life.[21]

Meditative verbs of co-realisations embody contestation and struggles. It involves disjunctions, conjunctions as well as emergent convergence. This resonates with de Sousa Santos' emphasis on emergence in life and knowledge. We can link de Sousa Santos' project of a sociology of absence and emergence to a sociology and spirituality of meditative verbs of co-realisations. For de Sousa Santos, 'The sociology of emergences is the inquiry into the alternatives that are contained in the horizons of concrete possibilities' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 184). We can realise emergent alternatives as meditative verbs of co-realisation, not just nouns, and also as emerging from processes of meditative verbs of co-realisations involving different co-creators of transformations as well as the subjective and the objective, epistemic and ontological, political and spiritual. This process involves both compassion and confrontation. de Sousa Santos has drawn our attention to the significance of confrontation, especially creative confrontation, in giving birth to a different world. But we also need to cultivate compassion which has the courage to confront and confrontation, which has integral compassion to self, other and the world in its task of confrontation. We need to give birth to creative emergences as meditative verbs of co-realisations as works and meditations of compassionate confrontation.

With and Beyond Reason: Intuition, Imagination and Supramental Transformation

de Sousa Santos tells us about the limits of reason, what he calls functionalist reason and lazy reason. Building upon Leibnitz, he tells us how lazy reason is incapable of thinking beyond the order of conformity. It is linked to what he calls metonymic reason, which is 'obsessed by the idea of totality in the form of order' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 167). Lazy reason becomes 'proleptic' when 'future is conceived from the vantage point of the monoculture of linear time' (ibid: 181). He tells us how we need to overcome lazy reason of Western modernity by learning from other traditions, especially from the traditions of anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles against this as well as from contemporary movements of subaltern cosmopolitanism.

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In his reflections, de Sousa Santos also draws our attention to the significance of intuition in our modes of knowing. Speaking of alternative and resistant epistemologies from the South, he writes: 'Our knowledge is intuitive; it goes straight to what is urgent and necessary' (ibid: 12). This then invites us to cultivate further intuition in our practices of knowing and being not only in our personal lives but also as part of a wider cultural work. We need to develop cultures of intuition. For example, institutions of knowledge can help us in developing cultures of intuition. This can be done, for example, by creative training of senses, by *yoga*, *tantra*, integral education and development.

In his work, Sri Aurobindo talks about the significance of both reason and intuition in human life which also resonates with simultaneous attention to it in Edmund Husserl, the initiator of the movement of phenomenology. For example, in his reflections, Husserl tells us how our life world is a world not only of reason but also of intuitions (Husserl 2002). Science as part of our life world is not only a world of reason but also of intuitions. In fact, J.N. Mohanty (2001), building upon Husserl, invites us to realise the work of living intuitions which can creatively supplement de Sousa Santos' project of inter-cultural translation as a living process and Gramsci's view of living philology on which he builds. So, alternative epistemologies as part of ontological epistemology of participation ought to cultivate cultures of living intuition[22] as part of life worlds and living words.

In his work, Husserl talks about crisis of European sciences. To go beyond this we need a new vocation as Husserl himself calls for 'a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such' (2002: 173). Sri Aurobindo here also challenges us for spiritual transformation and goes much further. Sri Aurobindo challenges us to overcome the limits of reason by cultivating the supramental dimension in mind, self and society where we are not limited by divisive work of the mind and go beyond it. de Sousa Santos' critique of reason and cultivation of creative alternatives can have dialogues with Sri Aurobindo's project of supramental transformation

of reason, self and society (Sri Aurobindo 1962).

It must be noted that de Sousa Santos, unlike many other contemporary critical thinkers, is not dismissive of spirituality but rather wants to transform it as a companion of human liberation (de Sousa Santos 2015). de Sousa Santos looks at God though Pascal's wager: 'Although we cannot determine rationally that God exists, we can at least find a rational way to determine that to wager on his existence is more advantageous than to believe in his non-existence. [..] To wager on God's existence compels us to be honest and virtuous. And, of course, it also compels us to renounce noxious pleasures and worldly glories. [..] If God does not exist, we will have lost the wager but gained in turn a virtuous life. [..] By the same token, if he does exist, our gain will be infinite: eternal salvation' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 112). In his related work, *If God Were a Human Rights Activist*, he (2015) talks mainly about political theology but he does not realise the distinction between political theology and practical spirituality. While political theology strives for the place of religion in public life, practical spirituality is not confined to only issues of religions and power, rather it strives for realisation of beauty, dignity and dialogues (Giri 2018). While traditions of political theology in Western tradition as in the work of Carl Schmidt has promoted models of human social and political life characterised by enmity, practical spirituality strives for realisation of friendship across borders, including friendship among human, Nature and Divine (Giri 2013). Inspired by cross-cultural and cross-religious realisations, practical spirituality invites us to be a *Bhikkhu* in the world. Walking and meditating with Buddha, it invites us to be a beggar in the world with bowls, ploughs[23] and computers in our hands for new knowledge, enlightenment and liberation. Practical spirituality as a mode of being a *Bhikkhu* fulfils Cusa's model of learned ignorance that Santos presents in new ways. A learned ignorant becomes a *Bhikkhu* and epistemic work as part of an ontological epistemology of participation becomes a work of a *Bhikkhu* – seeking enrichment and enlightenment holding Infinite in one's palm but also sharing it with others with courage and love. Practical spirituality thus makes epistemological work a gift work reviving this tradition from Marcel Mauss to Gandhi and beyond.

