

**ITINERANT CURRICULUM THEORY: FULFILLING THE  
ETHOS OF THE CARNATION REVOLUTION<sup>1/2</sup>**

**TEORIA DO CURRÍCULO ITINERANTE: CUMPRINDO O ETHOS DA  
REVOLUÇÃO DOS CRAVOS**

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**Abstract**

Five decades after April, where do we find ourselves as pedagogues and curriculum theorists? What progress has been made, and what challenges still lie ahead? A question of such magnitude will not fit in an essay of this nature. Aware of this obstacle, this article crafts a broad and varied picture of achievements and setbacks that characterized education post-April 25th. The essay focuses on emblematic epistemological cathartics between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic traditions and within the latter that have been unable to devitalize the field's historical epistemicidal nerve - maculating the democratic spirit of education, curriculum, and teacher preparation programs. The article describes how these shakeups trigger a theoretical imparity and involution in the field, intimately related to some of the most egregious social challenges the nation is facing - immigration, climate change, poverty, and inequality, among others. The essay ends by advocating an itinerant curricular theory as a pedagogical proposal that responds to humanity's diversity and epistemological differences.

**Keywords:** Itinerant Curriculum Theory, Curriculum Epistemicide, Curriculum Involution, Eugenics, Theorycide,

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**Resumo**

Cinco décadas depois de abril, em que ponto nos encontramos enquanto pedagogos e teóricos do currículo? Que progressos foram feitos e que desafios temos ainda pela frente? Uma questão desta magnitude não cabe num ensaio desta natureza. Consciente

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deste obstáculo, este artigo traça um quadro amplo e variado das conquistas e dos retrocessos que caracterizaram a educação pós-25 de abril. O ensaio centra-se em catárticas epistemológicas emblemáticas entre tradições hegemónicas e contra-hegemónicas e dentro destas últimas que não conseguiram desvitalizar o nervo epistemicida histórico do campo - maculando o espírito democrático da educação, do currículo e dos programas de preparação de professores. O artigo descreve como estes abalos desencadeiam uma imparidade e involução teóricas no campo, intimamente relacionadas com alguns dos desafios sociais mais flagrantes que a nação enfrenta - imigração, alterações climáticas, pobreza e desigualdade, entre outros. O ensaio termina com a defesa de uma teoria curricular itinerante como proposta pedagógica que responda à diversidade e às diferenças epistemológicas da humanidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Teoria do Currículo Itinerante, Epistemicídio Curricular, Involução Curricular, Eugenia, Teoricídio,

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*O futuro ainda demora muito?*

*(Nóvoa, 2005)<sup>3</sup>*

### **'... and there is the state the country has reached'**

Five decades after the April Revolution, Portugal grapples with some of the most dramatic symptoms of capitalism's current third hegemonic phase (Arrighi, 2005) that frames what has been defined as late coloniality – modernity (Quijano, 1991; Dussel, 1995; Mignolo, 2008). The signs are highly diverse - however interrelated - and of tremendous complexity, calling into question the country's long much-proclaimed progressive humanist tradition, ranging from successive economic crises, IMF austerity take overs and draconian policies, the inability to generate sustainable economic growth and development, an anemic labor market, the concurrent emergence of a substantive new class, 'the precariat' with a lumpenproletariat flavor, lack of skilled labor, impoverished public services with lack of teachers, hospital emergency rooms closed, a clogged judicial system affecting the 'have nots,' massive migration waves - the quasi exodus of qualified young people, and uncontrolled immigration and asylum seekers - population aging, depopulation of vast areas of the country's interior, the rise of xenophobic and eugenic impulses, the construction of the abject 'Other' through the fear of the abrupt growing number of communities not related to the Judeo-Christian tradition, Mosques already emerging in the interior of the country, sexual scandals flooding the Catholic church, an apparent crisis of Catholic vocation with seminaries

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<sup>3</sup> *Is the future still a long way off?*

being put up for sale, an increasingly footprint of a tabloid media, a broken media, the powerful visibility of identity and environmental movements, corruption at various levels - from the financial system to the political hemisphere - which some feared to be endemic, the declining level of credibility of the political society, echoing some of the viperous historical criticism of figures such as Eça de Queiroz and Ramalho Urtingão,<sup>4</sup> and as if that were not enough, the violent resurgence of a very muscular right which by its 'own democratic right' legitimately won 50 seats in parliament. A 'political hemisphere' that has always known how to parsimoniously coexist democratically with solid and legit parliamentary impulses from an acute Left now reveals a blatant ineptitude and inability to deal with this new Right wave with an unhesitant radical tendency. Adapting what Hannah Arendt (2004, p. 11) taught us, one would argue that Portuguese people 'reveal an inability to live in the society they created and to understand its meaning.' While the European Union and subsequent Euro membership offered another country to the world and other worlds to the country, it also exposed certain social sagas. It aggravated the discrepancies between the nation and the rest of the member states. The current colors of the nation are bizarre.

The so-called 'April heroes' – i.e., Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, Melo Antunes, Vasco Gonçalves, Salgueiro Maia, Vasco Loureço, and others - would never have imagined it possible that after five decades - of 'freedom and democracy' - the country would find itself plummeting in an implacable historical regression. The old mythical phrase of Captain Maia – 'there are different forms of state; there is the socialist state; there is the communist state; there is the capitalist state, and there is the state that the country has reached' - uttered when he led his military column towards the *Quartel do Carmo*, in Lisbon to overthrow Marcelo Caetano makes a resounding echo in current Portuguese society, that is struggling to come to grips with this 'unexpected' turn of events.

