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# AMERICAN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

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## American Critical Pedagogies

**Authors:** Walter Mignolo, Rita Segato, José Alejandro Tasat, Ricardo Salas Astrain, David Téllez Ramírez, Carla Wainsztok, Mauricio Langon, Egle Pitton, Fabiana Demarco, Alonso Bezerra De Carvalho, Fabiola Colombani, José Antonio Olivares Mena, Mariana Chendo, Magali Mendes de Menezes, Antonio De Jesús Nájera Castellanos, Víctor Del Carmen Avendaño Porras, Márcia Luísa Tomazzoni, Román Santiago Artunduaga Narváez

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# PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

*Dr. José Tasat*

*"Se conoce para vivir y no por el puro hecho de conocer"*
R. Kusch[1]

Within the framework of the collaboration agreement to develop academic and research actions between the Universidad Nacional Abierta a Distancia of Colombia and the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero of Argentina, we publish this book "Critical Pedagogies of the Americas," as a contribution to our educational system by adjoining different authors rooted in America.

Education is still the possibility of extending hope and increasing the expectations of its recipients and its committed actors, teachers, authorities, and community. It is a silent persistence of constituting a possible world before the existing inequalities and differences in the distribution of the educational good in our social bond.

The book's title, "American Critical Pedagogies," tends to describe and explain avatars that inhabit the educational field. We understand pedagogy as the philosophical currents addressing the educational framework and share a critical view of the educational process approach. Such criticism is understood not as a description of attributes but as an optimal distance between one and the other, with sovereignty and decision-making power, so one is not alienated from the desire of the other within this alienating capitalism from our human condition.

America, as a support for the new world imaginary, converged between the process of domination sustained by the empires with genocide and possession of nature. On the contrary, the ancestral peoples resisted orally and used the collective memory rooted in their cultures to address the meaning of simply living. In the face of the commercialization of life and the constitution of national citizenship in the battles for the inclusion

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1       La Negación en el Pensamiento Popular. Rudolph Kusch. Obras Completas. Fundación Ross 2000.

of rights to the eternally excluded, the denied, the unseen, in America, coexistence was a response proposed by Eurocentric thought to the universality of the search for equality. This view only seeks equality in the face of difference, while we in America coexist in the difference as a possibility to address life. It does not mean that there are no confrontations; it means a mixed space where the other is the other without the need to match a model (so preeminent of the logic of the empire, a single model of being-living in the world). Moreover, education is both an instrument of the civilizational war of the last centuries and an instrument of citizen emancipation; in other words, it is one of the symbols used to create poetry in the face of the abundance of the alienating reality.

This book brings together authors who accepted the invitation to write and systematize the action of their practice and their educational thought. We are proud to accept Ricardo Salas Astrain (UCT-Chile), David Téllez Ramírez (UNAM-Mexico), Mauricio Langon (Udelar-Uruguay), Rita Segato (UNSAM-Argentina), Walter Mignolo (Duke-USA), Carla Wainstok (UBA-Argentina), Fabiana Demarco (UNTREF-Argentina), Egle Pitton (UBA-Argentina), Magali Mendes de Menezes-Márcia Luísa Tomazzoni (UFRGS-Brazil), José Antoni Olivares Mena (USERENA-Chile), Alonso Bezerra de Carvalho (UNESP-Brazil), Mariana Chendon (USAL- Argentina), Antonio de Jesus Nájera Castellanos (UNICH-Mexico), Víctor del Carmen Avendaños Porras (CRESUR- Mexico), Román Artunduaga-Narváez (UNAD-Colombia).

Taking advantage of the chapter titles that make up the book, we present in the Book the avatars of "interculturality" from the assumptions for critical pedagogy in American interethnic territories, positioned in the south without Greece, outlined for a mestizo maieutics, to determine a philosophical education in intercultural dialogues. In moments of Pedagogies of Ancient Times, we encourage ourselves to Question the typical in inclusive education. We work critical community pedagogy of ethical and moral references in two Indigenous peoples of Chiapas, and we narrate the sociologia da imagem: a interculturalidada desde a escola indígena mbyá guarani. We propose moving toward an American critical aesthetic pedagogy after Auschwitz. And we think from the authonomy, a noção de estar e a formação ética: as contribuições de paulo freire e rodolfo kusch para a educação latinoamericana. In short, we question the conquest of differences in the civilizing project in education.

The book is presented as a unit that relates the diversities of the different latitudes in our American territory, the aspects of intervention in the various educational levels, and the multiple approaches of dissimilar, heterogeneous recipients, including ancestral wisdom addressed in education, community education, inclusive education, and new proposals to conceptualize of our practice in the teaching and learning process. Thus, we address the first questions of the meaning of education, its history of common assumptions of truths in the avatars of the interculturalities inhabiting in Nuestra America (Our America in English). This book will be worked on the path of teacher training, in specialization studies, and postgraduate studies in the social sciences, providing categories and stories of experiences applicable to the situated educational field. We respect the languages of the authors as a domain of their culture and in the effort of territorial integration, where language is not a limit but the condition of our ability to generate understanding and dialogue.

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I recognize the joint work conducted with Dr. Román Santiago Artunduaga Narváez (UNAD) in constructing the book. I thank Dr. Clara Esperanza Pedraza Goyeneche (UNAD) for her generosity in the call and her vision, which we share, "always together with others." This implies the possibility of promoting scenarios that help us manage and practice higher education to promote a more humane, less colonial, and more authentic education in this soil that hosts us as a feature in the landscape; that is what Rodolfo Kusch would say education is.

*Dr. José A. Tasat*

# AVATARS OF "INTERCULTURALITY"

*Rita Segato*
*Walter Mignolo*
*José Tasat*

# ABSTRACT:

*This text is a compilation of the three central explanatory statements developed within the framework of the "Habitar la Interculturalidad" (Inhabiting the interculturality in English) colloquium, carried out virtually on June 23, 2020, by the Centro Regional de Formación Docente e Investigación Educativa (CRESUR)-Mexico. Consequently, this article is no more or less than three "thoughts out loud" that attempt – in times of virtuality – to put into words the tensions, thoughts, and coordinates that characterize these times.*

*Thinking, reflecting, and talking about interculturality is, in short, thinking about the other. To this end, critical thinking enables diverse, plural, and alternative horizons to the hegemony that Modernity generated in the field of social and human sciences. Rethinking such intended universality is a task that has been generated from different and varied fields for some time now. It is no coincidence that in many passages of these explanatory statements, the focus is on the role of education and the university. But the current context of pandemics, lockdowns, and social isolation clearly gives such attempts an even more particular, and perhaps more urgent, character. The look of the other as a threat – even viral – makes it imperative. As Rita Segato mentions, the departure from a univocal worldview can only lead to a circle of increasing violence. How do we deal with differences? is one of the questions articulated, in one way or another, by the three authors. As José Tasat proposes, inhabiting and combining this difference implies "imagining and creating the world again," where the other can be something more than just a threat. To do this, as Walter Mignolo warns, it is necessary to constantly ask about "who enunciates interculturality?" which implies – among many other issues – an in-depth review of feelings, knowledge, and human ties.*

# RITA SEGATO

One of the topics that has always been an enigma for me from the time I lived in Brazil, and that has emerged here and been mentioned by several speakers who preceded me, is:    *What will an Indigenous person learn at university? Why the great struggle for educational inclusion?* I always remember an event that perplexed me, and it can be said that it was traumatic. For more than ten years, I cooperated with FUNAI, the National Indigenous Foundation, in Brazil, and I accompanied several workshops with Indigenous women in all regions of the country. During that period, I attended a great meeting on Indigenous education in the city of Cuiabá, the capital of the State of Mato

Grosso, in which 500 Indigenous representatives participated. But I must say that it was surprising and distressing to perceive the disagreement and the difficulty of clearly establishing what the Indigenous people seek and bring back from the university. It is not that there are doubts about the need to have access to university studies. What is difficult is to have clarity about the objectives: *What does the state offer to the Indigenous people in terms of education? What is being aimed there, and for what purpose*? For a long time, I thought about this issue.

For example, regarding the subject of our conversation here, I disagree with one of the speakers stating that the solution to the pandemic comes from the communities. The solution to the pandemic will come from a vaccine found in the same context of environmental imbalance in which the pandemic originated because, and this is important to understand when we think about the university and Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, colonial-modernity offers on one hand, the antidotes and remedies for the ills that it already introduced with the other one. The remedy will undoubtedly come from the one who introduced the illness. So, that is where the university, the inclusion, and the great struggle for affirmative action in education that we have had in Brazil come into the picture. When I heard the Brazilian colleagues here, I could not help but remember that when we started at the University of Brasilia in 1999, the struggle for quotas  — what is called in Spanish reserva de cupos — for Black students and ways to access university for Indigenous students. Most anthropologists were initially opponents of these policies of inclusion. Great and appointed anthropologists, and many others, later changed their positions because, as they argued at the time, entering university meant being absorbed by the nation's culture and putting the "difference" at risk. It is possible to doubt whether this was a real argument or a slay way of trying to prevent the university from having black students, so diligently predominantly white and so resolutely Eurocentric in the knowledge that it values and in the authors that it teaches in its well-known practice of the "Coloniality of Knowledge." Maintaining the university "white," in line with its contents' whiteness, was also to protect it from inclusion policies. It was argued, then, especially from anthropology, that it would be an *assimilationist* policy, this being, of course, and rightly so, a bad word.

From this, the issue of interculturality comes in, and the big question is:

> What can the university offer without assimilating? That is, without destroying the difference or eroding the civilizational armor that protects the world of the individual entering the university from another place, their communal world, as was said here, from their environment made

up of a nature that is neither a "thing" nor "resources;" a life that cannot be objectified. Therefore, what can the university offer? This is one of the great dilemmas that anyone interested in interculturality must consider, and it is not easy to do so.

One of the easiest ways to understand it is the following: they come to learn the antidotes and remedies for the ills that the university and the world of that university have already introduced. They need to learn them there. Moreover, I always quote, in that regard, the exciting fragment of José María Arguedas in his novel Todas las Sangres; when the community explains to the adorable character Demetrio Rendon Wilka why they send him to Lima so that he can go to school, they tell him: "Go, fly over the world like the sparrowhawk. Go and learn the vices of white men. But then come back…" [Translated quote from its original in Spanish] So, that is one of my answers on this topic, which is complex and requires extensive and informed reflection.

What happens to the Black person and the Indigenous person when they come to the university to learn what is needed to survive? What do they need, for example, to study law? To see if, with the instruments of law, they manage to protect their world precisely from the society that has formulated the law they are now learning. What is the purpose of Medicine? Similarly, to protect yourself from the diseases that the 'white' world knows because it has introduced them. That is why I state that knowledge of white men is needed to achieve protection from the illness of the white man. They need the answers this same world provides to the illness it caused.

Another issue is the concept of difference or the progress that interculturality represents concerning multiculturalism. The first way in which interculturality was thought of in the country of multiculturalism is that the state in schools would monitor the relationship among Black, white, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian people who all would share the same space inclusively and deliberately.  There would be quotas for each of these racial segments of this ethnic pentagon; they would be transferred to typical school environments, and there they would coexist during school time, thus interculturalizing. However, I believe there must be much more at stake than this. Consider, if the presence of these people fails to transform the state, that is, if schools are not made accessible, adaptable, and capable of transformation; if they merely operate from above; and if the state supervising the expected interculturalization of society fails to acknowledge its own whiteness, Eurocentrism, and power and knowledge coloniality, then history does not change.

Therefore, in the search for an intercultural society, the state cannot solely assume the role of mediator and articulator, of supervisor of differences, ignoring that it is not on a pedestal of neutrality, but that is one of them, one more of these differences. The state is white - between us- it is an implant, a transposition of the European management artifact bearing the same name. Still, it operates among us with a solid para-state influence and suffers from what I have repeatedly called: "a foundational error." Moreover, it is patriarchal, as I have argued in a variety of texts, arguing that it is the last phase of patriarchy since it represents the moment when the space of male, public, and political works is transformed into an encompassing sphere and captures everything that claims to be endowed with politicity. Moreover, it is the agora that seeks to capture and monopolize politics, transforming itself into an agora where voices that pretend to impact collective life must resonate, thus dismissing, with this maneuver, the politicization of domestic management and the political history of women. Then, returning to intercultural education, if the diverse presences attracted to the school fail to transform such space and that supervisor, that state management, its structure, and the very modes of the institution, the intercultural project will have failed.

Another of the difficulties that must be deeply and carefully considered when we discuss interculturality, a subject that Pepe Tasat and I have discussed, is that cosmoses are neither commensurable nor equivalent. There is no equivalence between civilizational cosmoses; for example, there is no equivalence between the Pachamamico cosmos and the Christian cosmos, nor is there an equivalence between the Christian cosmos and the African-American (Brazilian) cosmos, to name one I know in-depth, and through my participation. I have written a lot about this: the candomblé people and the Nagô community of Recife, with whom I lived for a long time and upon whom I wrote my doctoral thesis, visit seven Catholic churches as part of their initiation process. When I asked how this was possible, the answer was surprising: "Our dead (eguns) are locked here next to the house -in the quarto de balé- without doors or windows for all eternity; there are the ancestors, they are cared for in a closed room that only men enter through a narrow opening, very few men, the initiates, and only at a few times of the year. So why do we go to church? Because sometimes we like to feel that there is also another heaven to which it will be possible to go" [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

When discussing this topic with Pepe Tasat, he made me see that this example of the religious field could well be included in what philosophers call paraconsistent logic; that is, a logic that is no longer monologic, as the West and monotheisms have cultivated, leading intelligence in the direction of monopolistic, exclusive, and excluding logics for which difference, is always a problem to be solved. I dealt with this subject

also a long time ago in another text, talking about the difference between the initiation religions and the conversion religions: in a conversion religion, the subject is no longer A to become B, while in an initiation religion, the person is initiated into a religion, but they do not need to abandon their other spiritualities. In other words, they are not monological nor monopolistic. Thus, there are monological cosmoses and cosmoses that are not monopolistic. The structures of the cosmoses are very different, and it is impossible to translate them and find analogies; they are not even analogous, and their importance is that in them, it is possible to navigate between the differences without pretending to equate their convertibility. These are the cosmoses we must defend, which must be behind a project of interculturality. In them, there is an awareness of inconsistent logic. I believe that today, we must move forward with full force, trying to understand the importance of inconsistency.

A fourth aspect of the intercultural project, which I mentioned earlier, is that it is essential to try to destabilize, to deconstruct the *world-thing*, that is, the objectification of life, that crossing between Cartesianism and capitalism that produces the disasters we are witnessing in the relationship between humanity and nature. Resulting from this cross between colony, capitalism, and Cartesianism the invention of race originates, which is one of the most extreme forms of the objectification-naturalization-biological fixation of the bodies of the vanquished in the process of Conquest and Colonization, together with the other extreme form of objectification of the bodies characteristic of the patriarchal political order. I also believe that *communality* destabilizes an objectified world and that the operators of the communal are women; the ones who tie together the communal world are women. Therefore, it is possible to speak of the strong affinity between feminism, communality, and the revitalization of the *interculturality* project.

Finally, the limits to constructing an intercultural society are exposed today by the advance of the pandemic. It behaves like an excellent X-ray machine, a mega-scanner that passes over the world and exposes all the frightening aspects of the contemporary phase of capitalism and neoliberalism. It exposes to the open sky the frontiers between inclusion and exclusion and exposes the problems of permanent exclusion, of which a group of sociologists, of which Aníbal Quijano was part, anticipating the idea that exclusion is not and cannot be a problem to be solved because it is inherent and constitutive of the last phase of capitalism. The pandemic giga-scanner also exposes gender conflict, as gender is inevitably a conflict and the matrix of the patriarchal order, and, in turn, patriarchy is a conflicting order because it is an unequal system. Patriarchy is a political order; it is not a religious or moral order but a political order and an unequal political order. Therefore, it cannot be non-confrontational, and the

pandemic exposes its conflict inside the home. Finally, the pandemic exposes the genocidal tendencies of the world we live in, as evidenced in Brazil, where Indigenous societies are being decimated and have lost some of their most influential leaders, such as the great cacique Paulinho Paiakan and Ariana Yawalapiti.

