

A Call for the Desuperiorization of Philosophy and the Foundation of Superaltern Studies

Introductory remarks



Dear Participants, dear Speakers,

I am very honored to welcome you all here today.

Superiorism is a strange phenomenon. This egregious conviction of one's own normative superiority is perceived as an observable factual reality that seemingly entitles those who understand themselves as superior to dominate and suppress all those who are not like them and this domination is often practiced, as it seems, without any further moral self-doubt. Thus, I am so very grateful that our speakers have found the time to help us all to understand and fight this plague of superiorism. Thank you, Abraham, Natsu, Janine, Siseko, Benda, Veli, Mpho, Elvis, Dimpho, Boaventura, Robert and Wolbert, and, of course, Jonathan and Ana who unfortunately had to cancel their lectures.

I thank *you*, dear participants, who took the time to come to this conference with us from many parts of the world. I also want to thank the University of Paderborn, Germany, for allowing us to use their zoom-account for this event.

I am speaking to you today from Knoxville, Tennessee, in the United States. This is the homeland of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Shawnee, Yuchi tribal nations.

We have to acknowledge the genocidal violence and the forced removal these people had to suffer. We have to remember that this violence is not a matter of the past: Colonialism is alive. And it continues to take lives. We shall thus acknowledge, honor and respect our fellow human beings from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Shawnee and Yuchi tribal nations.

And we shall acknowledge another way that colonialism continues to take lives in the place where I live. Just about 150 years ago, about every fifth human being in this town was a slave.

The decolonial work that we want to do together today and in the following two days should be dedicated to them and to all those have fallen and continue to fall victim to superiorist violence.

As a most privileged human - a white, western, male, heterosexual human being - I am not in the least able to understand the heaviness that is pressing those down on the earth who are targeted by superiorism. It is time for me and my white fellow human beings to understand why our people developed an absurd tradition of superhumanization. We need to desuperhumanize ourselves. This is why this conference seeks to call for the establishment of Superaltern Studies.

Again, my wholehearted gratitude to all of you. I wish all of you a beautiful conference and I will hand it over to my brother Aribiah.

Bjoern Freter – August 11, 2021