It would, however, be imprudent not to highlight some remarkable democratic advances and gains. There is an undeniable consolidated democratic citizenship that has been sculpted daily over five decades. From education through health care and judicial systems, labor laws, unionism, and housing, the country has experienced enormous democratic attainments. Among them, one underlines the massification of education; free and compulsory elementary, middle, and secondary education for all; drastic reduction in illiteracy rates; new democratic forms of leadership and administration at district and school levels; increasing number of students in schools and universities; the emergence of new and innovative public and private schools and universities; countless state-funded graduate student fellowships that allowed innumerable students to proceed their doctoral studies in international top-notch academic institutions; the emergence of robust Institutes, Schools of Education, and Research Centers at University and Polytechnic levels; the emergence of curriculum as an autonomous field of studies; and the consolidation of education as a scientific field with a notable scholarship and research production in its various domains, from psychology, philosophy, sociology, educational and curriculum policies, leadership and management, as well as teacher education, evaluation and supervision, and the re-establishment of vocational

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<sup>4</sup> Works such as *As Farpas* are a faithful image of much of what the country is experiencing today.

educational system. Also, it is essential not to forget the countless reform processes that saturated education throughout the democratic consulate. Education, indeed, has become 'massified.' Teaching in the hands of the all-powerful teacher gradually faded and gave way, and the praxis of *comunidade educativa* gained ground. Parents' associations and municipalities gained a foothold in the educational and pedagogical processes and procedures. The praxis of democratic educational leadership and management was naturally slowly established. The State saw education as the engine consolidating the ethos of a democratic society. Education was not just in the cockpit but in the driver's seat, steering the economic and cultural development of the neonatal democratic nation.

Undoubtedly, today's country is not the same as it was in April 1975. However, is it better? The patient reader will ask. If forced to answer, I would promptly point to Slavoj Žižek's (2019; 2024) sublime irony and admit, 'Yes, please.' Hand in hand with António Nóvoa, I would 'evidently' emphasize "that today's school is infinitely better than yesterdays. It is more open, more intelligent, and more sensitive to differences. However, it is not enough. Pedagogically, schools are confined within the boundaries of modernity" (Nóvoa, 2005, p. 17). However, I wonder if this is a vital question. Let me continue my train of thought. The fact that most of these achievements either crumbled or could not avoid or at least mitigate society's social havoc completely invalidates the question's relevance. It justifies having taken refuge in Žižek's heavenly sardonicism. Crafting on Ernest Hemingway's (2013) remarkable *The Sun Also Rises*, I would argue that some accomplishments crumbled in "two ways: gradually and then suddenly." They have been disintegrating over these last five decades. Thus, despite outstanding endeavours, five decades later, the nation and education, in so many aspects, could be described as a 'Freudian chamber of horrors' (Jal, 2023; Ambedkar, 2016).

As I pencil this piece, I noticed that the government recognizes a structural issue in the educational system. Although this is a revealing statement and an act of intellectual honesty, it is alarming that a system that has been in constant reform since the dawn of democracy has failed to reform itself. For decades, reform without change saturated the educational republic, interpellated policymakers and educators, and commonsensically articulated and re-articulated the pedagogical praxis (Hall, 1997) and teachers' daily lives. As Dwayne Huebner (1966) teaches us, 'the problem with education is 'not change,' but precisely the lack of change, given that so much has been done to change, and yet nothing has changed.'

Observable evidence crushes us mercilessly. Hundreds of thousands of students remain without teachers.<sup>5</sup> The government kicked around 20 million Euros of incentives, whether to retain or attract new teachers, but it has yet to magnetize the social fabric as expected. Many schools are falling apart, and the number of deferred maintenance

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<sup>5</sup>When the new social democratic government took office, there were around 100,000 students with no teachers. More recent data from the National Federation of Teachers - FENPROF- indicate that a month after the beginning of the current school year, circa 34.0000 students are without a teacher for at least one subject. See Viana, Carla (2024) 'Um mês após o início das aulas, cerca de 34 mil alunos estão sem professor a pelo menos uma disciplina.' *Público*, 11 Outubro.

facilities remains a mystery conveniently swept under the carpets—despite millions burned associated with Parque Escolar.<sup>6</sup> Violent and criminal behaviour in schools rises alarmingly.<sup>7</sup> Almighty heralds of ‘artificial intelligence’ pop up everywhere, ignoring a school system with a deficient and, in many cases, broken electronic apparatus. Public schools suffer from depleted material conditions. Little or no attention has been given to students with special needs. Band-aid approaches to address demographic challenges in classrooms with ‘retention rates among students with an immigrant background being much higher than those of their national peers.’<sup>8</sup> A toxic and degrading professional environment has been established based on a culture of sharp competition and not collaboration among peers. The career is not attractive, and the processes and procedures for promotion are pretty outrageous. An obscene number of teachers are reaching retirement age—an issue that successive governments have not adequately addressed for decades. For years, teachers saw their salaries frozen to face the austerity challenges imposed by the IMF. The deskilling of teachers has become routine. The countless curriculum and teacher education reforms have proven - unsurprisingly for some experts - to be inadequate and to have a glaring lack of social relevance for a country facing drastic demographic changes. Meanwhile, the education system desperately struggles to keep up with PISA demands. The results blinded the system’s evaluation and fell into the complex swamp of comparing the incomparable - i.e., public schools with private schools. Five decades later, curriculum reforms are limited to the form and not to the content (Paraskeva, 2007). The reinstated vocational education that had been dismantled at the beginning of the democratic nation slipped into a Frankensteinian educational yarn, supported by an equally Frankensteinian teacher force and education and managed and led by a Frankensteinian leadership model. The tragedy crosses borders. Teaching the Portuguese language and culture abroad is a twilight zone, a discrete cartelized affair - a scandalous and promiscuous pedagogical aberration of epic proportions. Education has become divorced from pedagogy. While the former could be defined as the ‘son of a lesser God,’ the latter constitutes a restricted ‘republic within the republic.’ Moreover, education continues to turn its back on the economy; it is hard to unpack who at the *Conselho Nacional de Educação*<sup>9</sup> is tearing up important avenues between education and the economy. Education is also a part of the political economy.