Planetary Realisations: Latin America, India and Beyond

Planetary Realisations embody realisations of ourselves as children of our Mother Earth that go beyond ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, nation-state centred rationality and anthropocentrism. It also embodies planetary conversations across borders. de Sousa Santos himself takes part in planetary conversations with some of the streams of thinking from Latin America. He presents Cuban thinker Jose Marti's project of *Nuestra America* which is not the America of dominance. It 'carries a strong epistemological component' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 53). 'Rather than importing foreign ideas,' this project challenges us to 'find out the specific realities of the continent from a Latin American perspective [..]' (ibid). It must be noted that Jose Marti was also a creative poet and dreamer of human emancipation and he challenges us to understand the poetic dimension of alternative epistemological works.[24] Extending this to the contemporary, de Sousa Santos brings contemporary Latin American reflections, including insights from indigenous spiritual traditions into planetary conversations. In this journey of widening, broadening and hopefully deepening, we can here bring some deeper philosophical insights from India. Speaking of alternative epistemologies, we can here refer to traditions and paths of knowing in Upanishadic-Vedanta tradition, *Tantra* and Buddhism.

Epistemologies from the South and Planetary Conversations: Upanishadic-Vedanta tradition, Buddhism and *Tantra*

Here we can have a glimpse of practices of knowing and being in these traditions as plural and not monolithic. The methods of argumentation and conversation in the Upanishads[25] have a potential for participatory discussion and learning which can transform our ways of knowledge creation. As Godavarish Mishra tells us: 'The most important method is the method of inquiry where certain simple but critical questions are raised and answered. [..] In the Upanishads we repeatedly find that the questions are asked in different ways and answers are given till the students are [..] satisfied. [..] The underlying intention is to provide clarity

of the concepts and create a corresponding experiential base in the interlocutor [..] This method of questioning is adopted in many systems of Indian philosophy to ensure that no view was accepted without being examined for its experiential validity' (2004: 278-279). In *Epistemologies of the South*, de Sousa Santos does bring to the centre the problem of questions and answers which calls for a new pedagogy of living with questions and answers as meditative verbs of co-realisations and here Upanishadic modes and paths can help us.[26]

Sruti, or listening, is an important method in ways of thinking in Vedas but it is also accompanied by *pramanas*, evidence which give us 'objective knowledge' (Mishra 2004: 275). These *pramanas* make methods empirical thus having a possibility for building bridges with methods in social sciences such as participant observation and survey research. 'Sankara does not dogmatically follow *Sruti*. He says that there should be experiential domain for *Sruti*, as 'even a hundred scriptural texts declaring fire to be cold or non-luminous, will not be authoritative' (ibid: 287). To this method of *pramanas* the Mimanshakas developed hermeneutical methods 'for the understanding and the interpretation of the Vedas' while at the same time acknowledging the limitations of hermeneutical method and the need for it to be open to revelation (ibid: 279-280). 'In order to resolve the seeming contradictions of the text, Mimamsaka proposes that the subject matter (*visaya*) has to be identified first. This has to be followed by statement of possible doubts (*samsaya*). Then comes the prima facie view (*purvapaksha*) which postulates a set of meanings [..] based on which the doubt is answered. This is followed by the suggested view (*uttara-paksha*), which refutes the meaning proffered by the prima facie view, through rational arguments and offers an alternative set of meanings. Then comes *nirnaya*, the definitive judgment on the meaning of the text. The chief aim of this hermeneutic method is to identify the proper context in which the Vedic passages could be related to human needs in a more meaningful way and to show its all time applicability beyond the temporal justification' (2004: 280).

Advaita Vedanta has a method of what is called as *Adhyaropa-apapada* (superimposition and de-superimposition). While *Adhyaropa* points to the fact that many of our concepts and languages are

superimposition upon reality, *apapada* reiterates the need for de-superimposition. Languages and concepts we use are many a time a superimposition upon reality which need to be accompanied by a process of de-superimposition. Language does not only help us communicate, it also creates illusion and distortion of reality. In this context, Shankara emphasises de-superimposition as an inevitable part of understanding reality. As Ramakrishna Puligandla helps us understand: 'advancing an argument and rescinding it at the end; one advances an argument in order to inspire and orient the listener; and one finally rescinds the argument' in order to enable one understand reality in an open-ended way (Puligandla 1996 quoted in Giri 2004: 354).

Methods like de-superimposition help us overcome illusions and not to be bound to the prisons that we ourselves create through the use of language and concepts. 'It is part of movement from *adhyasa* – illusion (which is a very important concept in the Indic epistemology) to ever greater approximation to truth' (Wilfred 2004: 167). It also urges for purification of methods and consciousness in its stages of sense-perception, rational and theoretical understanding, and at the stage of wisdom. Methodology in these systems of thinking is not only confined to sense perception and rationalization but also includes movement towards the 'third stage of *prajna* or wisdom' (ibid: 168).