## JOSÉ TASAT

I will discuss inhabiting, and it seems to me that some issues within inhabiting are worth considering. One cannot inhabit without ground, nor can one inhabit without culture. We know no other way than through the history of an empire, a culture, and an identity. Unfortunately, in this way of inhabiting, we are engaged in the framework of what we describe in the social sciences as a process of domination. There is always an 'other.' And in that 'other' we reference, we assume a voice and a place to tell the story. It seems to me that these 'others' include individuals, enslaved people, from the stratification of race, nobodies, women, and peasants. There is always a way to articulate oneself within logic, which is a condition for living.  Both affirmation and negation are two sides of that coin to combine with each other.

In turn, there is always a hegemony, and that worldview action to inhabit the world is processed mythologically. In this era, the myth of science gives us the basis of validation and is a provable fact. The pandemic clearly came to demonstrate that those bodies were present. Those bodies that, unfortunately, we see losing their lives, transitioning to another stage according to the worldview from which it can be interpreted, are related to a healthcare system that clearly cannot fully provide adequate care. In this matter of inhabiting, what we, the modern and the first six speakers (including Rita and Walter), have been stating is that we are very monadic, as we start by describing things. If we move away from the monadic, then the monadic is an entity that explains things, but if we consider ourselves part of a relationship, the issues would be different. Walter points out this when he talks about community and what Rita refers to when she speaks of a different logic, what she describes as non-nomological compared to the monopolistic, paraconsistent logic.

We are orphans of theory, which clearly relates to the viewpoints we continue using, as we still have really outdated paradigms from the last five years. I believe that the richness of our reality should allow us to develop     new poetry. Why poetry? Because it allows us to imagine a transformed world. Yes, these are key features; unfortunately, the construction of violence as a bonding feature. However, it is one of them. However,

it is also true that we must express ourselves differently, both in educational and cultural fields.

What is the purpose of this exacerbating of profit maximization, minimizing costs, exacerbating environmental extractivist activities, and exacerbating productivity as an alienating area in daily life, alienated from us to be colonized differently, to carry a way of thinking that leads to disintegration, a break-through of a social bond that excludes us. Thus, the communal, the policy of friendship, and the spheres of political belonging provide us shelter, allowing us, from that shelter, to insist differently. But where do we insist? We insist on organizations that must have the possibility of democratizing democracy because, otherwise, decision-making sovereignty remains with the same people. We continue to live, and I take this from Walter Mignolo, in a tension of either westernizing the East or orientalizing the West. And this tension is something we experience daily.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the dehumanization of humanity is to inhabite within the framework of difference. What we cannot accept has to do with this difference, and we always think in terms of a hegemonic logic of similarity when the reality of living with difference itself is cohabitating. Therefore, above all, action is action by itself. If the action is action by itself, the interpretation of that action is made by specific sectors that almost always are those that hegemonize a narrative of interpretation to give meaning and to establish control over the public sphere. Who steps into the popular sphere, who enters the public domain to demand the eradication of racism, to denounce the recurrence of existing and constant femicides?  We are the ones who take on a voice of that difference to be heard.

And I think that all the different theories that have been brought up let us look beyond the objects and look at the differences, and someone always benefits from that difference. Let us look at the stratification that clearly constitutes us; this stratification is not of class but about race, and let us look beyond the fact that this logic of personal alienating slavery is not the only thing that makes us isolate ourselves from others and ourselves. That is why I think if one thinks about inhabiting, one thinks about a worldview. If we continue in this Western worldview of a capitalist state, a predatory state, or an anarcho-capitalist state, that is where the cards are played. If we continue to play these cards, interculturality as a form of articulation must try to reconcile the differences. It is the most challenging thing because those who hold power enjoy it while everyone else insists on having a different voice. Today, it is interesting to think about how we, from a field of thought, can contribute to the confrontation of forces because we do nothing but provide logic for thinking.

The confrontation of forces takes place in the field of politics. In other words, it is another segment. I believe that illuminating and giving importance to such a shift to ancestral or popular wisdom allows us to give a different meaning to action because the popular/ancestral has a logic that reason cannot comprehend. This tension that exists today between a conservative power, the invisible hand of the market, with its white-glove transferring currencies in the financial system to enrich itself, and the mass media that play in favor of the system and continue to deteriorate the other as a condition for the other's non-existence. It seems to me that this also relates to logic as simple as, if my freedom ends at the freedom of the other, what conservatism needs most is for the other not to exist.

Therefore, another tension that occurs, which I believe is essential to me and requires distinct scientific consideration, as Ernesto Laclau says, is populism because it carries within it a force of reason that conventional reason does not comprehend. Yet, it enables access to the distribution of social goods for those who lack them and within all the visible and invisible, constant frameworks with which a political system is inhabited. However, this occurs in the same place, within the logic of the state, but it seems crucial to me sometimes to move away from the logic of thinking from the state. If one moves away from the logic of thinking from the state, one can assume a different habitat because if we remain prisoners by the belief that things are the way they are, nothing will change. We need to imagine the world anew, as Rodolfo Kusch said, and the only way to imagine it is with the law of excluded middle in philosophy. This principle allows us to see that things can be and not be simultaneously and in the same aspect, prioritizing the possibility of relationships. There is something about relationships that is much stronger than the monadic way of expressing ourselves. That is why I insist on taking up the word, taking on a voice. Without a voice, a body, a territory, and being together with others, it is very hard to change our way of life.

## WALTER D MIGNOLO

I will summarize what I had planned to say to connect it to the many interesting things mentioned. I begin with a couple of questions: When did the conversation around interculturality begin? Who is talking or was talking about interculturality? In the United States, the dominant theme was multiculturalism. It began to be a topic of conversation in the public and university spheres in the 1970s. Why? First, because of the civil rights movement (1969), and second, due to the increased immigration from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, the melting pot could no longer be maintained. The melting pot was an appropriate metaphor while immigration was European, Eastern, and Western, but European. When non-white individuals

from Africa, Asia, and Latin America began to arrive in the United States, the melting pot ended, and multiculturalism emerged, displacing it in the triumphant rhetoric of modernity. However, it was the state that talked about multiculturalism through civil society. It encouraged individuals to celebrate their third-world culinary arts, practice their religions, dress as they wished, maintain their dances, and hold their parties, but not challenge the state. In other words, it was a liberation of the content of the conversation but not of its terms, that is, of the rules of the game. The state maintained control over the enunciation under the guise of freedom and change. It was a sweet measure to satisfy people, avoid altercations, and accommodate third-world immigration.

In Latin America, interculturality became a topic of conversation and debate. I see it as the Latin American version of North American multiculturalism when interculturality is used in a broad sense in the public sphere. But who speaks about interculturality, and what does it mean? When people in the Ecuadorian or Bolivian states, which are somewhat familiar to me, speak about interculturality, its use corresponds more or less to the sense of multiculturalism in the United States, with the obvious differences of the corresponding local histories —imperial history in one case, colonial in another, ethical and demographic composition, economic levels, and social distribution of wealth. When promoted by the state, the rhetoric of interculturality preserves the underlying logic of coloniality. For example, the Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia established that both are plurinational states. Interculturality and plurinationality are related concepts, although there is an important nuance: plurinationality is a Constitutional concept that calls into question the mononationality of the nation-state, while interculturality is a matter debated in the public sphere. It is not established in the Constitution that Ecuador and Bolivia are intercultural states. In the United States, the same concept of plurinationality is unthinkable for both the state and the media, Republican or Democratic, coverage which supports the *status quo*. Why is that? It is a topic for another conversation.

The intercultural issue is very different when Indigenous or Afro-descendant people speak and use the words intercultural and plurinationality in their political positions. For the state, the word plurinational is in the Constitution, but we have yet to see any effort in Bolivia or Ecuador to activate what is constitutionally written. In turn, for the Afro-descendant communities of the Colombian or Ecuadorian Pacific, plurinationality in the Constitution is a concept that legitimizes their claims. As for intercultural, they appropriated the concept and changed its meaning. First and foremost, "they did not change the content but the terms of the conversation." That is, they displaced and appropriated the enunciation of the state and the public sphere (civil society, mass

media, and social media) to Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. For these communities that live in harmony, the territorial state line dividing Ecuador and Colombia is of a state and social nature, non-communal.  The communal has its own rules of coexistence and organization. The territorial state lines are proper to the state, not of *Abya Yala* or  *La Gran Comarca* (The Great Region in English), the territorial nomenclature for Indigenous people, the first, and Afro-descendants, the second. Or it is our problem because that line divides us. Afro-descendant communities no longer inhabit Latin America, but rather The Great Region; that Indigenous community no longer inhabits Latin America, but *Abya Yala.* In managing its affairs, the intracultural refers to the communal policy agreed upon among Indigenous people. These are matters that they resolve among themselves. Afro-descendants named it *casa adentro* (inside the house in English). Intraculture belongs to *casa adentro.* Interculture concerns *casa afuera* (outside the house in English). It describes the relationships between communities and the state.

Interculturality refers to the moment when what has been agreed upon interculturally and *casa adentro.* It is confronted interculturally with the state. These two moments are crucial for the detachment of those who live and practice it and those of us who participate from the outside. Thus, we can understand that culture (in its words of inter-culture and intra-culture) is neither an object (a being) nor something that can be combined or used to make two beings communicate. Instead, "culture is created by human beings" through their constant use of language and their daily living within the modern/colonial (today) state order. We enter the political-epistemic field and move away from the idea that culture is something that people have rather than something people do. The introduction of the words *intraculture* and *casa adentro* and the appropriation of interculturality to mean *casa afuera* reduce the state and the national and media public sphere to their proper terms: that is, although it is hegemonic and dominant, in discussions about interculturality, the state no longer has the final say in either politics or knowledge. That is why there is detachment from the hegemonic or dominant state discourse and the public sphere, as the case may be. It is both political and epistemic, as it states that neither the state nor the media can suppress them. They can silence them but no longer suppress them.

So, it is no longer about asking ourselves *what interculturality is, but who enunciates interculturality*, when, where, for what purpose, and why? Ontology does not prompt us to ask these questions because the assumption is that ontology guarantees the representative discourse that describes and explains what is and what exists. Therefore, it hides and paralyzes the questions that uncover enunciation and show us what is built by enunciation. I believe that what I just said connects with many things that have al-

ready been discussed here by Mario Vilca, Luciana Ramos, Eduardo Oliveira, and Rita Segato. This brings us to the question of education.

Let's return to *Abya Yala* to discuss education and connect with the *Pluriversity Amawtay Wasi* (https://amawtaywasi.org/). The history is long and complex. For the topic that interests us here, I recall some details. From what I know, the conversations that first led to the creation of the *intercultural university* (let's remember what *intercultural* means from the Indigenous perspective) began with the request from Ecuador's Indigenous organizations to establish their own higher education institution, Amawtay Wasi (*Amawta* means wise person, *Amawtay* means wisdom*,* and *Wasi*, home) in the late 80s. It was institutionally established around 2007 or 2008. Rafael Correa closed it during his administration. He implemented corporate university evaluation criteria, and those who evaluated it decided it did not meet those criteria. These are criteria that Amawtaw Wasi is not interested in fulfilling as it proposes a non-corporate education. Correa, on the one hand, criticized neo-liberalism and, on the other hand, applied neoliberal criteria in higher education. In 2020, it began the process of reopening. [2] We do not know the criteria for its reopening or if there will be any permits to the state. What interests us here is the project. The vision of restoring Indigenous knowledge is underway, and this will not stop, even if there are permits for the reopening of Amawtay Wasi.

The gnoseological (the principles of all forms of knowledge) reconstruction of epistemology (the Western principles of knowledge, both their own principles and the monitoring ones of non-Western knowledge) is necessary to restore these forms of knowledge. The estheticis reconstitution (feeling, emotion, belief) of aesthetics in the West (and those who adopted it outside the West) reduced aesthesis to the realm of art and suppressed its understanding in all our actions. We are neither robots nor entirely rational beings who have a body to make the mind work. We call the mind an activity of the brain, but the brain is an organ of the body, such as the liver, kidney, and heart.

One of the key moments in the process of the argument that interests us here is when the state's voice (Ministry of Education) asked why they needed their own university when, given the Constitutional reform of 1987, Indigenous people could attend national and public universities in Ecuador. Do you see the state principle of interculturality? "Come to our university, and we will teach you what we know, the things you need to learn." The belief of state actors in any of their functions and of most civil society

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2    Amaway Wasi and the United Nations intervention for its reopening: https://www.servindi.org/actualidad-noticias/21/11/2018/abriran-nuevamente-la-universidad-indigena-amawtay-wasi-en-el-2020

is that Indigenous people are not qualified to be responsible for the teaching of non-indigenous knowledge. The same classic argument: outside Europe and the North Atlantic, people are not capable of self-governance, that is, they do not know how to govern themselves as we govern ourselves, and the way we govern ourselves is natural, universal, and beyond question. But this was precisely what was at stake: The *Amawtay Wasi* project was and is the reconstitution of Indigenous knowledge (not Western state knowledge) "by Indigenous people for all Ecuadorians, and not only for the Indigenous population."

Do you see the radical shift in reasoning and the struggle over the control of enunciation? That was the response, rearticulated in my own words, to the state's opening for Indigenous people to attend national universities (a gesture of multicultural or intercultural openness). Now, what I understood was: Thank you, but no. You, Ecuadorians, can come to our university, which is open to everyone. Do you see the interculturality from the Indigenous or *casa afuera* perspectives? It is not about changing the content and incorporating Indigenous content into the national or state or private universities, but about affirming the enunciation rooted in the cosmology of the Indigenous peoples rather than the Western cosmology (theological, liberal, and Marxist) that frames the state universities.

I will make a few remarks about the materiality of the institution and the curriculum. The institution did not use the campus nor the urban structure of universities as a model, many of which are spread over several buildings. Amawtay Wasi goes to the students, to the countryside and the communities, instead of requiring students to move to the city in order to study according to the institutional materiality of the state university. Second, the curriculum and the philosophical orientation of education were not subjected to the "university model," which is a Western particularity since the foundation of the first university (Bologna) in the Middle Ages. The West is the only civilization that has a university. Surely, because all other civilizations (Chinese, Indian, Arab, Persian, Beni, Aztec, Incas) have "houses of wisdom." Only for Europeans and Latin American collaborators, what was not Western civilization was barbaric. The university is the Western local configuration of houses of wisdom. The difference is that it managed to impose itself as "The" house of wisdom along with the West's economic, political, and military expansion.

With the colonial expansion, the model of higher education was installed in the Americas, Asia, and Africa, and the actors who implemented it dismantled the houses of wisdom where the Western house of wisdom was installed, i.e., the university. We refer to this when discussing the coloniality of know-how or knowledge: the dispossessed

knowledge. Today, the reconstitution of these dispossessed knowledges is underway. However, they will no longer be what they were because Western knowledge is present and maintains the power differential of colonial difference. Therefore, the reconstitution of knowledge must be based on border thinking, acknowledging colonial differences, and the power differential. Insofar as this is the case, border gnoseology is underway in the Global South and East and the Global North and West since coloniality is everywhere.

How was the curriculum of Amawtay Wasi organized? It was not modeled after *the trivium and the quadrivium*, which was hegemonic in the colonial Renaissance university, nor after the Kantian-Humboldtian model, which was hegemonic in the secular university from the late eighteenth century until World War II, nor after the corporate university model that is currently displacing the Kantian-Humboldtian model and prioritizes professional training to generate efficient professionals rather than responsible citizens. The curriculum of *Amawtay Wasi* was modeled after the Southern Cross[3] (Figure 1), which also served as the organizational model for the *Tawantinsuyu*: the world organized into four *suyos,* the basic unit of the Andean organization, equivalent to the Greek *oykos*. Look, the Greeks have no privilege except in the Western system of beliefs.