In higher education, the colours are bizarre as well. Universities are in financial agony; if they were private institutions, the shareholders would have pulled the plug long ago. It is not even worth discussing the aberration that the foundations associated with Universities constitute. The paradise promised by the couriers of Bologna – as

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<sup>6</sup> A state entity with the mission of ‘planning, managing, developing and executing the modernization and maintenance program for the public network of secondary schools and others assigned to the Ministry of Education.’ (see <https://www.gov.pt/entidades/parque-escolar-e.p.e>)

<sup>7</sup> Martins Ângela Maria & Alves, Mariana Gaio (2019) Conflicts at public schools in Portugal: analysis of a government program. *Ensaio: aval. pol. públ. Educ.*, 27 (102), pp. 9-23; Also, see Barroso, Ricardo (2023) ‘68% dos adolescentes portugueses foram vítimas de comportamentos agressivos em contexto escolar’ Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD); Matos, Margarida et al (2009) *Violência entre pares no contexto escolar em Portugal, nos últimos 10 anos*. Santarém: Instituto Politécnico de Santarém, Escola Superior de Educação.

<sup>8</sup> See Moreira, Cristina Faria (2024) ‘Alunos com pais estrangeiros chumbam três vezes mais do que os colegas de origem portuguesa.’ *Público*, 13 Outubro.

<sup>9</sup> *National Education Council*

anticipated - has proven to be fallacious in many respects (Paraskeva, 2009). Universities remain endogamic – reproducing intellectual consanguinity – protected by a bunker leadership and management culture that is quite peculiar and only ‘open’ to an upper caste of Illuminati of Academicus Lusitanus. I do not recall seeing a foreign academic in the rectorate of a Portuguese University. The faculty career in academia remains perverse, with sadistic refinements, profoundly bigoted, and brutally violent - an overt attack on human rights. The once robust and vibrant Institutes and Schools of Education – the University of Minho, for example, was a world pioneer with two autonomous Institutes of Education - are dwindling miserably. In survival mode for decades, the faculty has exhausted and surpassed creativity and innovation’s physical and metaphysical limits. As higher education greatly influences other levels of education (Pires, 1987), this crisis should be a cause for concern

Alarmingly, as Ruben Gaztabimde-Fernandez (2022) adverts, before such social collapse, one witnessed a field utterly saturated with a culture of ‘pretending not to know.’ Maria Filomena Monica (2011) did not mince her words, arguing that under the democratic tenure, “the [government]<sup>10</sup> gave parents the belief that if their children graduated, they would have a glorious future. Humble people convinced themselves this was true and made unimaginable sacrifices to send their children to university. In the end, many of them found that they only found work, if at all, in call centers. (Monica, 2011, pp., 561 – 562). Monica’s take insightfully transplanted the famous Münch’s scream into breathtaking prose. The utopia of a just tomorrow crafted by the revolution is questioned, and one wonders “if the future is still a long way off.” (Nóvoa, 2005, p. 17). Five decades after the Carnation Revolution, we do not have an education that embodies the promises of such a radical turn. Alternatively, as some would say, the Carnation Revolution did not give rise to a carnation education, curriculum, and pedagogy. Franz Kafka was not wrong when he stressed that the utopia of ‘every revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy.’ Education, indeed, has failed the nation miserably—obviously for a multitude of reasons. One of those reasons, I argue, was that it clung to a mythomaniacal logic that had ‘mythomaniacally’ saturated curriculum theory and development. I will return to this issue later.

An opposite question to the one I asked previously now naturally arises – demanded even by the more inattentive reader. So, is the country in a worse situation? Again, I have to take shelter in Žižek’s (2019; 2024) exalted sarcasm, and with him, I will, again, say without hesitation, ‘Yes, please.’ In doing so, I ‘stick with my guns’ and reiterate that I remain uncertain if this question is vital. I see that both questions are profoundly useless. They cancel each other out - in other words, the fact that there are certain democratic gains casts a shadow over the setbacks that have been observed, and the fact that there are setbacks overshadows the democratic gains that have been achieved. Both questions prevent us from going to the core of the problem. Along with my tolerant reader, let us try another path, as what matters is to ‘exfoliate’ (Gil, 2018) and critically grasp – the best we can - how we ended up in such a deplorable stage and if, why, where, and how we failed as pedagogues and curriculum theorists. What did we miss? Who

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<sup>10</sup> Parenthesis mine.

missed? How did the country and education get to this stage?? Who benefits from such social malaises? Such a social and educational ordeal is not happening innocently. If there is a structural problem within the social apparatuses—as has been officially assumed—then one must recognize a structural problem in our democracy to save it. No democracy is functional without or with limping – socialist/social - democratic social apparatuses.<sup>11</sup>

A social crisis of this magnitude is not related to just one factor but to a combination of complex issues that are nevertheless related. In other spaces, I have tried to answer these questions by focusing on two vectors that have significantly contributed to the challenges we have faced as pedagogues: the neoliberal triumphalist impulses and the epistemically nature of the epistemological cathartics between dominant and counter-dominant traditions and within the counter-dominant epistemological circles - particularly those that I have defined as a radical critical curriculum river that frames the generation of utopia. (Paraskeva, 2023; 2021; 2022; 2018). In other contexts (Paraskeva, 2021; 2018), I have unpacked the challenges placed by the impact of neoliberal policies in education and understand ‘where and why’ critical approaches have experienced puzzling setbacks; in this essay, I will focus on some of the epistemological wrangles and their impact in our field.