In Buddhist epistemology, *anatta* or no-self is an important aspect of reality as well as inquirer of reality. For example, the inquirer of reality does not have a fixed self nor does reality. de Sousa Santos' alternative epistemological work can also draw inspiration from the Buddhist notion of *sunyata*. In this view, what characterises reality is not an essential and determinate structure but a '*dynamic sunyata*', a vacuum to put it in the language of quantum physics (cf. Dallmayr 1996a; Zohar and Marshall 1994). The significance of dynamic *sunyata* or the vacuum is not merely genealogical i.e., reality has emerged out of the vacuum but its role as a permanent destabiliser of any stabilised form. As Dallmayr interprets, *sunyata* or emptiness 'denotes not simply a vacuum or empty space; nor does it coincide with logical negation. Far from serving as a vacuum preamble to conceptual determination, the term signals an absent-present matrix allowing conceptual distinctions to arise in the first place

(while simultaneously placing them in jeopardy)' (Dallmayr 1996a: 177). Reality has a *sunyata* aspect or a vacuum aspect as an integral part of it and our methods of study must be sensitive to this aspect of reality. As a mode of engagement, taking emptiness or *sunyata* seriously means that we are not totally and arrogantly certain about our methods, objects and subjects of study and we have the courage to take part in 'self-emptying process' – to be free from the privileges, securities, and the power of essential categories. Another important aspect of Buddhist reflections on reality is co-dependent origination which resonates with complex system thinking today to de Sousa Santos is sympathetic.

From Vedanta and Buddhism, we briefly embrace *Tantra* which has been much more transgressive of boundaries, for example, being open to women and low-caste as contributions to enriching planetary conversations which await us here.[27] As Marcus Bussey helps us understand, 'Being deeply rooted in the indigenous experience of reality *Tantra* has a broad metaphysical base which allows for ways of knowing, feeling and processing that go far beyond the limited rationality that informs the Western Enlightenment project' (1998: 5). For Bussey, Tantra challenges us to understand the meaning of life in the graveyards which can bring new realisation of the relationship between home and homelessness (Bussey 2014).

Tantra brings us not only to the graveyards but also to the forest. So do paths of Buddha, Vedas and Upanishads. As Tagore tells us, Indian civilization is a civilization of forest which challenges us to realise the significance of forest in religion, culture and society, which helps us go beyond imprisonment in systems. *Epistemologies of the South* should help us realise the significance of forest and wider reality and vision of commons in nurturing a new ecology of knowledge and life which helps us go beyond the violence of civilisation (see Taylor 2011). As de Sousa Santos himself so passionately tells us, at issue is the birth of a new civilization which also challenges us to go beyond civilisation as barbarism, as Walter Benjamin would urge us to realise.

In *Epistemologies of the South*, de Sousa Santos raises many themes and here we can briefly touch some of these as part of our continued cross-cultural conversations and planetary realisations. One of these

deals with the problem of roots and options. For him in modernity, 'roots do not hold; options are blind' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 75). But he quite wisely tells us: 'But the explosion of roots and options does not occur merely by means of endless multiplication of both. It also occurs in the process of searching for particularly deep and strong roots capable of sustaining particularly democratic and radical options' (ibid: 84). As a companion to this, we can also cultivate path of cross-fertilization of roots and routes. We need to realise roots themselves have routes and this cross-fertilization has been a fact of history and creative memory work of this as well as transformative action based upon this in the present can give birth to creative cosmopolitan future (Dallmayr 2016; Giri 2017c).

In his manifesto for a good life, de Sousa Santos gives important role to intellectual activists who are concerned with life and not only with thought. As he writes: 'The concern of intellectuals is the life of thought, and that has little to do with life of life. Lived life—as much as Spinoza's *natura naturana*—is supposed to be less than thought, but living life and *natura naturans* are more than thought' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 6-7). Intellectuals must strive to understand this surplus of life but should not activists also learn the *sadhana* and discipline of thinking itself? Intellectual work and activist work needs to be connected but they may still demand differential though related practice and dedication. We need to understand their dynamic autonomies as we continuously strive to transcend fixation and boundaries. Intellectual activists thus need to strive to realise without falling prey to a logic of self-justification, self-valorisation, reproduction of populist clichés and slogans, quick satisfaction and pronouncement of final solutions. For this they need to be part of love and labor of learning as well as work on self-transformation and mutual transformation. In a related work, I talk about the vocation of scholar activists who strive to embody ontological epistemology of participation in their vision and practice (Giri 2005). They also embody a multi-valued logic of autonomy and interpenetration and an aesthetics of establishing threads of connection across borders. They have mutual respect for their differential starting point. One who begins as a scholar does not continue to reproduce the logic of scholastic exclusivism and walks, works and meditates with the

activists without sacrificing her continued love and labour critical and creative learning. One who begins as an activist also does not continue to construct the world only from the activist point of view of an *a priori* absolutist model of human salvation; she also learns to question her own faith without debilitating her force of action and she also continues to learn the discipline of being with the world in a spirit of inquiry of a scholar, an intellectual. We need to embody such a multi-valued logic of autonomy and interpenetration as our world is bleeding and weeping from the self-certain closure of the scholars on the one hand and activists on the other.