**Figure 1:** A Cross over the City



ALPHA AND BETA CENTAURI STARS ARE
THE EYES OF THE MOTHER FLAME

MILKY WAY

(KARMA MAIRA)    SOUTHERN CROSS

CHIAR KOTA

EAST    SOUTH    SOUTHWEST

NORTHEAST EAST    WEST

NORTH
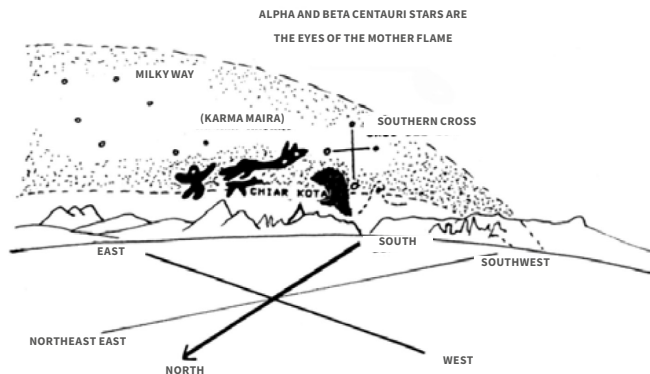
Figure 1

**Source:** *Moscoso, V ((2000). Una Cruz sobre la Ciudad. Revista Ciencia y Cultura, (7), 55-61. Available at: http://www.scielo.org.bo/pdf/rcc/n7/a09.pdf*

3    Design by Victor Moscoso, "Una cruz sobre la ciudad" SciELO Revista Ciencia y Cultura, 7, 2000. http://www.scielo.org.bo/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2077-33232000000100009

The curricular structure was organized based on the Andean history, the Indigenous peoples' philosophy, life practices, desires, and needs. Figure 2 is a basic outline of the curriculum structure:

**Figure 2:** Curriculum of Amawtay Wasi University
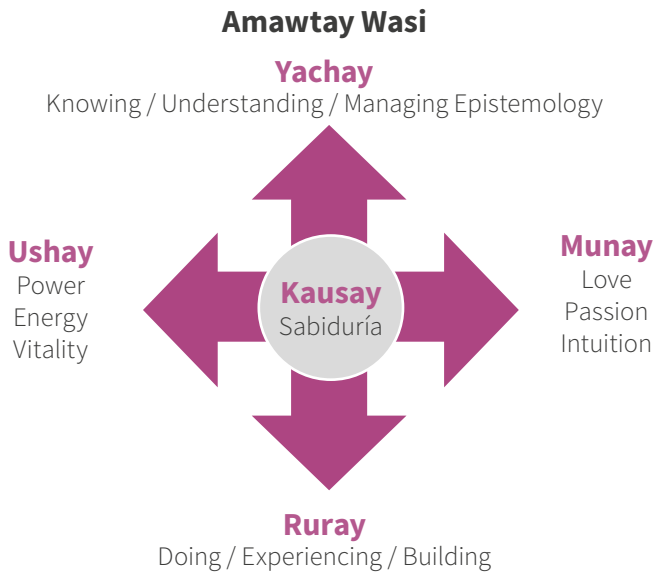


Source: *Cortez, David (2012) Curso "Genealogía del Buen Vivir / sumac kawsay",
dictated in Flacso Ecuador, July-September*

You can see the four curriculum areas (let's call them that) modeled after the four *suyus* of the *Tawantinsuyu.* And the center, which in the Tawantinsuyu was Cusco. Here, it is *kausay*, which means both wisdom and life, for the simple reason that one cannot live without knowing, and one cannot learn without living. We can understand the meaning of *Sumak Kawsay*, which has received so much attention in recent years from both the Indigenous and non-indigenous intellectuals of Latin America and the American and European academies. We already know that the binary cosmic-political organization of opposites is particular to the West. In all other civilizations, it is about duality, not binarism, and duality is always complementary, not opposing. Each of the members of the duality is half of a whole.  Of course, this idea fits into binary oppositions in the West.

In short, a complex issue: To know and understand each area implies knowing their relationship with the others. Nothing is isolated. Second, the horizon of teaching is wisdom. Learning to unlearn to relearn and learn to be. This statement pronounced in the Indigenous experience has an enormous weight: it is based on the coloniality

of knowledge and the coloniality of being that deprived them of their wisdom and dignity as people and as a nation. Thus, the conception of *Amawtay Wasi* operates in two ways: intraculturally in the regeneration of knowledge, living, memory, dignity, and trust of the Indigenous peoples. It also operates interculturally in co-existence with the intraculturality of the Creole-Mestizo population and with the state. However, the Creole-mestizo population "does not see" their intraculturality since it assumes it to be universal, even if it is a branch of Western Europe and the United States.

Rafael Correa obviously could not - I say it correctly, "could not" - tolerate the co-existence of knowledge foreign to Western knowledge in national universities, and he used the accreditation tool to close *Amawtay Wasi*. The co-existence of knowledge today and in the future is and will be inevitable, marked by the power differential of colonial difference. In this conflict, Correa took advantage of his presidential privileges and the heavy-hand approach of the state and reaffirmed the canonical university education, a mix of Kantian-Humboldtiana and corporate universities. Thus, he founded four new universities at four strategic points in the country: in the North (Imbabura), in the South (Cuenca), in the East (Amazónica), and in the West (Guayaquil). In other words, he translated the quadripartitions of the Tawantinsuyu into strategic spaces of the national government built on the ruins of the Tawantinsuyu. Moreover, the University of Imbabura, named it *Yachay* (it is the area of knowledge in Amawtay Wasi) and called it the "city of knowledge." Here, we see the inter-institutional, intercultural, inter-epistemic, and interpolitical conflict. The ecology of knowledge is a romantic idea of what could be and which overlooks the colonial difference and the political, epistemic, and historical power differential.

I close the first of the topics, which is the broadest, and frame the other two remaining ones. The second point is the "the Americas" issue, from the Mapuche region to the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the Caribbean. This continent, with its Islands, was formed with three major and diverse demographic groups. First, the enormous diversity of the Indigenous peoples and the three great civilizations of the continent, with all their complexities, are summarized in the Incas, Mayans, and Aztecs. In addition, strong cultures such as the Iroquois in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada and the Osages in the southeastern United States, etc.[4] From that complexity, their cosmologies survive and co-exist with the Christian/secular cosmology of the West, from whom the U.S. Constitution took and adapted the Iraqi model of confederate states. Again, the current political complexity of interculturality

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4    Map of the Native American Regions (Native American), http://s1.thingpic.com/images/1b/M6jmb2RNfrZ4bfRL-2JnxGC9F.gif

between the conservative forces to maintain the privileges of knowledge, the institution that protects them, and the liberating and reconstructive forces of dispossessed knowledge. Decoloniality is the reconstitution of dispossessed knowledge by actors who inhabit the present, the memory, the language, and the life practices of that knowledge.

The second demographic constituent arrived from Europe without a passport or invitation, establishing their assets in foreign territories. They created viceroyalty governments in the South and North, cohabitating as visitors (the Pilgrims) or in small commercial centers of the English Crown until the so-called American Revolution, which founded the nation-state. They subjugated the Indigenous populations and contributed to the already established and commercialized trade of enslaved Africans. The Pilgrims and their descendants self-constituted and established their cosmology (the Bible) and then science and secular philosophy, which coexist until today within the same family. The conflicts of knowledge between Christian theology and secular science and philosophy are conflicts within the same family framed by the Greco-Christian-secular cosmology. In the same movement of the constitution of what will be in the United States and Canada in the North and the independent republics in the South, the dispossession of existing cosmogonies and cosmologies that have existed for thousands of years occurs. Here, you see the two faces of modernity/coloniality, while one constitutes the other deposes. Decoloniality emerges in the reconstruction and restitution of the deposed, which is relevant to the present day of those who work in epistemic and aesthesis reconstitutions.

The third large contingent, as mentioned, were enslaved Africans, mainly men, to work on plantations. Millions of Africans populated the continent and the islands of the New World from what is now the United States to the southern tip of the continent. According to Aníbal Quijano, America, modernity, and capitalism were born on the same day. [5] Two important elements were the massive expropriation of land, the massive exploitation of labor, and the availability of human life to ensure profits.

Forced and voluntary immigration continued. From the 19th century, the illegal declaration of slavery opened the doors for Asian immigration, particularly in the Caribbean. In Argentina, the National Organization since 1852, created conditions for the massive European immigration of the late 19th century and the first decades of

5    QUIJANO, Aníbal. La modernidad, el capital y América Latina nacieron en el mismo día. Interview by Nora Velarde. ILLA, Revista del Centro de Educación y Cultura, n. 10, Jan., p. 42-57, 1991

the 20th century. The Industrial Revolution facilitated transportation, and steamships created favorable conditions for the mass mobility of people in the second half of the 19th century. However, a political aspect is worth highlighting: today, political issues are played out among these three groups in the Americas; in all the Americas. This is interesting to reflect on intraculturality, *casa adentro*, and interculturality, *casa afuera*. Of course, I am not saying that political projects specialize groups since people from different demographics can support and ally with the projects of others. Moreover, not all members of an ethnic group share the political projects of liberation of the group to which they belong. I am saying is that political projects emerge from subordinated ethnic groups in response to the political projects of the subordinate group.

This does not mean that all of us who belong to the subordinate ethnic group support subordination. A peculiarity of political mobility is critical: people of European descent, for example, can and do ally with themselves with Indigenous or/and Afro projects. At the same time, people from diverse groups of Indigenous peoples or the African diaspora can join the projects of people and institutions of European descent. At stake in these displacements are, for example, the loss of privileges of those who support political projects of the Indigenous peoples and/or Afro-descendants without belonging to such ethnic formations. At the same time, people of these ethnic groups can choose to be on the side of the ethnic group to which they do not belong, but which controls the privileges. People are not *politically* linked to their ancestry, although *subjectively*, they always will be, even in conversion. Conversion means that one person has become another.

The conquest dismantled the governing apparatus of the two active civilizations during the invasions: The Aztecs and Incas. The Maya states, independent from each other, were already in the process of decay. The result was that, with the fall of the governments, the people gathered around one or another cultural, economic, and political organization were left without leadership, so to say. However, they kept their cosmogony (creation stories) or their cosmology (ways of life and conceptualizations of their ways of life, knowledge, and sensitivity). Today, all that which never disappeared is re-emerging with political force, challenging the "Latin" American hegemony. This is why the name *Abya Yala* was returned name the territories of the Indigenous peoples, and *La Gran Comarca* was invented to name the Afro-descendant territories. The "Latin" American and Euro-descendants inhabit in the South and Central America. In *Abya Yala*, the Indigenous peoples, and in *La Gran Comarca*, the Afro-descendants. How is this possible? Easy, "Latin America" is not an entity but a political-cultural construct

with economic impact. The same applies to Afro-descendant communities in Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil that inhabit *La Gran Comarca*[6].

On the other hand, linked to territoriality and memory, Afro-descendants, in addition to Palanques and Quilombos (Brazil), created Santeria (America and Hispanic Caribbean), Voodoo in Haiti (French), Candomblé in Brazil (Portuguese), and Rastafaris in Jamaica (English). In each imperial order, different but concomitant spiritual practices emerged that are still present today. Interculturality does not work very well in "Latin" America because the population of European descent still maintains the feeling, consciously or unconsciously, of marginalization (not to call it racism) of the First Nations and Afro-descendant populations. Meanwhile, non-Latin populations, who are aware of this, are now resurging with a political force that was never been lost since colonial times but which today, for various reasons, has gained an impulse and reached a moment from which there is no return. Zapatismo is an exemplary case. The Zapatistas are restoring what has been dismissed, and in doing so, they are also in the midst of an epistemological and aesthetic reconstitution. In other words, they are moving away from epistemology and opening up gnoseology to reflect on all forms of knowing. They are moving away from aesthetics and opening up aesthesis and all traces of feeling.

The third and last point, but there are many more, I will discuss that I have chosen it for the three or four minutes I have left to speak. Much has already been said about what I am going to say; I am not going to say anything new; I am simply going to add a few more elements. In my experience, the distinction between the communal and the social is crucial. When I speak about the communal, people often ask: "Oh, but how, with capitalism, technology, the media… How are you going to convince the state to be communal?" No, I am not going to convince the state to be communal. To think this way is to accept that the state controls everything and that civil and epistemic disobedience must necessarily be illegal and condemnable by the state. Undoubtedly, the state has the possibility of criminalizing any attempt at disobedience. But there is room for disobedience that, even if criminalized by the state, sustains itself and with the support of a large part of national and international civil society. Zapatismo, again, is a case worth noting.

As Rita has already mentioned, the state—today across the globe and indeed in South and Central America and the Caribbean—is masculine, patriarchal, white, or

6    Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America. The Colonial Wound and the Decolonial Option.* Barcelona and Buenos Aires: Editorial Gedisa, 2006.

quasi-white in skin but white in mentality. However, patriarchal states can undertake public policies that show signs of a maternal state, as Rita also pointed out, maternal. This characterization is complicated and controversial. The problem lies in the word maternal, which evokes in the listener the idea of matriarchy and the biological fundamentalism that defines "woman" (I use quotation marks because "woman" is a cultural construct that denotes and connotes a specific type of body, although no type of body is essentially and naturally a woman without the culture that determines roles and divides them between "man" and "woman").

In other words, Rita intuitively pointed out when she referred to the government led by Alberto Fernández in Argentina —since it was the early months and everything was chaotic with the pandemic, the debt, and the opposition supporting the pandemic and the debt—. I sensed that what she suggested hinted at what could be a state (better forms of government) and *matrizticas* (from the Spanish word meaning matrix) cultures, with an "Z." [7] Maturana relates the *matriztica* culture to the will to coexist, which, for him, it is the path of democracy. For me, it is the path toward the *communal* since democracy is a word linked to the *nation-state and society.* The concept of *society, the idea of society* we owe to Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte. The idea of society transferred to the colonies displaced the communal. It also guaranteed the grouping of human beings in competition with each other and separation from "nature." The reconstitution of the communal today can only occur in coexistence with society and the state (again, Zapatismo is an example). Within the communal, there is no place for patriarchy since in patriarchy coexistence is difficult if not impossible, especially in the current situation as we see in the opposition in Argentina and in the governments of the United States and Brazil. Today, patriarchy fosters a culture of hatred, hence the need to rebuild and restore cultures of love in the restitution of the communal. The *matríztico*, therefore, must not be confused with the feminine, nor should the patriarchal be confused with the masculine. Thus, *matrízticas* cultures are both necessary and possible because today, monarchical states or patriarchal nation-states are sustained by patriarchal cultures. When I use this word, many of my interlocutors, almost all of them, react as if matristic were matriarchal, just as many people confuse colonialism with coloniality.

This is to say that *the communal* is a horizon of coexistence and respect in the culture of love. It needs to be built, but things start to unfold when we begin to talk about it, and it is already being done. The communal*,* unlike the *social* in any of its forms, includes

7    I am referring to the school in Santiago de Chile, founded by Humberto Maturana and Ximena Dávila, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kRvZRTpN0Q

the linkage with all living things, of which the human species is a minuscule part. This is how millions of Indigenous peoples in the Americas, Asia, Oceania, and Africa live and think.

However, the hegemony of the *social*, the drug of consumerism, accumulation, and living to work and possess obscure working to live, share, respect, and cohabitate. It is no longer possible to cohabitate in society; competition and hatred are already rooted; we see it in Argentina, the United States, and Germany, and in the Western promotion of the violence that Hong Kong experienced for a long time before COVID-19. I am not talking about inter-state violence but about the culture of hatred in *civil society* (that is, liberal nomenclature) promoted by the right wing and in the United States and Brazil promoted by their respective states. This is very different from the culture of *dignified rage* that motivates protests against injustice and racism, as it is in the United States because of the assassination of George Floyd.

In short, all these highlight factors to be considered in "intercultural" reflections and behaviors: who, for what, when, and where.

# CRITICAL COMMUNITY PEDAGOGY: ETHICAL AND MORAL REFERENCES IN TWO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF CHIAPAS

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# ABSTRACT

This chapter address the hermeneutic analysis of ethical and moral references present in multiple Indigenous peoples of Mexico, Latin America, and the world. However, we will focus on the experience of two peoples of Mayan ancestry from the southern state of Chiapas. The Tseltal and Tojolabal peoples have historically marked key patterns in the conformation of what we can currently call the socio-historical development of these peoples.