### **Epistemological cathartics**

The struggles between ‘humanists, developmentalists, social efficientists, and social meliorists’ right at the emergence of the field during the end of the nineteenth century (Kliebard, 1995; Paraskeva, 2007) speak volumes about what I have defined as the field’s original sin – eugenics (Paraskeva, 2023) – and the concomitantly epistemicidal nature of the curriculum epistemological purges (Paraskeva, 2011; 2018). Such a nature is also quite palatable in later – and more contemporary – battles between conservative curriculum traditions and the more radical, critical, and post-critical impulses. While the battles between such movements were violent, the conflicts within the counter-hegemonic nucleus were brutal. Voices ‘from within,’ while praising some advances made by the critical matrix championed by the works of Michael Apple (1979), Henry Giroux (1981), Peter McLaren (1989), Cockburn and Blackburn (1970), and others – namely, ‘education as political,’ a ‘site of power struggles’ and as a ‘social construction’ – they also saw such approaches as “historically backward-looking and ideologically reactionary” (Wexler, 1987, p. 127), providing a “functionalist approach and have neglected crucial empirical investigations” (Liston, 1988, p. 15). Critical perspectives, dissent waves argue, were silent against relations of patriarchy permeating educational apparatuses (Gore, 1992; Walkerdine, 1992) and “surrounded by repressive myths that

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<sup>11</sup> It would be interesting to see what progressive Christian existentialist intellectuals like Charles Péguy and Emmanuel Mounier would craft before the social pandemonium we face today. See Péguy, Charles (2001). *Temporal and Eternal*. New York: Liberty Fund INC; Mounier, E. (1938). *Personalism*. New York: Longmans.

perpetuate relations of domination; [they]<sup>12</sup> did not ‘empower and did not emancipate.’” (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 298).

My attentive reader anticipated what I was about to do and asked me to clarify the relationship between these theoretical metamorphoses of the field on the other side of the Atlantic and the struggle for the curriculum field on this side, precisely in Portugal. The nexus is much more evident than it might seem at first glance. The truth is that what could be defined as the curriculum field in Portugal, primarily since the 90s, and with very few exceptions, was profoundly driven by American and Anglo-Saxon waves.<sup>13</sup> Most curriculum theory and development were labored under and within the limits of such an epistemological matrix. Indeed, some of the theoretical larvae of countless American-Anglo-Saxon epistemological battles crossed the Ocean.

One of the great examples of the clashes between dominant and counter-dominant impulses was triggered by Nuno Crato’s devastating critique of the chaotic state of public education. In his terms, the field was highjacked by a spurious logic, a cult of darkness framed through an obscure, odd, and obtuse linguistic thesaurus that he called ‘*eduquês*.’ Crato, a trained mathematician, unleashed a ruthless critique of education’s romantic and empty language, an education based on a pseudo-pedagogy impregnated with dangerous commonplaces and clichés hiding nefarious ideological cults. He brutally targeted progressive movements and tendencies, blaming the educational field for the disastrous state of education. The democratic State under such *laissez faire laissez passer* pedagogy was irreversible compromised. Crato’s take echoed some of the arguments one could flag, for example, in particular conservative positions in the U.S. - namely, Admiral Hyman Rickover (1959), E.D. Hirsh Jr’s (1999), Tony Bennett (1994), Rudolph Flesh (1955), Cox and Dyson (1969) - challenging the state of public education. Interestingly, some of his incursions also jazz with certain impulses raised by Diane Ravitch (2000).

Another great clash erupted earlier, with a ferociously articulated critique of the so-called *Filhos de Rousseau*<sup>14</sup> that mainly opposed Monica, Steven Stoer, and António Magalhães. Contrary to ‘Crato’s *Eduquês*,’ Monica, Stoer, and Magalhães exemplified a clash more aligned at the core of the counter-dominant agora.<sup>15</sup> This dispute unfolded some visible wounds that would later be brought to light in Crato’s ‘*eduquês*.’<sup>16</sup> Although they have slightly different contours, the fact is that they touched on common points

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<sup>12</sup> Parenthesis mine.

<sup>13</sup> It goes without saying there were influences from other schools of thought. The Francophone school also influenced many Portuguese pedagogues and avenues of thought – let us not forget the importance of intellectuals such as Albano Estrela and Teresa Estrela. Some authors drew from the Francophone and Anglo-Saxon American schools, such as António Nóvoa. But the truth is that the curriculum field in the country had a solid Anglo-Saxon-American influence. Even the connections and influences built and received from currents more situated in Spain and Latin America had an Anglo-Saxon American tendency since these currents were also heavily influenced by various Anglo-Saxon American movements.

<sup>14</sup> *Children of Rosseau*.

<sup>15</sup> Our field has a problematic tendency to label the ‘other’ – those who dissent from our views - always in a dysphoric tone. It would always be, in my opinion, rashness to label Maria Filomena Monica’s approach as palely conservative.