Scholar-activists deal with the finitude of human existence, especially the suffering of soul and society but they do so holding the infinite on their palms. In his work, de Sousa Santos tells us about the challenge of the infinite in our contemporary societies. He writes: 'The infinite we face is not transcendental, resulting, rather, from the inexhaustible diversity of human experience and the limits to knowing it' (de Sousa Santos 2014: 110). But in our times, why the infinite is also not transcendental? Here de Sousa Santos seems to be unconsciously within the limits of contemporary critical thinking such as that of Habermas, which can only realise transcendental as immanent. Here we need to be open to both immanent transcendence as well as transcendental immanence (Strydom 2009, Giri 2013).

de Sousa Santos talks about pragmatics of social communication and epistemological pragmatics. This pragmatics can be related to an interlinked vision and practice of spiritual pragmatism and pragmatics (Giri 2016). In spiritual pragmatism new languages and practices are born of multidimensional *sadhana*, strivings and struggles involving both the social and spiritual bases of life and society. Spiritual pragmatism involves interpenetration of spiritual and material, immanence and transcendence, capability and transcendence. Spiritual pragmatism involves practical discourse as suggested in the critical theory and practice of Habermas and practical spirituality suggested in the works and meditations of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi as well as in many transformative spiritual movements in societies and histories. Spiritual pragmatism thus

contributes to strivings for realisation of non-duality as an ongoing *sadhana* and struggle in life, culture and society. It must be noted that there is an important legacy of overcoming dualism in American pragmatism as well which we notice in the work of social philosophers such as George Herbert Mead who urge us to go beyond the dualism of subject and object (Giri 2012). Spiritual pragmatism in its more social manifestation of critique, creativity, struggle and emancipation resonates with also the tradition of American pragmatism, what Cornell West (1999) calls 'prophetic pragmatism' inviting us to the struggle and martyrdom of savants such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement (also see Unger 2007).

Scholar-activists can be bearers of spiritual pragmatism and transformative communication. They can also embody a new art of renunciation that combines world engagement with renunciation. Both engagement and renunciation are not only outward and external but also inner. In *Epistemologies of the South*, de Sousa Santos talks about the need for cultivating a spirit of sacrifice which needs to be followed up not only in politics but also in epistemology. But the discourse and practice of sacrifice in Judeo-Christian tradition on which much of modern discourse builds involves mainly the sacrifice of the other and here we need to open the logic of sacrifice to a deeper cross-cultural realisation where sacrifice also means sacrifice of self as it is in Vedic tradition and in Vedic hermeneutics (see Murthy 1993). There is also a subtle distinction between sacrifice and renunciation where renunciation becomes a manifold process of practical and spiritual renunciation of binding and slavish attachments to our worlds of method, science and comforts thus freeing us to be seekers of knowledge, creativity and emergent worlds of beauty, dignity and dialogues beyond the existing structures and prisons of domination and annihilation. We need to embody practical renunciation in epistemology and politics which challenges us to go beyond our methods and ideologies of certainty and practice a mode of permanent emptiness and seeking. This resonates with what Giani Vattimo (1999) may call modality of weak thought and weak ontology which is also accompanied by a weak epistemology. Ontological epistemology of participation is a dance of weak ontology and weak epistemology through movements of practical renunciation

where one is not seized by the goal of victory but by quest for Truth and relationships in which our practical renunciation of will to mastery and certainty in life and method help us in our journey.

de Sousa Santos tells us how we need to cultivate different temporalities in self, culture and society. For example, living in the present we should not be a prisoner of the logic of the present or what can be called 'presentism.' We should cultivate creative non-contemporaneity of various kinds (see Habermas 1984). We can also relate to time in a different way, for example time as pregnant temporality. A realisation of pregnant space and time helps us in going beyond determinism and facilitate emergence in our lives. Time has been turned into a machine of production of social suffering and one of the sources of suffering is being imprisoned in a logic of monological presentism without creative memory of work of alternatives lying buried in the layers of the present. Time as part of our contemporary capitalist order forces us to run, run and run and here we can learn to breathe and live slowly as part of a creative epistemic, ontological, self and collective process. We can realise Time not only as a machine but also as our nurturing Mother.

In his reflections, de Sousa Santos builds upon his participation in World Social Forum (WSF). For de Sousa Santos, 'WSF represents the maximum possible consciousness of our times. [..] It has created a meeting ground for most diverse movements and organizations, coming from the most diverse location in the planet. [..] Some are anchored in non-Western philosophies and knowledges that sponsor different conceptions of human dignity and call for a variety of other worlds that should be possible' (de Sousa Santos 2008: 11, 12). Here we can also bring insights from the related movement of Parliament of World Religions which raise new possibilities of rethinking our basic terms of discourse such as religion, politics and spirituality. The recent meeting of the Parliament of World Religions was held at Salt Lake City, Utah, from October 15 to 21, 2015, in which I had taken part. This time the President of the Parliament was a Muslim imam, Imam Malik Mujahid from Chicago. Along with Imam Mujahid, many Muslim leaders and lay people brought their struggle for peace, justice and dialogue to this yearning humanity of around 10,000 people. Not only Muslims were