In this way, education from the community perspective:

It is linked to the cognoscitive and social transformation needs of the people as subject. This process leads to a continuous encounter with the "other," which formal schooling does not provide, and which man-people redeem in the need to act in society…Life becomes the setting to learn how to solve in everyday life, the diversity of challenges that arise. The experience of the collective is an intersubjective link that transforms into a force to think about reality (Pérez and Sánchez, 2005, p. 319) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Education among Indigenous peoples cannot be confined to the imposed officially hegemonic model, but rather, educational processes are constructed from within the communities themselves, forming individuals as carriers of historical and collective memory. Therefore, in the Chiapas context, the community as a cultural construct includes key elements that define it and turn it into a space for socialization and construction of knowledge since it highlights "the association of a collective with its territory; the historicity and permanence of the community over time, its own institutions and governance; the principles, values, and norms that govern collective life; the identity of belonging; and the shared culture" (Pérez, 2005, p.90). That is, the community plays a crucial role in the construction of the individual.

The spaces shaping the community allow for the articulation of educational processes in the formation of individuals. From this, we understand that

The countryside and the mountains are arsenals of didactic resources where one learns to walk, to find edible, medicinal, and useful wild plants; woods for various uses; stones of multiple shapes, colors, and sizes; the diverse flowers that change with the months of the year; the changes of

the seasons, the influence of the stars on the germination and growth of the plants; the types of soil (some facilitate the germination and growth of certain types of plants, while others are not suitable for these same species); springs of water, streams, and rivers still teeming with fauna today: fishes, shrimps, prawns, snails, and acociles. Each discovery is a moment of experience and learning (Paoli, 2003, p. 88) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish]

That is, the community environment as a basic unit for social life has allowed it to be not only a space for negotiation or belonging to the territory from which bonds and feelings are generated that become relevant in kinship relationships, loyalties, and characteristic ways of life, but it also becomes a pedagogical and didactic reality that is part of the educational and training process of individuals. Because from the community, social, political, productive, ritual, recreational, and collaborative activities are used pedagogically for the construction of cultural knowledge "through the realization of specific activities in specific territorial spaces as the knowledge, skills, and values associated with each activity are generated, reproduced and developed" (Claudio, 2016, p. 128) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

Thus, community work or *komon a'tel* from the Tojolabal perspective is a concept that refers to "work in the cornfield and other work in and for the communities. In other words, *'a'tel* is conducted for life... for the common good, meaning that each and every one has life" (Lenkersdorf, 2006, p. 19-20) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish]. In other words, work is an epistemological, ethical, and moral reference in the construction of community pedagogies, whose emergence is the construction of individuals with a sense of belonging and attachment to their territory.

In this way, multiple concepts specific to Indigenous peoples can be named, whose links between education and daily life are interrelated. Thus, they constitute pedagogies, typical of Latin American peoples, that are now becoming emancipatory critical references that allow them to be conceived as alternatives to the hegemonic, totalizing, and universalizing pedagogical models.

## METHODOLOGY USED

The methodological process used was qualitative-hermeneutic based on ethnographic work conducted with speakers of the Tseltal and Tjol-ab'al[10] languages, both Mayan languages of the state of Chiapas. The systematization of the main concepts addressed in the chapter led to the analysis of ethical and moral references used in daily life as cultural knowledge of both peoples in the field of education. Ethnographic data recovered from older people's experiences through semi-structured interviews in both Indigenous languages were systematized and translated that allowed for a better interpretation of the ontology of being in terms of learning and educating notions within the community.

## TWO CONTEMPORARY MAYA PEOPLES UNITED BY THEIR CULTURAL MATRIX

Although long before the arrival of the Spaniards in pre-Columbian Mexico, there was significant cultural unity among the diverse existing peoples. So much so that Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas in his work *Apologética Historia Sumaria* (1986) notes the connections he observes between the Guatemalan and Mexican peoples, stating that "all this land, which is properly called New Spain, must have had a religion and a manner of gods, more or less, and extended to the provinces of Nicaragua and Honduras, and returning to the province of Xalisco, and reached, as I believe, to the province of Colima and Culiacán" [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

Indigenous peoples clearly formed a unity understood as a macro-area, later named as Mesoamerica, a term proposed by Paul Kirchhoff. This cultural matrix mainly focused on sharing religion, dietary practices, and political systems among the peoples, a triad that would become the primary historical-cultural heritage for contemporary Indigenous peoples.

After this historical legacy, in the case of the Tojolabal people, we can currently find their population centers in the municipalities of Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Comitán de Domínguez, La Independencia, La Trinitaria, and recently in Maravilla Tenejapa.

10   Regarding the way of writing tojolabal, this text will use tojol-ab´al when addressing topics related to the language, and tojolabal when referring to the people.

However, they are also found in other municipalities of the state of Chiapas due to migratory processes. What is interesting is that it is possible to distinguish three ecological areas in the Tojolabal territory such as "the region of the valleys –which covers from the center to the southeast end of the municipality of Las Margaritas– the region of the cold lands of Altamirano– bordered  by the tributary of the Tzaconejá river to the north– and, finally, the region of Las Cañadas de la Selva Lacandona, bordered , in its lowest portion, by the Santo Domingo river to the south" (Cuadriello, 2006, p.5) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

In the case of the Tseltal people, their origins in Chiapas date back to between 500 and 700 B.C. when they began to settle in the  Chiapas Highlands. The Tseltales defined themselves as those of the original word whose concept "evokes a memory of the origin of the Mayan man whose (oral) heritage is recreated in the customs and practices of knowledge" (Gómez, 2004, p.6) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish], particularly the Tseltales inhabit the region of the highlands of Chiapas.

In this way, for the Tseltal people:

> The first signs of identity are acquired, and archaic memory is brought from before birth, from when the spirit or *ch'ulel* enters the fetus's body, in the mother's womb. Their spiritual entity will shape the individual's way of being and character and determine their future personal history. The act of incorporation traverses their two main centers of memory and identity: their spirit or soul (*ch'ulel*) and their heart (*yotan*) (Gómez, 2004, p. 9) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

In this regard, in both peoples, from their mythical memory, "the ethical sense remains that constitutes the faithful individuals on the reason for their origin, whose image emerges from the creative word: truthful. It manifests in a being of recognition, of offering, who shares their fruits with the deities and Mother Earth" (Gómez, 2004, p. 6) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

# CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY PEDAGOGIES FOR EMANCIPATION

Community pedagogies as emancipatory processes start from the construction of knowledge relevant to the daily life of the individuals. Hence, the importance of the cultural knowledge of the peoples, not as mere accumulated and *banking* knowledge, but as knowledge "compelled to understand and analyze its actuality within its own field of forces as resistance and power … as a power, encouraging and subverting from within people their social possibilities" (Limón, 2010, p. 37) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

In other words, cultural knowledge marks a characteristic way of living that involves addressing culture as a sample of the historical circumstances and tensions of each territory since

> the attention to the cultural character of knowledge distinguishes and shows the processes, conflicts, struggles, and resistances of the peoples; the denials and negotiations, verifications, and hidings; the historical oppression suffered, and the colonization exercised from the hegemonic and spaces of power" (Limón, 2010, p. 32) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

It is a category whose ethical and moral implications find possibilities in the context of intercultural dialogue and interculturality in its broad and human sense. Therefore, the cultural sense of knowledge and the relationship established with the community in the construction of pedagogical forms of individual formation find significant roots in the cluster of knowledge inherited in a time and space. In this way, community pedagogies imply that:

> sharing with other individuals and the community is a fundamental value affecting the domestic economy. For example, the products of the land, among others, are shared, generating a redistribution system that influences the satisfaction of needs: security and the feeling of community, as well as respect for the environment, which has to do with the K'anel of life (Bolom, 2010, p. 109) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

It is therefore concerning the construction of new epistemologies not centered on the idea of individuality and the Cartesian separation of human-nature, but on collectivity and intersubjectivity. It is about the pedagogies that aim to make visible the concept of communalism, as Jaime Martínez Luna proposes:

> We are communalism, the opposite of individuality; we are communal territory, not private property; we are *compart-tence,* not competition; we are polytheism, not monotheism. We are trade, not business; diversity not equality, even though in the name of equality, we are also oppressed. We are interdependence, not freedom. We have authorities, not monarchs (2010, p. 17) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Therefore, cultural knowledge highlights the importance of life in individuals. Hence "in Chuj knowledge, the criterion of respect for the *pixan* (heart-soul-spirit) is lived according to a principle: everything that exists has life and from its own and particular quality and realization is constituent and integrant of *masanil yib´anh k´inal* (the totality of existence, of what exists; everything that is, has been, and will be)" (Limón and Pérez, 2018, p. 54) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

That is to say, the plane of existence of daily life fosters the construction of pedagogies that turn knowledge into critical mechanisms of community emancipation since "the community has a sense of mutual help and responsibility insofar as the relationship between people is not sterile, but is built towards common well-being, that is, all individuals recognize and enrich themselves through their connections" (Ramírez, 2017, p. 81) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish]. Thus, the socialization of cultural knowledge as critical liberating references promotes the transformation of the conditions in which the individuals put their knowledge into practice, which have also been maintained for centuries in the face of processes of oppression and domination suffered by Indigenous peoples.

## THE TSELTAL AND TOJOL-AB'AL EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATING OURSELVES FROM AND WITH THE COMMUNITY

From López Austin's perspective, the worldview is understood as "the articulated set of ideological systems and their interrelations in a relatively congruent form, with which an individual or social group, at a historical moment, intends to comprehend

the universe" (2012, p.20) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish]; that is, it is a cultural product that has been built collectively.

In the last decade, reflections on epistemological, ethical, and moral references from the worldview of the Indigenous peoples of the Abya Yala have become more widely discussed and, in some cases, materialized into movements of social, cultural, economic, and political advocacy.

Such as *Sumak Kawsay*, in Quechua, from Ecuador, the *Suma qamaña* in Bolivian Aimara, ñandareko in Guarani, or *lekil kuxlejal* Tsotsil-Tseltal from Chiapas. All these approaches to the idea of Good Living go beyond the concept of conventional development. In this way, "the Bolivian concept of good living sets the standard for understanding what a good life means in terms of Indigenous peoples compared to predominant Western conceptions linked to the idea of development" (Nájera, 2017, p. 24) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish]. This reference to good living achieved formal recognition in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador as life alternatives in the face of the questioned dominant modernity.

Modernity and, therefore, development have justified the conditions of poverty in which a large number of populations live worldwide, where their intervention in terms of capital and ideologies from centers of power have deeply marked the historical evolution of hundreds of populations. Therefore, to speak of development is also "to speak about commercial relationships in which Indigenous peoples are often forced to integrate themselves, a situation that breaks the traditional systems of exchange of goods" (Huanacuni, 2010, p. 27) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish], to mention an aspect in economic matters. For example, in the case of the Tojolabal where the *b'olmanel* (Tojolabal barter) has "transitioned from being a traditional exchange system mediated by the products produced by the same individuals with a sense of reciprocity, to a process of exchange that is increasingly mediated by money" (Nájera, 2018, p. 80) [Translated quoted from its original in Spanish].

From the perspective of the Tseltal people, we can find an endless number of concepts specific to the people that allow us to understand other epistemologies and make visible other pedagogies contained in the daily practices of contemporary Indigenous peoples. Thus, from the Tseltales perspective, the concept of education approaches the translation of *p'ijtesel*, which

> "is addressed as a key concept in community education and is particularly linked to the wisdom contained in the elders. It involves a whole formative

> process in which knowledge is transmitted to young people from within their own cultural environment, which will allow them to build a life vision with relevance to a specific space" (Nájera and Gómez, 2020, p. 90) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

In this endeavor, the *p'ijtesel* also allows articulating a whole system of knowledge specific to Tseltal culture, enabling individuals to acquire wisdom in their language and culture. In other words, it allows individuals to build their own ideological and cosmogonic system from the space and time they live their daily lives. Thus, the p'ijtesel (pedagogical approach) focuses on the link with the social sphere. Therefore, the role of elders (men and women) is crucial, as they will be the ones who pass on the knowledge through long talks, particularly at night, illuminated by the firelight, which serves as a central space and focal point for family gatherings.

Another important space in constructing the *p'ijtesel* is the field or workspace, particularly the *milpa*, which plays a relevant role as a didactic resource where knowledge is taught in multiple fields of knowledge. It encompasses mathematical, meteorological, biological, chemical, physical, geographical, symbolic, and zoological knowledge, a diversity of knowledge acquired holistically, where interrelation and intersubjectivity permeate each activity, the learner acquires. Hence, understanding education from other epistemological forms, such as that of the Tseltal people, shows us that to individuals, "are not taught, but rather they learn... and it implies full activity by individuals, who actively approaches with their senses the environment that surrounds them, in order to know it. They observe in detail the plants, animals, inanimate beings, the actions of adults" (Maurer, 1977, p. 94) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

On the other hand, from the worldview of the Tojolabales people, the concept of education is visualized from the idea of *chol*, which denotes a goal towards which an action or practice is oriented. In terms of formation of the individual, this would imply the concept of *chol*, whose sociolinguistic approach focuses on coming to an agreement and lining up. Therefore, Lenkersdorf argues that

> the term *cholo* explains quite well the way of educating in Tojolabal communities, that is, the traditional education that occurs in informal spaces and allows a human become part of a collectivity or community... education creates a community in which pupils and educators participate and form a US, the *chol* that encompasses them all (2010, p. 208) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

The Tojolabal perspective on education from the community is not explained as an isolated or individual fact but rather is understood as a process that is collectively built from the community and among individuals. Intersubjectivity is manifested as a transforming power since it "is the presence of two individuals and the exclusion or absence of objects, a peculiar characteristic of Tojolabal" (Lenkersdorf, 2005, p. 28) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Therefore, it is crucial to consider that the way of naming and conceiving the world mediated by language is manifested in the worldview of the people, in particular the Tojolabal, where dialogue,

> expressed by the intersubjective structure of two actor-subjects, occurs among equals in the sense that mutual respect is maintained. In other words, in spoken communication, the dignity that each of the dialogue partners recognizes in the other by respecting them is manifested. All communication represents, in the Tojolabal context, the dialogue among equals. To have a conversation involves many modes of exchange: informal conversations, public discourse, children's stories, speaking to animals and cornfiel, and any form of communication we can imagine (Lenkersdorf, 2005, p. 36) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

In this case, for the Tojolabales, conversation and especially listening becomes a vital reference to promote educational processes from the community experiences given that

> in this language, there are two concepts for the term language or word: *'ab'al* and *k'umal*. The first corresponds to the language or word heard, and the second refers to the language or word spoken... the Tojolabales have, therefore, a particular conception of languages because they understand them to be composed of two elements, to listen and to speak (Lenkersdorf, 2011, p. 13) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Therefore, the Tojolabal community pedagogical process has as its primary reference conversation and listening, not from the perspective of the Indo-European languages but from the positioning of this Mayan people, where listening is not confine to the social level, but also involves hearing what nature tells us. There is no Cartesian breakdown, but rather, it is attentive listening to everything else that cohabits and coexists with the individuals since

> if we listened, we would not be in the climate crisis we are experiencing. Nature speaks to us: polar and other glaciers are melting; the temperature is rising; hurricanes are multiplying and becoming more destructive; soils, water, and air are polluted; lucrative and fun tourism is promoted, but rural areas are depopulating. All this is not being heard because what matters are business, competitiveness, macroeconomics...To listen reveals realities never perceived and moves us from the I to the us (Lenkersdorf, 2011, p. 19) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

In both the Tseltal and Tojolabal cases, the NOSOTRICA (us-centric in English) conception in community life is another moral and ethical reference, but above all, they manifest their critical capacity not to exclude or despise any individual but to encourage each person to contribute more thoughtfully. Thus, the 'we' finally becomes a social and community organizational principle.

Finally, the Tseltal reference raises the need to continue investigating the power of community pedagogies as decolonizing pedagogies that break the logic of modern/colonial power, as Quijano (2003) proposes. Delving into concepts or ethical and moral references of contemporary Indigenous peoples allows us to analyze practices that can restore the power of education as a transformative and humanizing life experience, where posing a critical and emancipatory community pedagogy highlights the "critical understanding of history (neither neutral nor aseptic), the recovery and repositioning of the legacies of emancipatory pedagogical practices and knowledge, and the questioning of decontextualized hegemonic epistemic approaches" (Guelman and Palumbo, 2018, p. 193) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

In closing, it is essential to highlight the importance of the knowledge present among contemporary Indigenous peoples, linked to the idea of education that is built from families and consequently with and from the community. We refer to community education as an agent of transformation of the individual based on ethical and moral community references.