<sup>16</sup> It is crucial to highlight that the educational and curriculum debates framing the Portuguese field cannot be reduced to such wrangles. I just brought to the table two of the most fractural clashes that emblematically grasp the state of the field.



verified on the other side of the Atlantic. Education, Monica (1997, p. 59) claims, has been a victim of progressive trends “from structuralism to postmodernism, from psychoanalysis to Marxism, from deconstructionism to feminism” (p. 59).

In Monica’s (1997, p. 59) terms, “left-wing pedagogues take refuge in a rhetorical limbo, in which nothing has meaning.” Contemporary pedagogy hurts the oppressed by “valuing popular language, without recognizing the limits of its vocabulary, thus confining the children of the poor in the filthy world into which they were born.” (Monica, 1997, p. 60). She believes “the main person responsible for this disaster is undoubtedly Rousseau.” Her take did not go unchallenged.

Stoer and Magalhães (1998) bring sociological studies (Baudelot & Estabelet, 1998) to the fore to counter the ‘thesis of the educational crisis.’ They attack the approaches led by Monica (2011) as simplistic, biased, elitist, and epistemologically fragile that brush under the rug the ills of almost five decades of dictatorship. They (1998, pp. 20-21) argue that Monica and her followers erroneously neglected that “a massified school, that is, a school for everyone, means breaking with the instrumentality of the ‘old’ elitist school based on a “stale academy that despises both pedagogy and its people.” With all the defects that the democratic school had - and it had many - it was necessary, they (1998) claim, to recognize its achievements and contextualize its challenges within the complex scope of the consequences created by five decades of brutal authoritarianism that offered shameful percentages of illiteracy to its people.

One can identify exciting elements in every side of such epistemological earthquakes. For example, all of them acknowledge that public education faces serious challenges. None of them vividly counter fundamental democratic principles, nor do they deny public education as ‘the’ great equalizer. However, to say that the challenges of public education are due to the dominance of progressive Rousseauian pedagogies is an exaggeration. A similar tendency is noticeable on the other side of the Atlantic. Hirsh Jr. (1999) and Ravitch (2000) also unleash a devastating critique of the educational system dominated by Freirean pedagogies – which is inaccurate. In opposition, Stoer and Magalhães (1998) perspectives find a parallel in some arguments edified on the other side of the Atlantic by intellectuals such as Cockburn and Blackburn (1970), Apple (1979), Giroux (1981), and others who place the challenges fundamentally as a consequence of the brutality of the capitalist system, which is also reductive and inaccurate.

João Formosinho’s (1988) seminal thesis – currículo uniforme pronto a vestir de tamanho único – constitute a clear checkmate to both proclamations. In what is arguably the germinal piece of the field, he (1998) crafts the true epistemological colors of the dominant curriculum trends that are the antipodes of what Rousseau advocated. Odd as it might be, such is the curriculum matrix groomed and protected under the democratic constitution. We are before two ‘irreconcilable’ proclamations.

Despite their geographical and epistemological disparity, it is possible to establish a parallel between all these perspectives. There are many points of convergence and common threads between the quarrels on this side and the other side of the Atlantic. The richness of some theoretical angles of these battles calls for serious

and in-depth investigation. One of the most glaring commonalities – and quite problematic – I would highlight in such epistemological purges within and beyond this side of the Atlantic is the epistemological consanguinity that frames such wrangles, aggravating our field’s epistemicidal nature.

### **An Exhausted Epistemological Consanguinity**

Overt epistemological consanguinity contaminates curriculum epistemological cathartics. Among the various negative aspects, I highlight two as they structure the thesis substantiating this essay. Firstly, dominant and counter-hegemonic traditions confined their epistemological struggles through and within the limits established historically by the modern Western Eurocentric reason. This inability to admit epistemological validity beyond Eurocentric reason tarnished the field’s dominant reasons; not only could they not recognize the existence of endless different and diverse epistemes beyond the Eurocentric platform, but they also failed to realize that they were working on an exhausted, worn-out reason that, despite having brought about significant advances for humanity, by itself, was no longer capable of responding to the challenges that societies and humanity in general faced, so many of them brought about precisely by such diminish reason. Dominant and counter-dominant curriculum logic labored on modernity’s reason, which was divisive and abyssal (Santos, 2007), a misleading dream (Harding, 2008), depleted and expired (Eagleton, 2003; Jameson, 2016); a reason with worn-out epistemological categories, and whose solutions are part of the problem and never its solution (Rasco, 2021). The reason that is criticizable and criticized cannot itself emancipate (Santos, 2018), or as Lorde (2007) taught us, ‘the master tool cannot dismantle the master’s house.’

Hence, while the former openly subscribes to the epistemicidal nature of education and the curriculum, the latter, by operating within the same epistemicidal matrix, sharpened the epistemicidal nature of education and the curriculum. The fight against epistemicide, led by counter-hegemonic impulses, inadvertently generated a reversive epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2018). Imbued with a reason as epistemicidal as the dominant reason, the counter-hegemonic movements also worked in a selective, divisive, derivative epistemological matrix as abyssal as the modern Western Eurocentric reason – revealing a notorious inability to avoid the construction of a mythomaniac curriculum theory and development (Paraskeva, 2024; 2023; 2022; 2021; 2018). A theory built based on a derivative; limited matrix is permanently incapable of portraying the aspects of reality silenced by such a matrix. It is a theory generated in a diffuse real(ity). It is not a theory of ‘truth’ but of a ‘particular dominant reason.’ It is an imparity theory, a limping theory incapable of provoking any sustainable reform since it was oblivious that it was grasping reality derivatively (Paraskeva, 2024; 2023; 2022; 2021; 2018; 2016). Any social theory based on an epistemological catalectic reason can only promote a catalectic curriculum incapable of responding to the tremendous demographic challenges driven by uncontrolled migratory waves and environmental imbalances. With the drastic demographic change, societies are flooded and irradiated with new and diverse epistemological perspectives – other ways of reading the ‘wor(l)d’ – which escapes to the

current curriculum dominant and counter-dominant traditions. Another educational and curricular theory is needed, which is an expression of such epistemological irradiation.