conspicuous by their presence in this Parliament in the traditional land of the Mormons, which in the process also has become more dialogical and open to inter-faith work, there was also almost the sweeping presence of the women religious leaders and indigenous spiritual leaders from the US and around the world. In fact, before the formal opening of the Parliament, there was an assembly of women spiritual leaders on revitalising the tradition and work of the Divine Mother in religions, societies, self and cosmos. This work on activating and regenerating the Divine Mother in all religious traditions and beyond may help humanity to overcome the spiral of logic of violence unleashed by rise of world religions in history which were primarily patriarchal. These world religions, whom philosopher and historian Karl Jespers and many of his uncritical followers celebrate as the rise of Axial Age and turning point of human consciousness, began with killing of the Mother Goddesses. This killing is continuing unabated as forces such as ISIS, Boko Haram and Talibans are killing women and girl children and their fellow killers from other traditions continue the project of killing girls, children and women in the name of religion. The new spring of solidarity which has started blossoming in the recent Parliament of World Religions is a silent turning over this patriarchal Axial Age to one of giving birth to life and nurturing it for fullest development of all.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

In their work *Theory from the South*, Jean and John Comaroff (2012: 48) call for a new mode of theoretical engagement which involves a 'respect for the real that does not conflate the empirical with empiricism. And a respect for the abstract that does not mistake theory-work for theoreticism.' de Sousa Santos' journey with theory and practice involves such creative engagement with the empirical and theoretical, in the process bringing an emergent dimension of transformation to both as a companion to a loving and courageous act of world transformation. In another context, Fred Dallmayr (1999) who has patiently cultivated a different mode of planetary epistemic engagement born out of ontological work and meditation and deeper

cross-cultural realisations had said: 'The reflective theorist in the global village must shun spectatorial allures and adopt the more modest stance of participant in the search for truth by opening mind and heart to the puzzling diversity of human experiences and traditions—and also to the possibility of jeopardizing cherished preoccupations or beliefs' (1999). de Sousa Santos' journey is part of such a quest which challenges all of us for more courageous transpositional movements and *multi-topial* hermeneutics across boundaries and settled foundations. This is part of our contemporary creative memory work and work and meditation with future as part of an integral struggle and *sadhana* of transformation which is simultaneously epistemic, ontological, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual where the future is not only a cultural fact but also a collaborative political and spiritual co-creation (see Escobar 2018).[28]

Endnotes

1   As de Sousa Santos writes: 'By discarding all alternative knowledges, modern science has revealed itself as a wastemaker, a condition that we, the few privileged inhabitants of consumer society, share as well' (2014: 151).

2   This means realising, as John Clammer (2017) argues, that aesthetics is a mode of knowing. I also argue how aesthetics helps us realise both threads of connections as well as dynamics of disjunctions across different domains of knowledge and life (Giri 2006). Gregory Bateson (1973) also helps us understand the link between epistemology and aesthetics as he writes: 'Our loss of the sense of aesthetic unity was, quite simply, an epistemological mistake. [..] more serious than all those minor insanities that characterize older cosmologies which agreed upon fundamental unity' (1973: 19). For Bateson, 'Mere purpose rationality unaided by such phenomena as art, religion, dream, and the like, is necessarily pathogenic and destructive of life.' Building upon Bateson and Plato's idea of *paideia* William Ophuls argues how we now need to restore beauty not only to epistemology but in the 'pantheon of human values' (Ophuls 2011: 101).

3   The project of planetary conversations suggested here finds a supportive resonance in the path of philosophical conversation cultivated by African philosopher Joanthan O. Chimakoam who invites and challenges us to cultivate conversations across borders along both horizontal and vertical lines. As he writes:

   In philosophy, one way to address the epistemic injustice which the over-commitment to the Eurocentric vision creates is to liberalise the discourse

arena in which the attitude of philosophical nationalism is substituted for philosophical conversationalism. [..] concepts of justice and specifically epistemic justice in any form and in philosophy particularly will not be able to go global if there is no horizontalization of 'philosophical conversations' and verticalisation of 'philosophical questions' by means of conversational thinking. By horizontalisation of philosophical conversations I mean equal intercultural engagement of actors from different cultures in the global justice debate in which there is no discrimination or marginalization of any philosophical tradition by another. In contrast, verticalization of the questions of philosophy sues for the liberalisation in which uniformity in philosophical question is discouraged. Thus different philosophical traditions are allowed to ask different questions in recognition of the varying conditions of life which give rise to those questions from one locale to the other. Hence while horizontalisation debars discrimination as to who should be a part of the conversation convened on equal platform, verticalisation promotes a form of discrimination as to the type of questions are allowed to ask. In other words, verticalisation is opposed to the uniformity of philosophical questions from different places. This verticalisation strategy breaks any form of knowledge hegemony and leaves room for the emergence of diverse epistemic perspectives. So the ideas involved in these two concepts are geometrical, horizontal suggesting equality of those in the conversation and vertical suggesting difference in their epistemic perspectives. What is required in the global justice debate in general and in epistemic justice in particular, is an ideology that is not ethnically and which encourages bridge-building like conversationalism (Chimakonam 2017: 132). In a related spirit, Yasmeen Arif also challenges us to understand how subject positions 'that appear in this planetary field claim the potential of enunciatory privilege by moving beyond the identity constraints that classificatory systems in linear theory bestow' (Arif 2015; 54; see also Beteille 2013; Das & Randeria 2014; Mohanty 1989).