In the case of the Tseltales and Tojolabales peoples, based on the approach we have made throughout this text, we can identify two ethical-moral references in the peda-

gogical processes: the first one is about *p'ijtesel*, where it is sought that the individuals become intelligent, wise, learners, or that they are instructed in daily life activities. This must be achieved primarily through the guidance of the elders who become the central figures to share values, practices, and knowledge. On the other hand, there is the observation and practice. Tseltal education highlights the importance of observing and practicing from different individual, social, and community perspectives. As a result, the maturation of the *ch'ulel* as an entity of consciousness has to gradually develop among individuals, fostering the ability to become *true* people with consciousness and thought. Hence, observation should allow one to see, hear, and name the world as a means of self-awareness.

Community practices have become another crucial element in the development of community pedagogies. Among these is the ritual that guides individuals' formation, through which they acquire norms and rules of conduct that they will build throughout their lives to achieve *legal kuxlejal*, the good life.

## SINCE

good living aims to dissociate quality of life from economic growth and the planet's destruction. In this regard, this paradigm constitutes a reaction to the conventional development model. It also corresponds to a way of life favourable for preserving a viable land for all whose resources are equitably distributed…This poses a double challenge that implies the union of human beings between them and with the environment in which they live. Good living implies a good coexistence, based on unity, exchange, solidarity, reciprocity, and respect as fundamental values" (Ortelli and Gómez, 2015, p. 144) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Furthermore, in the case of the Tojolabales, "the ways of naming and relating to everything present in the natural environment correspond to knowledge that is the product of the history of a people in their own ancestral territory" (Limón and Pérez, 2018, p. 42) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. That is, the worldview allows individuals the cognitive and sensitive appropriation of cultural knowledge. From these people, community pedagogy approaches what we have mentioned as *cholo,* in which individuals assume responsibility, and in this case, it is the learning of knowledge for daily life.

From the senses, individuals can know, recognize, and apprehend what is observed, heard, felt, tasted, or smelled in daily life; these are the primary means used by individuals to build knowledge. Thus, community pedagogy becomes "an emancipatory hope recorded in a different ontology from the act of educating oneself in experiential contexts … Hope is projected as far as individuals take possession of their living spaces to learn about reality and to consider transforming it (Pérez and Sánchez, 2005, p. 318) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Therefore, critical community pedagogy from the perspective of contemporary Indigenous peoples privileges the role of learning with a sense of solidarity among individuals in the public space in which they develop. It is thus a hopeful ontology where the social and the communal imply the reflection of "being in itself" and "being for what." That is, what is the pedagogical function of the individuals' education from ethical and moral community references, facing the current society marked by mechanisms of domination and asymmetric relations that lead to despair in the formation processes as Freire states when mentioning that despair "is hope, which, having lost its direction becomes a distortion of the ontological need" (1993, p.1).

Both the Tseltal and the Tojolabal people, from the critical community pedagogy, seek to harmonize a whole philosophical, ontological, and epistemological system based on ethical and moral references where their attention do not focus on an educational project mediated by norms and criteria designed from other cultural patterns, but whose fundamental interest is centered on the development of a historical consciousness that allows to form and transform individuals aware of their present reality, with its successes and its multiple tensions.

The sense of community pedagogy from the ethical and moral references presented in this text is a motivation to discover the wide world of community education that contemporary Indigenous peoples of Chiapas sustain. It allows us to reflect hermeneutically on other epistemic ways of approaching knowledge whose premise is to understand the world that surrounds individuals and not remain only at the level of knowing and intellect, i.e., to understand implies to interpret,

> to exist and co-exist, knowing others to be in others with me. Individuals are neither alone nor alien to the community. They live, take, process, observe, and co-exist individually and collectively. It is holomovement because individuals are born and simultaneously are in a state of not being born, since they are in a constant state of becoming in both self and

> community. They have the ability to define their future (Velasco, 2012, p. 89) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

In this way, when we understand community references from the world, we see the triad that consolidates the cultural knowledge of individuals; that is, family, community, and territory allow consolidation of the social construction of educational knowledge. The implications of community education also include socializing values among individuals since this will enable them to develop objective and subjective relations within their territory.

Finally, the contribution of the experience of these two Indigenous peoples from Chiapas in terms of community education is the formation of their own pedagogical methods for the education of individuals. Methods that have been denied by the monoculture and monoepistemology created in school education, which focus on the individual's formation as a unique person without interrelation with the territory. Therefore, thinking critically about education will imply conceiving other possible ethical, political, ontological, and epistemic projects from and with the view and hearing of other peoples, other cultures, and other forms of life.

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# ASSUMPTIONS FOR A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN AMERICAN INTERETHNIC TERRITORIES

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## ABSTRACT

*Based on the Chiapas, Amazonian, and Mapuche experiences where the uniqueness of the contexts is understood, the techno-political sense that many community educational activities reach is questioned, and where the sense of sociocultural critique associated with various postmodern and poststructuralist approaches has been expanding*. *In turn, new emancipatory practices are emerging that fight the epistemic injustices of the hegemonic sciences and that also effectively contribute to the decolonization of knowledge based on the dialogue of knowledge. In this regard, the text analyzes two relevant aspects: contextuality and reflexivity categories within the horizon of intercultural philosophy.*

## INTRODUCTION

In times of increasing virtualization of formal education, as a result of the recent COVID-19 pandemic that affected all Peoples of the Earth, the legacy of the Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* remains valid. Because today the emerging educational forms have not only had to attend the technical and methodological aspects of non-presential formative processes, but above all, they have had to consciously and critically assume that they do not assume or deepen the enormous connectivity gaps and digital asymmetries that give an accurate account of the dissimilar places of enunciation: some that are recognized, but many that make invisible the enormous inequalities and injustices between knowledge and practices that separate human beings. For Freire, such pedagogy is: "… that which must be elaborated with him and not for him, as men or peoples in the permanent struggle for the recovery of their Humanity" (Freire, 2005, p. 42). Today, the online practices put into effect by governments in this global crisis have been thought more from the active economic sectors and mainly for the sectors that consume, urban, and connected, and certainly not for the social movements and Indigenous peoples where virtuality has been entering very slowly and unevenly into the territories.

We want to indicate from the beginning that any critical pedagogy that accounts for the diverse and unequal socio-historical processes of America inevitably forces us to approach geocultural and geolinguistic spaces where mestizo and Indigenous peoples have lived, and which are not limited to the borders defined by modern states. To give an idea of this and briefly approach these territories, we will consider various segments of the Chiapas, Amazonian, and Mapuche experience that help us understand

the uniqueness of the contexts from which we can question the techno-political sense achieved by many community educational activities.

At the same time, insisting on the critique of the hegemonic habits of techno-science, which conceal a profound domestication and nullification sense of the alternative keys from which it is possible to appreciate diverse forms of the human sense of education that continue to emerge amid efforts to find ways for educational communities in an America trapped in a new global crisis (Salas, 2011). In this Westernizing educational tradition of recent decades, a sense of sociocultural critique associated with various postmodern and post-structuralist approaches has been expanding. Thus, critical theories have emerged and spread in the educational field, stemming from rationalist philosophical traditions, whose topics remain typical of a critique of a subjectivist vision of sciences and technologies, largely maintaining a profound ignorance of popular and ethnic knowledge. On the contrary, this American pedagogy requires to be formulated and thought from its own context, "which is far from being, materially, culturally, and historically, similar to that of the center" (Zúñiga, 2009, p. 607) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

In some of these critical conceptions that have expanded in the last 50 years, unlike Freire's approach, they fail to sustain and define pedagogical fieldwork, and in many cases, they have chosen to limit themselves to proposals within universities and primary and secondary education center. However, after decades, they have failed to permeate and incorporate this questioning approach into teacher training curricula or redefine government policies beyond their functional use. Despite numerous existing initiatives, these specialized proposals do not always translate into the development of new emancipatory practices that challenge the epistemic injustices of the hegemonic sciences and effectively contribute to the decolonization of knowledge and help to advance the dialogue of knowledge. Such perspectives fail to generate the necessary visibility of knowledge and cultural practices of broad politicized sectors of peoples, ethnic groups, and migrants.

The alternative proposals that have emerged in recent years under expressions of epistemologies of resistance and decolonizing education, among others, have allowed progress in a broad deployment of political-cultural categories. We believe that this ideal of proposing a critical pedagogy in its ethical-political sense requires us to think about what might help consolidate the prominence of popular and Indigenous movements that do not conform to the conservative or neoliberal dynamics prevalent in urbanized, modern hegemonic societies and, certainly, develop formative proposals linked to new spaces of resistance and social struggles that are not from the 1970s, and

that continue to define the diverse interethnic territories of Our America. The different forms of critical pedagogy emerging today in various spaces: courses, communities, and Indigenous societies, and in popular and migrant cultures allow for the conception of spaces of social and political transformation that help foster greater prominence of humanity.

 So far, a census of vital, human, and social issues that diverge from the logic of the formal and technological education systems has been compiled. These systems continue to maintain government educational institutions —sometimes in a hidden way— along with neocolonial ideologies and 19th-century forms of hierarchical systems that shape racist cultural systems, discrimination, and social exclusion in basic and secondary education. Moreover, these issues remain prevalent in higher education, defining the training of elitist professionals and a racial sense that continues to support supremacist valuations within social classes and defending nasty borders of racism and discrimination within communities (Mato, 2020).

These observations are also reflected by the significant emphasis that educational cultures place on competition due to a mercantile education model that reinforces families' sociocultural conditions. Today, educational reforms are more interested in regulating the educational market than offering incentives to overcome the admission conditions. It is also concerning how the axiological axes of common sense prevail, as they still reflect the cultural differences between educated and uneducated people in their everyday language, generating hierarchies and classifications of good and bad citizens. Unsurprisingly, these divisions have also been transferred to the organizational system of public and private institutions, secular and religious, monocultural and intercultural, etc.

In this philosophical work on American critical pedagogy, we will consider two aspects that we find relevant to elucidate: one theoretical, where we will highlight two interrelated aspects, namely the contextuality and reflexivity categories, which we have already outlined in some previous works on intercultural philosophy (Salas, 2009, 2011 and 2017). To clarify our hermeneutic and pragmatic assumptions, by *contextuality*, we will refer to the specific historical-vital depth where human communities emerge and the political possibility of advancing towards a path of full and communally supportive human beings. By *reflexivity*, we will understand those human beings' cognitive and affective capacities to advance in a critical and reflective understanding of the world. Both notions, developed in our intercultural journey, are essential to a critical pedagogy for strengthening the role of each individual, community, and people.

We will highlight another empirical aspect related to resistance struggles and decolonization practices of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala. We will exemplify this primarily based on some alternative experiences of intercultural/decolonial education carried out in the interethnic territories of southern Mexico, the Brazilian Amazon, and southern-central Chile. In these interethnic territories of Chiapas, Mato Groso, and Araucanía, we find the sociopolitical axes of the pedagogical struggle for common goods. In all these cases, we will point out the parallelism of some central pedagogical aspects to understand the struggles and social protests in specific interethnic contexts amid the resistance generated by the economic globalization of society (Salas, 2020).

In summary, they allow us to see these contextualized and reflective experiences without overcoming the structural conditions of domination and neocolonialism. It is difficult to make progress in resistance struggles that promote and consolidate a genuine intercultural dialogue, that is, to rethink the different models and styles of development, and a greater rapprochement between individuals and collectives and students and trainers/teachers belonging to the same region, with similar histories, problems, and challenges.

## TWO MATRICES OF OUR AMERICAN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY[11]

The consolidation of an American critical pedagogy in the last half-century post-Freirean has allowed much more systematic work on the achievements of many educational communities supported by popular educators, profesors, and researchers who have questioned the sociocultural models on which formal education is based. They have worked hard to critique colonizing practices and rethink alternative proposals as has been demonstrated first in the literacy proposals, in popular education, in various forms of education, and in intercultural training, which have been subsequently developed. In this process of deepening, let us examine the first assumption of these educational practices.

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11   The ideas developed here are based on an uninterrupted dialogue with Dr. Salas Astrain that began in a CE-ALC-UNAM Seminar in Mexico City in May 2019 and continued at the UC of Temuco, in Wallmapu, Chile until November 2019 and which was later reflected in an initial research work of master's thesis (under revision), entitled: *Antropología Filosófica Latinoamericana. Propuesta desde el Pensamiento de Mario Magallón y Ricardo Salas.*

# CONTEXTUALITY

One of the main problems with colonizing and banking education —as Freire called it — is the absence of references in formal education to the sociocultural practices defined by domination, which hides within its critical sense the possibility of advancing emancipation and overcoming colonizing education. Contextuality for critical educators anchors s to certain *topoi* where the determinants of domination and the possibility for a concrete emancipation are found. Although context can be defined by its structures, it is primarily a quality of human relationships, as all human beings exist in specific spaces that define and condition the vital possibilities of any human being. From here, their valuations and finite practices are projected, which implies an ontology from that singularity. Therefore, the context, which is historical, cultural, symbolic, and certainly physical and territorial, involves understanding vital words.

Contextuality expresses the dynamic, complex, and conflictive form of a prior, pre-reflexive life-world, a historical scenario where intersubjectivity develops; it is a familiar, typical world. In this particular, specific, and situated world, there is an experience of totality; it manifests a part of the whole and is a gateway to the universe of manifestations. It is immediate, personal, it is the space where one loves, lives, and generates culture because human beings are cultural beings. "Since there are no acultural human beings, we always find human beings interlaced with life-worlds…" (Salas 2017) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. They are worlds open to other worlds, not isolated, with ambiguous boundaries where cultural exchanges occur, which are not always peaceful. It is often said that contextuality and contextualities, where cultural exchanges emerge as soft romantic facts, and the painful experiences associated with injustices are avoided. Admittedly, while there may be positive experiences, most of the time, what exists is rudeness, sadness, pain, disorder, conflict, exclusion, discrimination in its worst sense, inequality, war, and mockery, and this negative aspect undoubtedly also constitutes the life-worlds, culture, and the human being.

So, if we are to ask ourselves about a rooted critical pedagogy, some of the main questions will undoubtedly have to be directed at the defining elements of contextuality. We must start from a notion of context in its multidimensionality and capacity to shape, especially, human beings. The decisive point is whether it is done in pursuit of rooting or uprooting. Although it has been repeated many times, to death, that adopting irrelevant educational models does not work, it is still maintained as a systematic and irrelevant practice of neglecting one's own memory and the discursivity of the native

culture. The neglect of one's own history assumes that there is something prior to the singular contextuality of those who are to be educated. It is known that this leads to serious problems in teaching practices and contents because the methodologies are irrelevant, and the meaning of what is studied pulls students away from the symbolic world that stems from the very ontology of the context. Not addressing concrete contextuality leads to an education "to reach" a specific heteronomous culture without starting "from" a cultural, situated, and living world.

Philosophical thinking has been aimed at decoding this anthropological ideal, which we could also call a kind of ecohumanism, but a contextualized humanism in which human history and the planet's history run in parallel, changing and intertwining their own dynamics.

We have indicated that the appeal to "the human" can no longer be formulated in terms of naïve humanism but especially requires outlining the concrete figures of the human and the inhuman amid contextual processes. Contextuality is thus a defining part of the human condition. To educate for liberating humanism implies teaching the awareness of human beings' inhuman aspects within their own culture. Inhumanity also resides within contextuality, especially when teaching fosters the oblivion of the material variables in which human beings live.

Contextuality is the space where a philosophical anthropology, in this case, must attempt to elucidate the philosophical dispute over a model, an anthropological prototype that may or may not play a leading role in the cultural contexts in which it lives, that becomes humanized or not, and in its coexistence with others both those who are near and those who are far away (Salas 2017). Thus, critical philosophy must not only observe and interpret the human being in its context, but also, based on this, be able to evaluate, make judgments, take political stances, and actively propose better forms of coexistence and liberating education, not universal totalitarian, but culturally contextualized.