Secondly, dominant and counter-dominant movements naturally expose themselves to criticism from a more anticolonial angle and decolonial inclination. They got lost in the false monumentality of Eurocentric reason (Santos, 2018), which completely obscured their interpretation of reality and possible paths for its transformation. They never bothered to question the possibility of other reasons, logic, and forms of knowledge and science. Betrayed in such a limited matrix, they erroneously perceived reality “as a totality and, as such, proposed a total alternative to the one that exists” (Santos, 1999, p. 201), an alternative that could only be possible through Eurocentric reason, viewed as the unique and legit. They were oblivious that “there is no single principle of social transformation and even those who continue to believe in a future socialist see it as a possible future in competition with alternative futures. There are no unique historical agents or a unique form of domination” (Santos, 1999, p. 202). Moreover, they did not pay close attention that many of the crucial concepts “no longer have the centrality they once enjoyed or were internally so reworked and nuanced that they lost much of their critical strength” (Santos, 1999, p. 200). The battle between the dominant positivist impulses and counter-dominant critical traditions occurs on the same Eurocentric epistemological ring, fought with the same tools provided by the Eurocentric thesaurus, triggering a theoretical impasse.

### **Theoretical Stroke**

The inability to perceive the world and its challenges beyond the limits of the Eurocentric epistemological matrix created a severe stroke within the field’s theoretical blood vessels; it fueled what I would call, drawing from Gil (2009), a ‘curriculum involution.’ Neither the dominant nor the counter-dominant traditions were able to claim complete victory; thus, we keep experiencing an increasing void between, on the one hand, the absence of the consolidation of a fully segregated curriculum – we do have countless examples of counter-dominant victories – and, on the other hand, the entire absence of the emergence of the new human being. And, within such an impasse, the epistemicide and the reversive epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016; 2018; 2021a; 2022c; 2023a; 2024). A void is defined by a paradox: neither the ‘old human being’ died, nor the ‘creation’ of the new human being was fully materialized. Recapturing Nóvoa’s (2005, p. 17) analytic matrix, “while we sense the end of the historical cycle of modernity, we have been unable to follow the path of contemporaneity.” Crafting on Gil’s (2009) framework, these battles represented no ‘real’ tragedy as they were stripped of their tragic dimension. Instead, a curriculum involution occurred, which, in too many ways, points to a ‘regression.’<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It goes without saying that certain achievements cannot be denied - *Escola da Ponte* project (Pacheco & Pacheco, 2018) and the adult and community education models, such as the *Universidade Túlio Espanca* and the *Escola*

Indeed, no transformation occurred. The improvement drove into regression. Authorized voices in the supervision of teaching practices testify to the difficulties in breaking away from regulatory models of knowledge towards more emancipatory paths. (Vieira & Moreira, 2011) Such involution triggered a promoted a kind of theoretical coup d'état, an attack on the space and time of theory, a theoretical mope, a theorycide, paving the way for a dangerous anti-intellectual intellectualism one of the enzymes of the de-skilling of educators. Intellectualism is becoming a rare collectible in school settings (Paraskeva, 2013). The incapacity to overcome such involution is evidence of curriculum's *capitis diminutiu*, which triggers its theoretical hypertrophy.

What is the best way(s) to address the theoretical hypertrophy? – the reader asks. How do we challenge the curriculum epistemicides? How do we examine the role of curriculum theory in such epistemicide? Such questions are optional for an easy answer. Without any intention of providing a recipe, I dare to share three possible paths, each of which, I admit, is highly complex – as it implies a radically different education, curriculum, and teacher preparation “to respond to the increasing uncertainties and complexities of teaching in the twenty-first century” (Flores, 2016, p. 196). We “need new concepts of education [since] the school model, as we know it, no longer works” (Nóvoa, 2015, n.p.). Firstly, there is the need for a profound collective awareness, particularly for educators as a class, that it is no longer possible to continue existing within the same political register that guides education. One ‘cannot change society if one is incapable of changing mentalities’ (Nkrumah, 1964).

Secondly, we must cease how we have historically produced curriculum theory, particularly critical curriculum theory. How we have been conceiving ‘criticism’ has to die. That is – and following Saramago’s (2009) metaphor that ‘there is no future as the following day, no one dies,’ - the divisive way in which we have been working on critical theory - obliterating the recognition of other epistemological perspectives beyond the Eurocentric matrix - has to die. This is not the end of critical theories and pedagogies. It is, however, the end of how we have labored critical and post-critical terrains.

Thirdly, connected with the formers, it is vital to have another educational and curriculum theory and research that walks away from its imparity nature and can respond to the significant challenges humanity is facing, the most complex of which is the need for recognition and coexistence of the world’s infinite and diverse epistemologies. We need theoretical work responding to the tremendous challenges facing humanity and the country – i.e., immigration and ecological disasters. We need a curriculum theory that echoes the ethos of the Carnation Revolution and constitutes a beacon of democratic values. We need a people’s theory - through an everyday curriculum (Oliveira, 2017).

## **Towards a Carnation Theory**

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*Comunitária de Suão* (Nico, 2021). However, these achievements never imposed themselves as hegemonic and could not provoke a revolutionary traction on a full scale in the educational system.