The project of planetary conversations is a project of cultivating simultaneously manifold paths of autonomies and dances of interconnections and interpenetrations across borders. In this context, Gurminder K. Bhambra's critique of Hussein and Farid Alatas' projects of autonomous sociologies is helpful (Bhambra 2014). Bhambra finds that there is little scope for deep learning across borders in this project of autonomous sociologies. In this context, what Bhambra writes deserves our careful consideration:

The autonomous traditions approach reifies thinking and thought as endogenous aspects of defined and separate civilizations where nothing is necessarily to be learned from others. The implication is rather that the autonomous traditions would simply co-exist, with each tradition generating knowledge within and for its own domain. While S.H. Alatas believes that other regions could not be 'isolated from interests in the West' [..], there is no

recognition of, or concern, for dialogue *among* regions. The model of global sociology being posited here is of creative, autonomous regional satellites orbiting the West where all satellites need to refer to the West but it is no requirement to refer to them, or they to each other. The only injunction for the creation of a global sociology is an additive one, where the knowledge produced by the autonomous traditions would cumulatively contribute to the 'growth of a genuine autonomous tradition throughout the world' (Alatas, S.H. 21). Global sociology, in this understanding, would be the consequence of the interaction between regional traditions and the West, defined in civilizational terms, without due recognition of the extensive, long-standing, entanglements between them (Bhambra 2014: 94).

4   Fred Dallmayr (1987) cultivates a mode of looking at ontology as practical ontology where ontology is not foundational and essential and does not suffer from 'ontic objectivism.' It is engaged with practical activities such as love, labor and learning. Practical ontology also has an aesthetic dimension and Wickman (2006) also argues how practical epistemology has an aesthetic dimension as in the works of thinkers such as John Dewey and Leo Vygotsky.

5   As Foucault (1986) ask us: 'What is the contemporary field of possible experience? Here it is not a question of an analytic of truth, but of what one might call an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves [..]'

6   Vattimo (2011) writes:

>   I will use ontology in a sense I take from Heidegger for whom it denotes the thought of Being in both senses, subjective and objective, of the genitive. This is different from most ontologists, who reduce ontology to a theory of objects. As for actuality, I use the term to refer to the common condition of our life at present..

Vattimo (2011: 139-140) also links ontology of actuality to a quest for charity and solidarity:

>   At the horizon line of the near future toward which we gaze, pragmatically assessing the utility of truth, there lies a more distant future that we can never really forget. Rorty alludes to this with the term solidarity, which I propose to read directly in the sense of charity, and not just as the means of achieving consensus but as an end in itself. Christian dogma teaches that *Deus Caritas est*, charity is God himself. From a Hegelian viewpoint, we may take the horizon to be that absolute spirit which never allows itself to be entirely set aside but becomes the final horizon of history that legitimates all our near-term choices.

This work and meditation of charity in ontology of actuality reminds us not about *karuna* or compassion from other paths such as Buddhism but also what Heiddgger called *Ereignis*. As Dallmayr helps us realise:

>   Far removed from *Macht* and *Machenschaft*, *Ereignis* discloses in Being an

immense and uncanny potency (beyond hard and soft power): namely, the potency to 'give,' nurture and sustain beings everywhere without coercion. The question is how the power-free potency can happen or proceed (Dallmayr 2016: 95).

Ontology of actuality as ontology of actualization and mutualisation and as part of ontological epistemology of participation creates a condition for this realisation of power-free potency, giving and generosity.

7   In his work, Piet Strydom (2013) also urges us to go beyond the opposition between realism and constructivism. In a related way, the work of Ali Mazrui presents a different variant of constructivism in which there is creative dialogue with the real. Aden Saifudeen calls Mazrui's approach postcolonial constructivism and the following note about this can be enriching to all of us concerned:

> Mazrui downplays the Europeanism of ideas, even if he also takes issues with their (sometimes presumed) universality. He Africanizes those ideas. By doing so, Mazrui offers not only an alternative reading of Africa that is fresh but also enriches the borrowed ideas by adding a new dimension to them, and without adulterating the Africanism of his perspective, in the process. [..]

Postcolonial constructivism is thus what emerges from the cross-fertilization of Mazrui's postcolonialism and his social constructivism. Postcolonial constructivism can be simply defined as an articulation of postcolonial concerns, with a social constructivist accent; it is a systematic interrogation of power and modernity. Methodologically, postcolonial constructivism represents a form of analysis which accommodates ethical considerations by integrating questions of justice, legitimacy and moral credibility into its concepts. In other words, empirical theory (observation) and value theory (moral judgment) are fused in postcolonial social constructivism (Saifudeen 2015: 5).

8   This paragraph draws upon my introduction to *Research as Realisation: Science, Spirituality and Harmony* which is the volume three in a trilogy on creative research and is dedicated, among others, to Boaventura de sousa Santos (see Giri 2017c).