It seems to us that in clarifying the topic of the human being, the Western philosophical inquiry has focused on describing anthropological alternatives, such as the individual being or the collective being, the rational being or the sensitive being, and historicity or universality. However, in dialogue with human knowledge, it seems unsustainable to me because human beings in our life-worlds are not polarized or forced to maintain those extremes radically. Everyday life, where wisdom also resides, is always situated and open to the whole world, where extremes play and touch each other, exchange,

tolerate each other, and share a bit of themselves. Similarly, pedagogy must have an anthropological-philosophical foundation (to make a better human being), a purpose, and a socio-anthropological horizon (to co-construct a better society). Between the foundation and the purpose is education, which is the instrument to create the best possible history in our specific context. The latter lies between being and becoming, between ceasing to be and being; it is the ongoing becoming. Education must be the consciousness and, simultaneously, the caregiver of this existential and social movement.

While pedagogy should not be pessimistic, it should not fall into romanticism either; education cannot wait to occur in a moment of tranquility but is an act immersed in conflict. Contextuality refers not only to the description of a state of affairs but also to the experience, symbols, and emotions lived within that state of affairs of which one is a part. That is why pedagogy must also be philosophy, a philosophy of education that not only accounts for the state of affairs but also for the social critique order that reproduces symbolisms and imaginaries of cultural domination, and the ideologies associated with the neoliberal communicative order, which can be questioned with reflective emancipatory proposals. Let us consider this second premise.

## REFLEXIVITY

Traditionally, modern European philosophy has focused on self-elucidating human reason as that which determines the essence of the unfolding of the human spirit. It is also known that, in contrast, there have always been different positions that highlight the irrationality of the human being. We know that issues such as thought, reflective capacity, reasoning, philosophical language, i.e., *logos*, have enjoyed a privileged position in the history of Western philosophy, of an unquestionable status. In this regard, intercultural philosophy aims at the horizon of revisiting and revaluing the plural human experience and considering human reflexivity as a rational quality open to other rationalities, to different reasons, and coexistence with other forms of knowledge.

In the pedagogical field, educating in and for reflexivity helps to integrate other dimensions of the human being without falling into relativism of denying the purely rational. For intercultural philosophizing, before what can be said about human beings based on their rationality, there is what does not depend solely on their formal or instrumental reason but on what belongs to their life-world, pre-reflexive matters, summarized

for them in four topics: a) people are life contexts, b) people are formed in historical-social contexts, c) people are part of contexts of ethics and morality, and d) people are culturally "embodied," open to the constitution of worlds and transcendence. We agree that the prior, external, or independent elements of human beings' rational capacity cannot be overlooked. In this regard, Salas (2009) points out: "…reflexivity refers to an inherent process in human cultures, not necessarily modern ones, challenged to dialogue and communicate with other cultures. Therefore, the idea of reflexivity is key to consolidating a critical instance within the demands of intercultural dialogue, as it allows unveiling the ideological forms of rationality as the cunning of power" (p. 15) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

When we discuss educational practices, reflexivity can be the common ground on which an educational space can be established for more horizontal learning.

As we can see, the quality of cultures to put in dialogue reflexive reasons, another way we could also understand reflexivity, is found within the life-world in concrete contexts. Here is where the notion of "experience" becomes significant because the world is experiential. Salas (2017) indicates that "…the experience of human beings has coincidental elements, the life-world (every day), which is mainly characterized by being a prior world" (p. 41) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

American pedagogy, if it makes sense, must consider that all human beings need to advance a critical perspective on the usual forms of socialization and questioning of biased stereotypes that impose forms of domination. In this regard, it is relevant to understand that every student already brings a vernacular culture and that it is not about imposing one culture over another in its diversity of dimensions through institutionalized education. In America, the historical experience of the encounter-discounter of humanity is a collection of social classes and people with differentiated cultures. Not only do we inherit systems from conquest and colonization, but we also belong to a region and cultures in which cultural exchange and the existence of conflictive diversity are, and have been, clearly evident throughout our histories. Our complex historical-cultural contextuality experiences several sociocultural and political relationships, not only as encounters but also as disagreements, confrontations, and conflicts. Moreover, as Tubino (2016) warns, these intercultural relations historically occur under unequal, asymmetrical conditions that we will briefly consider based on three experiences that allow us to cross North to South America.

# ALTERNATIVE INTERCULTURAL/DECOLONIAL TRAINING EXPERIENCES.

## Mexican Experience

It is well known that in Mexico, in addition to the numerous spaces of alternative and self-managed education with a critical perspective emerging outside the officiality of the state, from Indigenous communities, urban peripheries through collectives, religious groups, or in rural areas[12], there are also significant initiatives and proposals for higher education with an intercultural character. They have their origins and purposes in and for their own environment and contextuality in which many cultural worlds co-exist in one. In these settings, rationality is more flexible and open than the predominant instrumental reason in universities of Western modern tradition. They include, for example, the Universidad Autónoma of Chiapas, the Universidad Intercultural of Chiapas, and the CIDECI-Universidad of the Tierra-Chiapas.

Following the uprising of the Zapatista Army in 1994, especially in Chiapas, an organization was promoted, which would generate more or less independent spaces and institutions of the federal framework established for the entire country, that is, spaces whose goals and forms adhered more closely to the concrete reality and less to a national imperative where differences are made invisible (VVAA, 2016). Places addressing social needs such as health and education have been acquiring ever since a more original structure, more in line with the ancestral organization forms of the peoples who live there. Thus, in 2004 and 2005, the Universidad de la Tierra and the Universidad Intercultural were established, respectively. Both experiences are in Chiapas. The first was initiated by civil society, and the second by state institutions. However, both have an intercultural/decolonial perspective on social justice, love and respect for nature, and a role of social impact and struggle for recognition through two essential strategies; autonomy in developing their own curricula and collaboration with other public and private universities with which they share projects for the benefit of the most marginalized.

These institutions are just one example of a non-Westernized education built "from the bottom up" where community work and scientific research are not separate, where the

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12   There are many high-quality, non-official education and research spaces with a critical perspective. In the city of Puebla, for example, there is the Academia de Lenguas Clásicas Fray Alonso de la Veracruz, while in the rural area, there is, Tlanemactiliztli. Academia de Filosofía y Humanidades in Santa Ana Xalmimilulco, State of Puebla.

land is not a resource to be studied and exploited, where degrees are not based on the academic degree but on service. In short, it is an education conceived within its own organized context, based on reflexivity, community dialogue, and attentive to ethnic and local differences.

However, the Chiapas territory, which crosses the entire Mayan region, simultaneously is a new geopolitical scenario that has given enormous relevance to the indigenous movement in recent decades. It is also a scenario of various geoeconomic interests linked to new business megaprojects.

## EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE AMAZON

The Amazon is a vast ecosystem covering a part of South America and expanding into many of its countries, gaining immense interest in international relations. It is home to hundreds of people at various levels of contact with mestizo populations, and it is nearly impossible to reduce all these contexts to certain common economic, political, and cultural factors. Regarding our interest, the pedagogical processes experienced in the countless Amazonian communities are relatively differentiated by the states and societies in which they are deployed. Due to our debt to Freire's work and the persistent ideological struggle carried out by the current government, we prefer to focus on the circumscribed environment of the Tupi-Guarani region. Considering the different levels of contact these Indigenous populations have with Brazilian society, we use the descriptions of the professors from the University of Mato Grosso, where María Aparecida Rezende and Augusto Pasos indicate that, despite this, there are some specific guidelines and political processes that could be common across the entire Amazon.

For these two educators, the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of Brazil of 1988 has become a benchmark. The Amazonian peoples have broken the gag that kept them silence regarding ethnic recognition by the hegemonic society. Since then, the desire to establish an "Indigenous School Education" grew among them. It is crucial –state both colleagues– to involve a dialogue of lived primary knowledge to correct the narrow focus of Western sciences. In order to consider essential dimensions of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom that resist dying and freeze-drying of what in us has already been condemned to "disappearance": our animality.

On the other hand, diverse and heterogeneous social movements have, over the years, studied Paulo Freire and other authors to advise leaders focused on fighting for

land: Indigenous people, the Landless Workers' Movement (MST in Portuguese), and later, Quilombola people. Gradually, the Brazilian situation began to change, and the struggles intensified in the search for land acquisition to survive and thus avoid being exploited by oppressive capitalist systems.

However, in these territories, these struggles for emancipation still face many repressive barriers and, at times, take on very violent shades. The Amazonian peoples have achieved various successes in recovering some of their territories, which in the past had been invaded. Currently, the MST has occupied some lands, and Quilombolas have succeeded in reclaiming some of their former territories. Still, these struggles have provoked the organization of dominant economic sectors in capitalist society — big businessman and agribusiness. In the face of this threat, they will begin a conspiracy to destroy the rights acquired under the Constitution.

In a moment of a severe global warming crises, with a heightened awareness of the biosphere's future for humanity, the political problem is that transnational capitalism, supported by the current Brazilian government, continues to approve the increase of pesticides in food marketed by Brazil, affecting both its people and other countries. In the end, the lands, vegetation, and all forms of Brazilian life are in danger, crying out for help. Still, the profit-driven appetite for wealth concentration causes the voices of those who cry out to be silenced in one way or another.

For Rezende and Passos (2016), the spaces of negotiation and power in society remain hidden and intentionally made invisible. In Brazil's current political moment, there are no spaces to discuss the issue of interculturality. The Senate is made up of people who are opposed to a land reform and family farming policies, prioritizing agribusiness. As a result, initiatives to legalize or expand Indigenous Lands are held back.

## INDIGENOUS AND DECOLONIZING EDUCATION IN WALLMAPU.

Further south on the continent, in the Mapuche territory of Chile and Argentina, Wallmapu remains a disputed territory economically, politically, and culturally. From early on, during the Conquest of the territory, colonial power through religious congregations, established Schools for the children of Indigenous chiefs. Later, during republican times, they were spread in missionary schools where some Indigenous children were educated and then destined for the work of transcriber and interpreter, and they

were then considered key figures in bridging both societies. After the military conquest of the Mapuche territory in 1881, the Chilean state established educational institutions mainly at the primary level where children and young Mapuches of a certain social and economic status were educated. Since the early 20th century, many Mapuche leaders had the possibility of developing new leadership and socio-political networks that would help defend Mapuche's interests by having positions as normal-school professors. Some of them achieved notoriety in the intellectual circles.

In the last decades of the 20th century, a series of ideas and proposals related to intercultural bilingual education began to spread, led by the Ministry of Education. In recent years, this has resulted in a series of intercultural educational projects in the Mapuche territory. Although these projects and practices have managed to spread in many rural establishments and have inspired with certain optimism the idea of an education that positively considers the Mapuche culture, especially influencing broad sectors of the educators' training centers, they have not managed to solve the various conflicts and problems associated with an education subordinated to the Chilean state's proposal. This arises in the disconnection between educational institutions, which lack knowledge of the language and traditional cultural practices, and the different strategies within the indigenous communities.

A major unresolved issue is the role of the traditional professor, a person from the community hired based on their knowledge of the culture and language. Yet it has to materialize into a productive proposal that ensures intercultural and interethnic dialogue.

In summary, the educational projects in intercultural establishments are clearly insufficient in their general proposals to interculturalize education. Nevetherless, they highlight the undeniable capacities of some self-managed communities and many young professors who stand out for their committed work in the classroom, with critical and reflective content.

One of the most interesting projects is the Escuela Llaguepulli in Lafquenche territory. The school's administration consists of Mapuche authorities who have made significant progress over the years in an education that reinforces ethnic identity and manage of Mapuzungun, on the way to consolidating a genuine Mapuche education on the edges of Budi lake.

In short, the brief overview of these three contextual forms of educational experiences, shaped by the tensions and contradictions with national states, shows us that throughout the Americas, social groups, indigenous minorities, and popular movements are in

the amid of severe social and political tensions in the defense of their territories. This forces us to think about critical pedagogy beyond the main questions of the philosophy of culture, such as the aims, values, and principles of education, to deepen a social and political philosophy that considers justice among forms of knowledge.

However, based on the situations described and the specific and differentiated issues facing Mexico, Brazil, and Chile, a set of domesticating themes driven by global capitalism, which pushes towards the creation of development megaprojects that do not consider the interests of the peoples and especially in the interethnic territories. These "other forms" of education in America invite us to better understand our various contexts and not to naively project the power of each state as a decisive element in the unification of the peoples in a united America. In fact, the nation-state has attempted to shape a homogeneous socio-political reality. However, this perspective in our time already crosses the sates' borders because it is often about issues relevant to humanity itself. America is somehow geoculturally united by its own territories and by its people who have been in contact since the origins of the human being on these lands, and the nation states have tried for two centuries to force and separate the peoples themselves.

With this, we aim to value different contexts and propose utopian projects linked to the dynamics of reflexivity, showing us the wisdom richness of less anthropocentric ancestral traditions, whose worldview is more holistic. However, it is not only about Indigenous education, or what is called ethno-education or intercultural education, it rather involves all formative spaces where new spaces that ensure the protagonism of individuals and the collectives are articulated. Therefore, popular and community experiences spread across neighborhoods and transit places of migrants are essential in creating of interactive spaces where human solidarity is lived and a utopia in which we are all treated as human beings with dignity.

When referring in this text to critical pedagogy, we understand that it must promote that liberating educational spaces are not defined by protecting, isolating, or enclosing in an elitist bubble but that it leads individuals to become protagonists of alternative educational and socio-political processes. This pedagogy creates spaces for disagreements and conflicts arising from social and political asymmetries.

# CONCLUSIONS

The current understanding of Paulo Freire's pedagogy raises questions about the meanings linking emancipation and oppression since dialectical processes continue between oppressors and oppressed, as well as emancipation and domestication struggles. In the last decades of the previous century, there were failed experiences and socio-political defeats that must be acknowledged. Sometimes, intellectuals make diagnoses to recognize the responsibilities of others, but there is a lack of critical self-evaluation by those who paid and suffered the greatest cost. American critical pedagogy involves learning from those painful processes, as social movements and Indigenous peoples also face the denial of their reality according to the existing model. Hence the question, as Rezende and Passos (2016) state, is how to find the strength to reorganize and change the social injustices that still prevail. For this reason, these social sectors continue to advocate for a school education that can walk "side by side" with marginalized subjects and Indigenous peoples, respecting their knowledge and wisdom. A school education that returns to the environmental reality of Indigenous peoples and contributes to their growth and respect.

In the different interethnic contexts of Our America, the relevance of social and critical education is recognized. Today, as a result of social crises, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the increase of online technology, critical pedagogy remains relevant to account for the various decontextualized educational practices in times of crisis. It requires recognizing that many Indigenous and disadvantaged popular sectors continue to live today in much more precarious conditions, where processes of violence, racism, and discrimination are considerably increasing, thus diminishing the importance of alternative educational proposals, such as those experienced during the boom period of popular projects. It is still necessary to put on the table the various worlds in tension for discussion that transform students into protagonists and participants in all social and political processes.

Moreover, critical pedagogy must be extended to many other sectors of society. However, it does not always find the necessary institutional support, which is now focused more on order and social control. In times of crisis, many of these new proposals require severe adjustments to assume, in all their complexity, the processes carried out by the disadvantaged popular and indigenous sectors to clarify their tense relationship with the hegemonic society.

In this regard, although the article aimed to investigate how critical pedagogy becomes possible and we focused on a couple of main assumptions that allow us to understand critical pedagogy, we have emphasized the idea of generating shared projects of sociocultural and political rooting. The interest we placed concerning three experiences of decolonizing practices in interethnic territories (Chiapas, Amazonia, and Wallmapu), which can also be found in other American territories; they precisely show that the educational project is not something parallel or different from the dynamics of social processes of struggle in the economic and political fields.

When we state that the two main theoretical enunciated elements of critical pedagogy, i.e., contextuality and reflexivity, allow us to present and support the main idea that an American critical pedagogy requires to become part of the main innovation of Latin American hermeneutics, which is based on the recognition of peripheral life-worlds, linked to indigenous and popular cultures. These are alternative rationalities to the dominant Western rationality, which implies that such underlying logic integrates the narrative and political search for plural and mestizo identities. This approach comes from two types or models of Latin American hermeneutics: a) the one based on communitarian symbolic-religious traditions, and b) the one based on historical movements and subjects that define a continental history of struggles and resistances.