As I have relentlessly argued in other contexts (Paraskeva, 2024; 2023a; 2022c; 2022d; 2021b; 2018; 2016), the best way to unblock such curriculum theoretical ‘involution’ and ‘impairment’ is to deterritorialize curriculum theory, which implies a non-derivative commitment to fight for a subversively transgressive platform, one that pushes research to a “level of instability, not stability, generating concepts also, in itself, unstable” (O’Brien & Penna, 1999). In doing so, a deterritorialized curriculum theory increasingly becomes an itinerant theory - a theory of nonspaces (Augé, 2003)<sup>18</sup>. In essence, I argue for a rhizomatous approach that sees reality beyond dichotomies, beyond beginnings and endings (Gough, 2000); an approach that breeds from the multiplicity of immanent platforms and, from its centerless and peripheryless position, defies the myth of clean knowledge territories (Deleuze & Guattari, 1997); an itinerant curriculum theory (hereafter ICT) is committed to unending diverse and different non-Eurocentric epistemological rivers to edify a perpetually non-abysal theoretical posture that will force curriculum theory and research to deal with multiple, not fixed, frameworks within ample and intricate world epistemological waves (Moreira, 2017).

ICT thus challenges Modern Western Eurocentric monumental abyssal thinking as the riverbed of dominant and counter-dominant Eurocentric curriculum reason. ICT is the decolonial turn through its commitment to de-linking (Mignolo, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2018) from coloniality and its power, knowledge, labor, and being matrix. (Quijano, 1991);<sup>19</sup> ICT is a non-derivative epistemological approach committed to thinking and doing theory ‘from the perspective of the other side of the line’ (Santos, 2007a; 2007b) - fostering the emergence of radical collective and individual subjectivities respecting *nuestros locales* (Jupp, 2023). Such a theoretical approach is an itinerantology that addresses *las heridas abiertas* (Anzaldúa, 2007) of the colonality of power. To create, the ICTheorist “needs a foothold” (Pessoa, 2014, p. 214), and the strength of such foothold comes from his/her “extraordinary exteriority” (Gil, 2010, p. 14), that is, the “interior and exterior constitute a space of implosion” (Gil, 2010, p. 15). ICT thus decolonizes the complicated conversation (Trueit, 2000; Pinar, 2000) - in ‘itself an epistemicide,’ as Dwayne Huebner (2022) proclaimed.

ICT is not a bunker theory (Gil, 2009) or a silo theory; it works under a “pluralistic conceptual grammar” (Jupp, 2017, p. 4) and allows us to think “a prudent knowledge for a decent life” (Santos, 2007a; 2007b) respecting the world’s epistemological diversity. ICT walks towards knowledge emancipation, thus opening up the canon of knowledge

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<sup>18</sup> José Felix Angulo Rasco (2024) frames a different reading of Marc Augé’s (2003) take. As he argues (2024, p. 92), Augé’s non-place is a place of passage where one does not stay, communicate or speak. According to Angulo Rasco (2024, p. 92), Augé’s theory of non-spaces is complexified by philosophers such as Zygmunt Bauman, arguing that a non-place is a space deprived of symbolic expressions of identity, relationships, or history: examples include airports, highways, self-contained hotel rooms, and public transport.’ I am not so sure about the divergence. The ‘itinerantology,’ I advocate, implies precisely non-spaces that itinerantly promote eloquent silences - which are also ideological, as Eagleton (2003) elucidates. Augé’s non-spaces provide the ideological river bed for the itinerant flux needed for an alternative non-derivative way to produce a curriculum theory that addresses the world’s endless epistemological difference and diversity. Such a dispute deserves a deep examination, which does not fit here, given the nature of this essay, and I intend to address it in my forthcoming work.

<sup>19</sup> Much has been written about the decolonial torrent. Many decolonial and anticolonial authors have expressed great concern about how the term ‘decolonial’ has been used gratuitously and without due recognition and historical and political context. See, Táiwò, O. (2022) *Against Decolonization. Taking African Agency Seriously*. Hurst.

regulation; it is not a great narrative of a great theory as “knowledge-emancipation does not aspire to a great theory, it aspires to a theory of translation that serves as an epistemological support for emancipatory practices” (Santos, 1999, p. 206). ICT is not a grande theory, though - in the sense of a tremendous theoretical narratology. It is only a theory -- perpetually itinerant -- of greater knowledge, a just knowledge, fully aware that such greater knowledge is reachable only through a “full consciousness that everything is continually transformed inside and outside our mind” (Tse, 2007, p. 66).

ICT is a wordily theoretical approach; it is the theory of *palavrar* (Pessoa, 2014, p. 226). The ICTheorist is constantly mining the meaning (Williams, 2013). Thus, ICT is inherently “an exfoliation” (Gil, 1998, p. 127) metamorphosis, a sill of infinite mournings” (Couto, 2008, p. 105). ICT is a “new form of political affirmation grounded in a global pluriversal epistemological visions and interests to be favored and courses of action to be followed that are sustained in people’s history” (Popkewitz, 1976).

The ICTheorist moves towards a radically different curriculum reason. ICT implies an itinerant theorist immersed in a metamorphosis “so perpetually incomplete that even dreams dislike because they have defects” (Pessoa, 2014, p. 126); so perpetually deep that it “hurts the imagination” (Gil, 2010, p. 86), it hurts the “physical brain” (Pessoa, 2014, p. 234). ICT is the perfect different walk towards the ‘utopia,’ implies a different ‘utopist’ (Santos, 1995), because it is conscious of the imperfection of what is perfect, mindful of the perfection of the imperfection, and aware that an alternative utopia towards the utopia is needed (Paraskeva, 2016; Süssekind, 2017). Hence, being perfect contradicts being complete, yet the theorist is thirsty for ‘being complete,’ leaving him/her in a perennial state of useless pain. ICT is a weapon against the epistemicidal nerve of the field – as Cabral (1969) would put it.