9   Such imaginations as in the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin then becomes a source of inspiration for transforming the social reality of slavery.

10   Here we may take note of the way movements in literature such as magic realism interrogates a naïve realist sense of the real and creates radical possibilities (see Chandra 2009). Literary critics such as Meenakshi Mukherjee (1985: 167) tell us how in creative experimenters and novelists such as U.R. Ananthamurthy engagement with reality also brings us to its mystical and mythical dimension.

11   What de Sousa Santos here writes also deserves our careful attention: 'A destabilizing subjectivity is a subjectivity endowed with a special capacity, energy

and will to act with *clinamen*. Bearing Bloom's use of the term in mind, we might say that a destabilizing subjectivity is a poetic subjectivity (2014: 98). I am exploring the poetic dimension of action, development and human condition further in my related work on poetics of development (see Giri 2017c).

12 It may be noted here that in Vedanta and other traditions, *Maya* is not illusion but manifestation of the Real. As Coomaraswamy tells us: '[..] I understand the true and original meaning of *maya* to be *natura naturans*, as the 'means whereby' the essence is manifested' (Coomaraswamy in Moore & Coomaraswamy 1988: 239).

13 In our conventional engagement with language and reality the noun form plays a determinant role which sometimes neglect the verb dimension. As physicist and philosopher David Bohm who urges us realise the dimension of wholeness in reality tells us: '[..] the dominant form of subject-verb-object tends continually to lead to fragmentation' (Bohm 2012: 40). Bohm tells us that in some ancient languages such as Hebrew, 'the verb was in fact taken as primary. [..] Thus the root of almost words in Hebrew was a certain verbal form [..] However, in modern Hebrew, the actual usage is similar to that of English, in that the noun is in fact given a primary role in its meaning even though in formal grammar all is still built from the verb as a root' (ibid: 38). This emphasis on verb and the verbal formation of words in Hebrew that Bohm talks about finds a resonance in Sanskrit and the world view of Vedanta. As Brian Hodgkinson tells us:

> In his *Astadhyayi*, Panini tells us how words in a sentence are related grammatically to the verb. This emphasis on the verb implies that sentences essentially denote actions [..] and is keeping with the Vedantic standpoint that the world is made of processes, rather than of analogically independent things. Plato similarly believed that the world is in a state of becoming rather than being (Hodgkinson 2006: 185).

The above discussion urges us to realise how many cultures 'have developed complex improvisation verbal forms' (Sawyer 2003: 86). It also challenges us not to imprison language and reality only in the dominant noun form and it is important to realise the verb dimension of all nouns. But the verb dimension not only includes action as suggested above, it also includes meditation. Co-realisation thus involves co-realising the meditative verbs of language and reality. But here de Sousa Santos (2014) challenges us a further critical work. For de Sousa Santos, it is important to realise that our battle is over nouns as well and just making nouns verbs is not enough.

14 There are many critiques of dominant politics of knowledge around the world but one wonders whether the epistemological direct action it involves embodies *Satyagraha*. For example, we can explore if both post-colonialism and post-modernism as critique of knowledge embody Satyagraha. Similarly we can explore if the critique of knowledge coming from such scholars as Ashish Nandy and Shiv Visvanathan who present themselves as intellectual

street fighters involve a vision and practice of *Satyagraha*. Many a time their critique of science and West is self-certain and one-dimensional. As Connell writes: 'There are some troubling limits to Nandy's thought. In *The Intimate Enemy*, this cast list was almost entirely male, the only woman to play a significant role was the sneaky French woman' (Connell 2011: 190). Connell here refers to Nandy's critique of Sri Aurobindo but Connell herself does not bother even to name the woman referred to here who is called The Mother whose original name is Mira Richards who is a spiritual co-traveler of Sri Aurobindo.

We can find similar one-sidedness in the work of Ramachandra Guha. We can explore if Guha's critique of knowledge and other thinkers involves a dimension of *Satyagraha*. In Guha, one witnesses sometimes a self-confident construction of the other. For example, in his introduction to *Makers of India*, Guha (2010) justifies his exclusion of Swami Vivekanada and Sri Aurobindo from the canon of *Makers of India* on the ground, among others, that both of them seems not to have contemporary following and their following is limited to middle classes. Again such a critique raises the issue of *Satyagraha*. One wonders whether Guha cares to take part in many-sided movements of consciousness taking place around India and the world drawing inspiration from Sri Aurobindo, for example integral education movement in Odisha and the international city of Auroville. If contemporary following is a criterion of selection to be part of Guha's pantheon of makers of modern India, how does he include both Jinnha and Nehru who by his own admission have limited contemporary following in both Pakistan and India.

15 This resonates with Foucault's (2005) hermeneutics of the subject where to be a subject means to be critically reflective upon the models of individualization offered by the state.