On this path of more than 50 years, Paulo Freire's contribution has been significant in its pedagogical and political dimensions, helping to build such pedagogy as a robust political thought. Our American pedagogical thought is linked to a critical nature because it joins the various efforts of Latin American critical thinking. The educational experiences briefly outlined in Chiapas, the Amazon, and Wallmapu demonstrate that every educational practice is associated with decolonization processes that show the relevance of the specific territorial context and increased political and cultural awareness levels and, at the same time, it is subjected to the practices of violence and police and military control. This implies that it is a type of education that resists being functionalized and instrumentalized by governments and institutions responsible for education.

This political-critical role of Freire's legacy remains relevant, and it is part of the political controversies of the right-wing governments that rule our countries, to the extent that one of the first initiatives of neoliberal and conservative governments has been to inhibit critical popular experiences or simply functionalize them by making them lose their critical impact. It is a media event, confirmed by the rhetoric since the beginning of Jair Bolsonaro's government, that has ostentatiously removed Freire of his consider-

able recognition and merits as a great popular educator and iconic of the struggles of the majorities in poor and peripheral countries.

On this path, American critical pedagogy needs to advance in many other projections currently required in the various levels of formal education. Today, more systematic challenges are needed in the processes carried out by universities and intercultural programs, among others, that could be highlighted. This critical pedagogy must be incorporated into the transdisciplinary processes of universities and training centers located in interethnic regions, and it must especially be open to other knowledge that comes from traditions of thought of Indigenous peoples in the form of a genuine dialogue of knowledge.

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# PEDAGOGIES OF ANCIENT TIMES

*Carla Wainsztok*

# ABSTRACT

In our continent, the philosophy of education has its own name: pedagogical thoughts of the south. We like to name (the) pedagogies of the south as decolonial grammars. By grammar, we understand an articulation between experiences, existences, feelings, and thoughts. Grammars that encompass singularities and pluralities. Grammars of a text that range from singular experiences to plural thoughts, faces, otherness, and politics.

We invite ourselves to read the poetic grammar of the south because pedagogies can be pedagogical poetics. To name the knowledge, the classrooms, the silences, the words, the distances poetically.

To poeticize from the south is to denaturalize pretentiously universal histories, with decolonial grammars, positions of truths that do not conform to a Cartesian Certainty but rather to questions and promises of humanization.

We read and propose pedagogies of tenderness in the humanizations and hands and the sciences and tenderness. The tenderness of pedagogies, the tenderness of teaching tasks. Teaching tasks and works, while we act, we ask ourselves: What (does it mean) to act? Knowledge that knows it does not know, knowledge that knows because it does not know, and knowledge that questions the meanings of teaching. Teaching is leaving signs and inventing palimpsests. And what remains despite the erasures are tenderness and curiosities.

To name the south means to think simultaneously about a continent and contents, a plurinational, complex, diverse meditation. What contents for our continent?

> We call upon ourselves to think, feel, and imagine the potencies and possibilities of other pedagogies. Situated pedagogies replete with eros, myths, and logos.

# PEDAGOGIES OF THE SOUTH

We like to name (the) pedagogies of the south as decolonial grammars. By grammar, we mean an articulation between experiences, existences, feelings, and thoughts.

Grammars that encompass singularities and pluralities. Grammars of a text that range from singular experiences to plural thoughts. Faces, otherness, and politics. Pedagogical grammars are being constructed.

Pedagogies of the south in classrooms, social movements, and cooperatives, and we long for them to be included in (educational) policies as well. If it is a matter of building states of well-being and good living, the pedagogical grammars of the south (our GPS) cannot be silenced. The heart of these grammars is a question: who are we being?

It is a question about (id)entities. What is it like being from the south without naming ourselves? We unname when (school) textbooks speak for us. We unname when we do not know our stories, our philosophies. We unname when the media imposes on us how we should be. To unname is to depoliticize and depoeticize. Poetic grammars of the south are another name for our thoughts.

How to build thoughts-others? Thoughts replete with eros, logos, and myths. Inventing other narratives. Instead of necrologos, we propose living and vital thoughts. Descentered and eccentric logos. Logos other, other logos. Unpublished logos like our times. Unpublished means unedited, what is it like to read what has not yet been edited?

Knowledge from a ancient time, the remoteness of our knowledge and our times. The remote can be the past, the distant, the strange. We are estranged in the face of events, and we are surprise in terms of yearnings. The remote can also be controlled, remote control, remote jobs.

Confusions between public and private lives. The public intrudes into our intimacies, and the private is also the intimate. We long for a "room of our own" where we can think, write, and read. We long for more than just a room of our own; we long for time to think, feel, navigate, and process what is happening, what is happening to us.

We are scattered, like distracted, taking care of our families and our friends; we take care of dreams and lives. Policies of care, pedagogies of care. Dispersions can be self-absorption. Can the world be embraced from a window? Do gazes retreat when looking through windows? How to build meaning from the large window and Windows? Teaching is inventing meaning even in the midst of a pandemic.

We lean out, and we are amazed. Writing and thinking about wonder, writing, and thinking from wonder. Wonder and beginnings, wonder and origins. Thinking from the

original and the origins, thinking originally in these times. If thinking is not original, can it be called thinking?

The thinking of languages. How to inhabit living languages? Communities (that) express themselves in different languages, and thus, think about the languages of the communities. Thinking of the south is thinking about the languages that we speak and those we stop enunciating. Lost languages and new languages. Lost languages turned into loose words and bastard languages. Mottled thoughts,

*Ch'ixi* literally refers to the mottled gray, formed from countless black and white dots that are unified for perception but remain pure and separate. It is a way of thinking, speaking, and perceiving that is based on multiplicity and contradiction, not as a transitory state that must be overcomed (as in dialectics) but as an explosive and contentious force that enhances our capacity for thought and action. (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2015, p 295).

Thinking is not repeating clichés; it is undoing phrases, interrupting repetition to invent new concepts. Inventing even the name of pedagogies, plural and in the plural.

Pedagogies can be an epistolary genre. Thus, they can be letters, exchanges of words, transmissions. Letters sent to the past, the present, and the future. "The creation of the future is a marvelous capacity of language, which articulates time and allows its inflections to make real what does not exist anywhere except in words" (Pradelli, 2011, 67) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Words spoken. Giving words. Letters sent between generations. Words written across generations. Diffuse and complex contemporaneities. Words that invite and communities are invited. Singular and plural letters. Love letters. Knowing how to love and wanting to know. Why is there no word in Spanish that means thinking collectively?

The times of letters, chalks, the virtual and remote times. Chalks draw worlds, destroy sandness. Stories are non-linear; they fold over and unfold. Thus, we would like to draw other shapes, other formations not based on a timeline. What if we invent trees of time? The roots, the branches, and the leaves. The leaves of the tree, the leaf I am writing on. Green leaves, dry leaves. Old and new leaves. The saps and the wisdom.

We throw bottles with letters into the sea. The seas and the lovers. Were we not thrown into the "new world" when we were expelled from other languages?

The curse (*maldición* in Spanish) of Malinche? Wrong-diction (*mal-dicción* in Spanish)? Or the "appropriate" possibility of blaming women for illnesses. The languague(s) of Malinche, Eve's temptation. Stop counting (our) ribs. Women and stories. Who wrote the stories? The women in stories. In the 19th century, our women, including Manuela Sáenz, Guadalupe Cuenca, Juana Azurduy, could battle, write private letters, but not write (the) stories. We invite ourselves in this other time to be southern. Southern is a name, the name of relational thinking and feeling.

We invite ourselves to write letters no longer (only) private. Singular and plural letters and pedagogies. Correspondences between singular and plural worlds. Correspondence between biographies and stories.

The times of the letters, the time of writing, and the time of waiting. Letters and pedagogies have other temporary nature. The time of waiting and dissemination. Dissemination is another name for diasporas. Pedagogies and letters shortened and shorten distances between the sowing times.

Arboreal pedagogies, stories of trees, and knowledge that unfold in communities, transmissions, and generations. In all three, our ways of naming the world, our ways of building worlds, are present. We write and narrate to avoid being spoken by a colonial and racial epistemology.

Can it be taught that we are not being? Can we keep saying that we are *cannibals, barbarians?* How do we teach and transmit that we are being? It is a matter of forming subjects capable of writing, reading, loving, imagining, dreaming, desiring, naming and, above all, knowing and recognizing (themselves).

Knowledge, therefore, fulfills the function of activating the need to be a subject since when we think about the relationship of knowledge, it does not refer to the set of classified contents but encompasses the challenges of being constructed as a subject from the very act of building contents (Zemelman, 2007, p. 28).

Existential, volitional, and emotional knowledge form subjects capable of naming and constructing their own voices. "Who am I? Who are we being? Questions that link us to infinitions more than to definitions. Infinitions and infinite. Definitions enclose, "they excel." Uncloistering languages to build other times. "Perhaps it should be considered whether teachers, in that extremely complex web that involves transmission are not always, every time it materializes, giving with language nourishment that implies the future" (Pradelli, 2011, p 23) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

The development of transmissions, the narratives of our stories, our philosophies, our biographies. How do (social) stories and biographies get entangled? The movements of being beyond gazes and temporalities. The times of learning, the learnings of time.

The dimension of time was crucial in the civilizational conception underpinned by the evangelizing process that sought to redeem the 'savage' Indians and the 'unfaithful' black African and that consequently allowed some to be entrusted and to be enslaved in that great military enterprise of capitalist expansion towards this part of the world, towards this *terra nova* ready to be appropriate and swallowed in its most varied aspects (Albán Achinte, 2013, p 443).

Latin American pedagogies seek to contribute to the debate, to the argumentation of the (other) pedagogical from the south. To put it more emphatically, pedagogues do not have to assume the problems of the human and social sciences. Pedagogy emerged from the affection of parents and the survival desires and forms of coexistence that the human species learned to configure to serve as vital niches. This origin of the pedagogical relationship cannot be forgotten (Assmann, 2013, p 48).

Pedagogies of memories and forgetfulness. The memories of pedagogies, the pedagogical forgetfulness. From that non-forgetting, we invite ourselves to build communities between singularities and pluralities.

But the community, the forming community (the only one we know so far), is no longer being one next to each other but being one with the other in a plurality of persons. And that plurality, although it moves together towards a certain goal, fully experiences a mutual predisposition, a dynamic opposition, a flow from the I to the you. There is community when the community happens. The collectivity is based on an organized decrease of the personal element, while the community is based on its increase and confirmation in mutuality (Buber, 2013, 138).

The mutuality of which Buber speaks is in the etymological origin of the word *communitas*: The Latin *cum* and the word *munus*. "What prevails in the *munus* is, in sum, the reciprocity or 'mutuality' of giving that determines a commitment between one and the other" (Esposito, 2003, p. 22-23) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Therefore, *communitas* is not "a possession but, on the contrary, a debt, a pledge, a gift–to–give" (Esposito, 2003, p. 22-23) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. The gift appears in the perseverance of being, in the will to live, in the will to live together, in the invitation of worlds. Existential communities.

As we said, to transmit is to give the world, and to give the world, one must first appropriate it. To teach what is preserved, that is to educate. Contact with the old (and with the elders), with the dead, and with certain practices linked to custody, collection, record, and compilation, as well as others associated with distribution and allocation is inevitable. As inevitable as the disposition of a select army of agents responsible for practicing this distribution among new generations. When education occurs, the machinery that creates heritage and offers repertoires is set in motion (Alliaud-Antelo, 2009, p 28).

## SOUTHERN VERSIONS

We invite ourselves to read poetic grammars of the south because pedagogies can be pedagogical poetics. To name knowledge, classrooms, silences, words, and distances poetically.

Pedagogical thoughts encrypt the critical by broadening the horizon of rationality. Thoughts, feelings, existences. The existences as potentials and possibilities. From the "plebeian powers," we wish to problematize the ways of colonial thinking, binary and dichotomous thinking. Eurocentrism is

> (…) a binary, dualistic, knowledge perspective (…) It would not be possible to satisfactory explain, in any other way, the development of Eurocentrism as a hegemonic perspective of knowledge, of the Eurocentric version of modernity and its two main founding myths: one, the idea-image of the history of human civilization as a trajectory that begins from a state of nature and culminates in Europe. Two, to give meaning to the differences between Europe and non-Europe as differences of a (racial) nature and not of the history of power. Both myths can be unmistakably recognized in the foundation of evolutionism and dualism, two of the core elements of Eurocentrism (Quijano, 2003, p. 211) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Europe is presented through a spoliating philosophy as a lesson to be followed, a choice, as stories that pretend to be universal and are not. Poetizing from the south is to denaturalize the pretentiously universal stories, with decolonial grammars and positions of truths that do not conform to a Cartesian Certainty, but rather questions

and promises of humanization. The humanities that are not only the sciences. Hands and humanizations. Hands draw other worlds. Knowledge and love. Sciences and tenderness. Gabriela Mistral and José Martí, poetics from the south.

How do we relate to the worlds? How do we connect with otherness? Leaning cannot be forced through pain. The Chilean poet reminds us, and we remember (her): "Without love, your intelligence produces monsters or causes dead (..)" (Mistral, 2017, p. 21) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Knowledge without love can become a fossil. There would be no archeology of knowledge to rescue them. Love and knowledge, love for knowledge. The knowledge shared, in the sharing lies life. The knowledge that overflows lives. What does "knowledge economy" mean? Can knowledge be saved? Vital thoughts that have nothing to do with financial productivism.

And naming grammars that reveal secrets. Why do we say "digital gap"? The word "gap" comes from the French *bréche,* meaning a hole, a dent, a break in a wall, a city wall, or a battlefront. Do gaps conceal inequalities? Economic, cultural, pedagogical, and gender inequalities. If the concept to name the opposite of inequality is equality, what is the opposite word to gap or is there perhaps a silence surrounding the gap?

Against forgetfulness and silence, pollinate of thoughts about the south. "There is a cluster of essential truths that fit on a hummingbird's wing" (Martí, 1961, p. 97) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. For us, Martí is the hummingbird. Martí-the hummingbird, who taught us about the relationship between science and tenderness. His project aimed to "launch a campaign of tenderness and science and to create for it a body that does not exist, missionary teachers" (Martí, 1961, p. 102) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Letters and missions are Martian's materials, missions of teachers, pedagogical missions, and booklets of the literacy campaigns. Martí called his notes letters, which were published in newspapers and journals.

Science and tenderness and where we read and propose pedagogies of tenderness. The tenderness of the pedagogies, the tenderness of teaching tasks. Teaching tasks and works, while we act, we ask ourselves: What (does it mean) to act? The knowledge that knows it does not know, the knowledge that knows because it does not know, the knowledge that questions the meanings of teaching; teaching is leaving signs, inventing palimpsests. And what remains despite the erasures are tenderness and curiosities. Curiosities that were once forbidden and later redeemed. It is only necessary to

remember that curiosity was part of the index of prohibitions during the Middle Ages. Nicolás de Cusat, the author of the Docta Ignorancia, brought it (closer) to us. How can knowledge be unfolded without curiosity? Curiosity as a relation with other worlds. Curiosity to know, curious knowledge.

Curiosity as an inquiring restlessness, an inclination to discover something, a verbalized question or not, a search for clarification, and a signal for attention that suggests being alert. It is an integral part of the vital phenomenon. There would be no creativity without the curiosity that moves us and makes us patiently impatient before the world we did not make, to which we add with something we do (Freire, 2008, p. 33)

Tenderness and curiosity from the south. Curious tenderness. The opposite of this curious knowledge is cruel knowledge.