The ICTheorist is in a volcanic chain, constantly lacking equilibrium. Thus, s/he is always a stranger in his/her ‘own language’ and profoundly conscious of the multiplicities of lines, spaces, and dynamic becomings (Deleuze, 1990). ICT thus echoes Dwayne Huebner’s (1959; 1966) challenges of a radically different semantology, thirstily seeking a new language. ICT and its struggle against the epistemicide grabbed the field’s attention, providing “a new influential discourse” (Pinar, 2013, p. 64) that is highly relevant (Zhao, 2019), which “enacts the call for new languages for curriculum studies” (Schubert, 2017, p. 12). The purpose of the ICTheorist is to travel, go beyond the limits, move, and stay in a kind of “permanent exile” (Said, 2005). ICT is the theory of non-places and non-times, which is, in essence, a theory of all places and all times. The ICTheorist is a constant migrant (Jin, 2008), a “permanent nomad of his own all multifaceted consciousness” (Pessoa, 2014, p. 113), who experiences a series of [epistemological] events (Khalifa, 1999). Such migrant being and thinking situates the itinerant theorist. The ICTheorist is an epistemological pariah.

ICT is a theory of disquiet (Pessoa, 2014), challenging the “disquiet paralysis” (Gil, 2009, p. 20), yet knowing full well that it is through disquiet that subjectivities emerge (Gil, 2009). It is not a sole act, however; it is a populated solitude. The challenges the canon. ICT, Antonia Darder (2016, p. x) claims, calls for a political praxis that

must be both epistemologically fierce and deeply anchored in the sensibilities of our subalternity—the only place from which we can truly rid ourselves of the heavy yoke of Western sanctioned tyranny, which has wrought bitter histories of impoverishment, colonization, enslavement, and genocide.

ICT's abyssal commitment constitutes an anthem against the indignity of speaking for the other (Walsh, 2002; Delzeuze, 1990). ICT challenges the sociology of absences as the only way to grasp “silences, needs, and unpronounceable aspirations questions” (Santos, 1999, p. 206); ICT is not an orthonimus theory, quite the opposite (Gil, 2010); fully heteronimus, it is a heterotheory.

ICT confronts and throws the subject to a permanent, unstable question, ‘What is it to think?’ ICT is a metamorphosis of the endless multifarious epistemological “alphabet[s] of thought” (Gil, 2009, p. 25). In this sense, ICT “reads differently because it is written and spoken in a different way” (Gil, 2010, p. 20). ICT challenges not presentism (Pinar, 2004) but momentism that frames contemporarism (Gil 2018; Paraskeva, 2024; 2021a), the yoke of the present-now – in which our field is sinking - a dangerous cult of ‘the contemporary,’ which completely dilutes any utopian hypothesis.

ICT put forward un paradigma otro (Mignolo, 2000; Escobar, 2013) that “does not fit into a linear history of paradigms or epistemes [that] runs counter to the greatest modernist narratives [and] reaches towards the possibility of non-European modes of thinking” (Escobar, 2013, p. 34). ICT pays cautious attention to the strife of religion and spirituality (Ela, 2013). The challenge of an itinerant curriculum theorist is to un-puzzle the nexus of physical—metaphysical. ICT is an ethical take.

ICT, William Schubert (2017, p. 10) argues, is not merely an “invocation or evocation;” it touches the ‘real’ nerve (Dabashi, 2015) by challenging both dominant and specific counter-dominant traditions within the Modernity Western Eurocentric epistemological matrix as part of the epistemicide. However, as a future for the field, ICT alerts the need to walk away from all forms of romanticism regarding the non-Modern, non-Western, and non-Eurocentric epistemes. ICT is not a nationalistic theoretical platform. ICT fights any form of indigenoustude (Paraskeva, 2011); it is also about decolonizing native narratives as well, by “considering the relationship of language to power and also to empowerment” (Mallon, 2012; Táíwò, 2022). In so doing, it reacts against epistemological blindness, opening the veins of a complex cognitive canon, dissecting its strokes, and counter strokes (Janson & Paraskeva, 2015). ICT also counters “the violent power of the identical that becomes invisible,” as Byubg Chul Han (2018, p. 10) would put it; it reacts against the fading of otherness in an era in which “the negativity of the other gives place to the positivity of the identical” (Han, 2018, p. 10). In ICT terms, the identical is pornographic (Han, 2018), and the ICTheorist counters reactionary essentializing dangers of certain identity currents that subvert individual identities into group identities. It is an epistemological declaration of freedom and independence (Paraskeva, 2019; 2024). ICT attempts to turn curriculum theory against

itself, not just to solve problems but also to cause them (Biesta, Filippakou, Wainwright & Aldrige, 2019) – derivatively.

ICT aims precisely at ‘a general epistemology of the impossibility of a general epistemology.’ (Santos, 2014). It is an itinerant posture profoundly committed to an epistemological radical co-habitus. ICT epitomizes what John L. Austin (1962, p. 58) calls performative utterance, as it does something by saying it. Today’s educational theoretical labor begs for a radically different pedagogue. To be or not to be an epistemological pariah? Along with Žižek, I would argue, ‘Yes, Please.’ This is the best way to honour April’s revolutionary ethos.

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