16 It is helpful to explore further the link between my proposed path of foot working and foot-meditating hermeneutics with Heidegger's pointer to a hermeneutics of facticity. Here we J.L. Mehta's following creative interpretation of Heidegger is helpful:

> Even in his earliest lectures, long before *Being and Time*, Heidegger conceived the main task of phenomenology [as understanding] how our factual life as actually experienced hides depth which its spontaneous self-explicating activity must bring to light [..] [For Heidegger, for this] a way must be found to eliminate the baggage of traditional ontology and to interpret factual life afresh by means of a 'hermeneutics of facticity,' as Heidegger called it [..] (Mehta 2004: 239-240).

17 I explore this trigonometry of creativity in my following poem:

Three T and More

Travel, Truth and Translation

Travelling with Truth
Translating Truth in Travel
In Between the Relative and the Relational
Absolute and Approximate
Translating While Travelling
Self, Culture and Divine
Beyond the Annihilating Tyranny of the Singular
A New Trinity of Prayer
A New Multiple of *Sadhana* and Surrender
[Written at Lake Putra, Putra Jaya, Capital of Malyasia, May 15, 2015: 530 PM.]

18 Jaina tradition refers to *Anekantavada*, multiple perspectives of Truth. Building on this, I talk about *Anekantapatha*, multiple paths of Truth.

19 As Molz and Edwards (2017: 84) write:

[..] an integral meta-hermeneutics has much to offer in studying different interpretive frameworks from a meta-perspective. Traditionally, this has been the territory of all those, especially postmodern approaches that took an 'interpretive turn' towards treating the task of explanation and understanding as a function of epistemology rather than ontology, including the psychological, sociological, socio-historical, economic and geopolitical conditions, contexts, positions and interests of the researcher and respective communities. However, rather than simply focusing on the deconstructive analysis of epistemologies an integral meta-hermeneutics would also move on towards the constructive task of finding connections and developing integrative frameworks for the plurality of interpretive positions.

20 Multi-*topial* hermeneutics based upon for example the idea of hermeneutics in the Vedas calls self-sacrifice but sacrifice here is self-sacrifice, sacrifice of one's ego and the will to power, rather than sacrificing the meaning of others (see Murthy 1993). Transpositional movements help us in one's transformation of ego. We need to explore the links between self-sacrifice, renunciation and hermeneutics.

21 Speaking of meditation, we should not forget that meditation is not just a practice of repetition and reproduction of rites but is an alternative to it. As K. Satchidananda Murthy tells us about Shankara's approach to meditation:

In his *Bhasya* on *Brahadarnyaka*, Sankara makes it clear that meditation is not part of a rite, but an alternative to it. It produces a greater result than mere ritual (Murthy 1993: 96).

22 Here I draw inspiration from the work of my friend Marcus Bussey who in his essay, 'Intuition, Rationality and Imagination' writes:

[..] Intuition is a form of reasoning based upon the capacity to connect the dots in ways that disrupt the present and allow for it to become remarkable. Deleuze coined the term transcendental empiricism as he sought to make sense of the patterns and ruptures that challenge all readings of culture

and the conceptual experiments undertaken by cultural agents. I want to emphasize that intuition is a cultural tool—it is shaped by our experience of culture and can be harnessed when we are considering questions that lie beyond the contemporary horizon of the sensible and rational (Bussey 2015: 2).

23   Buddha as Bhikkhu walked with a bowl in his hand. But there was no plough in his hand. We now need a new modality of Bhikkhu which goes beyond this division of hand and head.

24   Jose Marti writes about his poems in his essay, 'My Poetry,' which has implications for cultivating an alternative poetic epistemology and ontology:

These are my poems. They are what they are. I have not borrowed them from any one. As long as I could not lock up my visions whole, and in a form worthy of them, I allowed them to fly. Oh, how many golden friends have returned! But poetry has its honesty, and I have always wanted to be honest (Marti 1999: 251).

25   *Upanishad* means to seat near by and discuss.

26   de Sousa Santos terms it the problem of strong questions and weak answers in the dominant fields of life and epistemology. Here he argues that the presence of religion and spirituality in the contemporary field raises a strong question to which 'Western critical tradition' has only a weak answer (de Sousa Santos 2014: 22). But reading this I am inspired to go beyond the logic of question and answers as familiar ways of responding and cultivate these open ways of mutual explorations and co-realisation.

27   As M.P. Pandit, a great scholar of *Tantra* and follower of Sri Aurobindo, writes: 'Unlike the Vedas [..] the *Tantras* [take] pride [in the fact that] their teaching is open to the Shudras' (Pandit 2010-2011: 52).

28   Here we can walk and meditate with Arjun Appadurai's engagement with future in his *The Future as a Cultural Fact* (Appadurai 2013). Appadurai here could undertake a far deeper cross-cultural interrogation of the epistemology of the present as well as disciplines of modernity. Future as a cultural fact also could be far more hermeneutic facilitated by *multi-topial* hermeneutics suggested in this essay which also resonates with some of the movements that activists of his transnational movements make across borders. It is part of an ethics of possibility as Appadurai aruges but this also has an aesthetic and spiritual dimension which is understandably little explored in Appadurai even in his related reflection on capacity to aspire. We can here walk and meditate simultaneously with de Sousa Santos and Appadurai and make them part of the needed emergent movement of planetary conversations and planetary realisations going beyond the limits of Euro-American epistemology in deeper and foundational ways.

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