I would like to emphasize here, explicitly, that this knowledge, regarding this distinct cultural pattern, disturbs some established knowledge in a cruel subject (…). This disturbing knowledge also acquires an absolute value, something truly grotesque, from which it can be inferred that cruel knowledge is, no less, ignorant knowledge. From there, cruel knowledge and those who sustain it will seek, first and foremost, to discriminate against the bearer of that different cultural pattern (Ulloa, 2012, p. 111)

To report cruel knowledge is to continue announcing (…) an education that shows and values cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity and does not preserve the consensuses of the old hierarchical, exclusivist, routine, and sometimes dogmatic order (Fals Borda, 2012, p. 78)

Thinking about the south is thinking simultaneously about the continent and the contents, a plurinational, complex, and diverse thought. What contents for our continent? Thinking and straining teacher training. The languages of tenderness. "narrate with grace; you know that your profession, which is one of tenderness, has forbidden you to be hard-hearted; it also forbids you from being so in language" (Mistral, 2018, p. 29) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The languages of pedagogical tenderness to counteract inequalities. Inequalities are not only economic, cultural, symbolic, gender-based, and pedagogical. Missions, mobile teachers, and mobile schools.

They were easy to create. There was a small table, a radio, and a rural teacher of an apostolic type (…). I keep the memory of those and other ingenious inventions of the great reformer José Vasconcelos, who alphabetized thousands of peasants with the help of missionary teachers, cinema, and radio (Mistral, 2018, p. 194). Vasconcelos, a reader of Martí and Gabriela's friend, recreated the schools.

The atmosphere created in the mobile primary schools among that group of students, whose ages ranged from six years to sixty, seemed precious to me (…) There, I had the joy of learning that the idea of American Indian suffering from an irredeemable intellectual incapacity is an old and unfortunate superstition (Mistral, 2018, p 194).

Are there not mobile teachers today who approach their students? What do they seek and pursue in their students? Being a mobile teacher. Inventions of pedagogical encounters despite distances. Pedagogical experiences in pandemic times. Schools of thought.  New territories to explore and traverse. Reading, imagining as another way of being in motion. Pedagogical movements. The new school and Lake Titicaca. The Ayllú School in Warisata and Gabriela Mistral. The Indigenous matter is not only about the possession of the land.

Sometimes, absorbed, Amautas children of the Peruvian Puna or Cholitos who add a touch of living source among glass-like dryness against the sky where the Anáhuac trembles, or the little Indigenous of Titicaca who sing while the boats flow from their hands like water lace (Mistral, 2018, p. 46).

The lake symbolizes life, which flows between feeling and thinking. The waters flow sometimes gently, while at other times, they stir and spring forth, carrying their memories with them. The course of the lake and knowledge. Knowledge in progress. Diving in search of pearls. Remote Latin American pedagogies. Discourse and speeches. Life (with) flows between feeling and thinking. How are the depths of thoughts and the lake measured?

Pedagogies and readings, pedagogies of readings. "(…) the text is a river, a multiple torrent, always expanding" (Piglia, 2005, p. 20) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. From that torrent, we tell ourselves, we narrate ourselves, inventing (id)entities. Dialogical pedagogies built existences and imply positions, compositions, and not impositions.

Teaching as interpreting, a teacher is a "translator," the tasks on texts are a work of "translation," reading texts and contexts without excuses. Hermeneutics and "culture

circles." Narratives where existentialisms, conflicts of interpretations, and emancipations converge. Pedagogies, theologies, and philosophies of liberation. The deliberations of liberation. Knowledge and concentric circles. As if the word were a small stone, we threw it into the water, and the movements do not cease, the movements of being and the potentiality of touching biographies. Texts, lives, biographies.

Texts and textures, textures of texts. A teacher is also an actor and an actress; they have "roles" to play, and even the class can be a scene. And although they have to say the exact text, neither the text nor the teacher is the same. Like the river and the philosopher who invites us to cross it. How many times have we crossed the river? How many rivers have we crossed? Who are we becoming?

## SOUTH-REALISMS

Reading is reciting, that is, inventing, hence pedagogical poetics of equalities. Equalities as loving irreverences. Reading is not repeating or allowing hearsay to be imposed upon us.

 Readings and interpretations. Readings and essays. The rehearsals of (the) readings. Rehearsing writings, rehearsing works, rehearsing policies and pedagogies. Latin American essays that connect "feeling-thinking." Knowledge and affection. Affections and the effects of knowledge. All education is sentimental; all reading is sentimental. "Passion of reading, a lovely fever that almost matches that of love, friendship, championships" (Mistral, 2018, p. 56) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Teachings and readings, teaching readings. Teachings and writings, teaching writings. What modes of authorship do we create in the daily life of our existences and experiences? What does it mean to think about our practices? What (is) writing from the south? How do we build pedagogical records? Logbooks that give us hope that paper boats will continue sailing. Who has access to the readings of our experiences?

 To be an apprentice of thought, to be a writer of stories that lovingly intertwine pedagogies and philosophies. Pedagogical thoughts, pedagogies of thoughts.

Desires as materials of pedagogies, desires as unfinished subjects of an "educational system"? What does it mean for education to be a system? Educational budgets cannot be just economic; our pre-suppositions are equality, lovingness, freedom, and diversities.

Problematizing pedagogies that invite us with other pedagogies, other pedagogies, full of life, phenomenologies of tenderness. "(…) life is there and works with the obstinacy of the wave against the firmness of the cliff that imprisons it" (Taborda, 2011 b), p. 61) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Pedagogy of life, man and woman, they asked themselves questions: "Taken from their original world, from the total world, this man addresses beings and interrogates them" (Taborda, 2011, p. 253) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Taborda, the teacher and pedagogue, states that the being thrown into the world connects with it through curiosity and questioning: "In every cognitive situation, man interrogates the world and asks for an answer" (Taborda, 2011, p. 253) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

To question the world is to humanize it; in that case, the answers are human creations. Hands and humanizations. Humanizations and dehumanizations. The humanities that are not only sciences. The humanities and the narratives, every life counts. Every life counts if it can unfold; otherwise, we discuss precarious and precarized lives. Broken and discarded lives. "Low-cost" lives. Low-cost means that the market and meritocracy govern them. Desperate lives.

They say that Scherezade narrated every night to avoid death, and perhaps that is true, but it is no less true that Scherezade enchanted the listeners and charmed the night. What do we tell in schools? With whom do we narrate? Do we enchant? "(…) storytelling is half the lessons, storytelling is half the schedule and half the management of children, when, as in an adagio, storytelling is enchanting, with which magic enters" (Mistral, 2018, p. 59) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. The pedagogies that tell stories for children, youth, and adults. Why believe that pedagogy is only for childhoods? We must stop sheltering only children under the word pedagogy. Or do not adults, who were once expelled from the "system," also need science and tenderness?

The pedagogies of the south dream of alternative literacies, of inventing geonarratives. If geography is the drawing of lands, geonarrative is the name for thinking and naming from the south. We are being amidst words; we are becoming words. Being/South. Becoming south. Feeling and thinking the remote, the strange, the (yet) unknown, the present, and the becomings. Becoming in words, becoming in welcomes and good living. The remote Latin American pedagogies and the textual relationships of existence.

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# TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATION IN DIALOGUES BETWEEN CULTURES

*Mauricio Langon*

# ABSTRACT

The goal is to understand education from an anthropological perspective. To this end, we will focus on some concepts that are part of the conceptual constellation we will navigate. We will look at and listen to a concrete scene in which this perspective is conceived. We will conclude with contributions to defining criteria and questions to plan, implement, and evaluate educational settings.

# INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to *reflect on and discuss education*, e.g., the specifically human actions of *educating* and being *educated*. The *school*, invented in classical Greece to learn, takes children out of their homes, out of their private spaces and times where they learned to eat, walk, talk, and other things to educate. A *pedagogue*, an enslaved person, takes them to another place, a *public* one. There, a world beyond the home will open up to them during a *free* period. I propose we give ourselves this "free" space-time for writing and reading to experience thinking about education together, in reflection and discussion, in a world without enslaved people.

Reading and writing (like the means of remote encounters provided by current technology) enable meetings in and from distant times-places. They are configured as a *place* (an *ára*: a specific portion of space for a certain time). We built it, and it constitutes us as a group.

 I hope this text becomes a resource to view education more broadly, allowing for better addressing its problems.

We will go through an anthropological perspective to understand education (1) we will pause on some concepts that are part of the conceptual constellation in which we will navigate; (2) we will look at and listen to a concrete scene in which this perspective is conceived; (3) and we will conclude with some contributions aimed at defining criteria and questions to plan, implement, and evaluate educational settings (4).

This text aims to discuss open and provisional results. The presentation moves back and forth between solid dichotomies, with one foot in the clouds of theoretical abstraction and the other in the ground.

# AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION

## "Education" is used in many ways.

Although they seem to be discussing the same thing, very different issues are discussed when referring to education. This is a serious ambiguity because, without questioning the concept (how it is defined, its meanings and functions, why, for what, and how human beings *educate and are educated*), assumptions that prevent us from *thinking about education as such* are accepted. These assumptions even deny education.

Some believe education is *unnecessary, superfluous, or useless* due to alleged *biological* conditions that would cause some to be *unteachable* while others would be self-sufficient. Or because of the naive belief that educating is letting something that *is already* within each individual emerge. Or because they see education as merely a *means* or *instrument* for a country's particular purposes (expecting it to produce *development*, improve its *competitiveness*, provide work for its people, eliminate poverty, or teach how to survive with minimal resources).

But it is not possible to sustain a rational discussion about something without going through the "first operation of intelligence," which consists of understanding what lies "behind the words," that is, in defining the concepts (Thibaudeau, 2010, 21) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

We will focus the education on an anthropological framework and its *anthropogenetic* function. Education consists of the human activities of teaching and learning, which generate and provide continuity to hominization (anthropogenesis) and humanization processes. It integrates the internal processes of each group that has *become human* in a specific *place* (in which it exists and gives meaning) to make its *newcomers* human, thus continuing their special way of remaining human.

The processes of existence and consolidation of our species occur within different human groups in this variable, conflicting, and never fully closed processes, which are partially conscious. These processes, in turn, institute, continue, and modify the group and its habitat. Their origins are lost to us in infinite regression into the past, and their end appears undesirable and dissolves into an unpredictable and unprojectable future. Thinking about our human time, our historical being, requires placing *its rationality*

not in the static and timeless concepts of *beginning and end* but in the historical and contingent *meantime* of *human existence*: both personal and collective.  It is not a matter of thinking about becoming by *ordering it* from the unmoving but thinking about it within life itself, in the spatiality and temporality where we *find ourselves and are being*.  Places-times *where* different groups and people *meet.*

The *encounter* invites conflictingly to approach and to distance, to love and to hate, to coexist and kill, to get involved and to flee, to get together and to isolate. The encounter can be a clash (of cultures, rationalities, interests): not recognizing the other as human, wishing to exterminate them or, if not, to subjugate and use them, or at least isolate them. This path has multiple variants: the violent recourse to physical force, which is formed and accompanied by reasons, propaganda, and "education," more convoluted ways that can spiral into "vertiginous" violence.

 The moments and places of encounter (all of them, but here we particularly consider educational ones) can also be places of *dialogues*, advancing *through* or *among* the diversity of people and human groups despite and thanks to their different ways of feeling, valuing, thinking, and doing. Here, we support the alternative of transforming educational places-times (and others) into encounters of dialogue that, in essence, are always intercultural among cultures.

In the current situation of *globalization*, which makes the world a macro-space *between* cultures, considering "encounter" as problematic by recognizing the *conflictive*, *limited,* and *social* nature of humans, and adopting a radical, philosophical, and dialogical perspective in education, seems necessary.

## What Do We Mean When We Talk About Education?

Education is a phenomenon inherent to each human group. It basically consists of *shaping its new generations as humans, specifically as humans of that group*. Education makes human beings of that group distinct from others.

Each group becomes human in its own way: it generates its own ways of feeling, valuing, speaking, thinking, acting, imagining, constructing, believing, and creating. It constitutes its *culture* broadly: from giving meaning to both singular and collective existence to its ways of *working* in, with, and on "nature," to imprinting its "spirit" in "ma-

terial" works: cave paintings, pyramids, skyscrapers, symphonies, epics, theories… Culture as a whole operates as a *system*[13] prior to each singular human, providing identity (self-importance) and meaning to the existence of the group and its members. In this way, they mutually recognize each other as humans and, as such, as valuable.

Education is enculturation: an internal process within each human group through which each group provides its previous culture to the new members who will adopt it. It gives them the sense of being human in and of that particular group, which has been generating, transmitting, systematizing, repeating, changing, solidifying, or reinventing that culture through their experiences. This culture includes the resources available to new members to face the world and its changes without losing the sense of their lives.

## Education and Conflict

Human beings "of flesh and blood" are part of the same biological species with distinctive, exclusive traits, such as living in organized groups, having language, and being capable of reasoning. As we know, value, decide, and choose, we can act freely and are mutually responsible for our actions.

To educate and to be educated are human activities that we conduct with awareness, will, and freedom, conditioned by the culture and education that enable us to exercise them. Education is guided and carried out by assuming conscious strategies and practices. Hence, it is not mere repetition, growth, and reproduction of what is already given, as if we all shared the same language, goals, and techniques[14]. We are human, we are diverse. Educational activities are thought out, discussed, planned, and carried out in society and consciously.

13   The Guarani *mbya* use the term *eko* (*reko*, *teko*), usually translated as "culture," "customs," etc., but they always translate it as "system." They compare "our system" (the mbya) to "your system" (or the "whites"), and you have different internal coherence, which is not immutable. In their sacred music, they use violins and guitars, they speak several languages and use watches and calculators. They preserve their evolving cultural identity intact. They refuse to send their children to school. They ask for land that was taken from them. They suggest intercultural houses of wisdom. We talked with them as usual: drinking *mate* [A traditional drink made of caffeine and herbs].

14   Reference of Biblical text on the Tower of Babel (Beresit or Genesis, 11, 1-9).

*Conflict* is, therefore, constitutive of what is human. To try to erase it would be to renounce being human. But it is difficult for us to assume the challenge and responsibility of being what we are: equal because we are diverse. Capable of desiring and valuing different things, thinking differently, and acting in the most varied ways in activities impossible for other living beings. Because we are different humans, we are in conflict. What the Greeks called *logos* (human language and reason) is a way to process our way of being or being in conflict, not to eliminate it. Wanting the end of conflict is wanting the end of human rights because it means not recognizing "other."

The human consists of *interrupting* deterministic, unconscious, or extra-human processes by a specific human action. This specificity allows the possibility of freely and responsibly guiding educational processes so that we remain human.

The great educational challenge is to ensure that the human task of *homanizing through education in diversity* continues and deepens.

I will present the constitutive conflictuality of education from two different and complementary approaches.

## Education in Intercultural Conflict

We all become human by internalizing the culture of a specific group through endogenous educational processes, which leads us to consider the members of other cultures as *not equal* (as essentially inferior or superior). Those of us who have become human by living different and even contradictory millenary experiences tend to incarnate in others (persons or peoples) our fears, hatreds, or submissions to the point of personalizing in them our image of the monstrous and threatening or the ideal or good. We tend to embody in them the *models* of what should not be or what should be. What should be eliminated or should be emulated.

These tendencies occur when we feel inferior, in imitative educational models, to be able to reach (for example) the *development* of other countries, *copying them*, following their formulas, and measuring ourselves by their standards.

When we feel others are inferior, we attempt to transmit our languages, beliefs, habits, knowledge, techniques, and skills that would allow them to become "people like us,"

making them cease to be what they are. "Integrating" them into our society in a subordinate position or "excluding" them for their culpable failure to become like us.

The fact of cultural diversity and the conflicting difficulty of *understanding* each other make intercultural conflict a constitutive problem of current humanity.

Education can and must be thought through and discussed to guide collective decision-making processes with criteria that orient it towards a liberating and dialogical perspective.

Education is founded on transmitting of *past* experiences (past dangers faced together) by the ancient generations of a particular human group. The resources forged in their specific history to face what was then "different" and "new" might be inadequate for today's challenges. This solid cultural foundation also provides meanings of human life and even resources to confront (consciously and unconsciously) unforeseen challenges. But these must be sufficiently ductile to constantly reformulate themselves to face something that *had never happened* but is indeed *happening* now and *could happen* in the future. Therefore, the mere application of outdated methods to new situations does not guarantee success and often dissemble creativity. Hence, it is necessary to have an education in which everyone questions their culture, reinterprets it, resignifies it, and reinvents it in the face of new situations.

That is why educational activities must include criteria for critical reflection, even on their own tradition and culture, and be open to the contributions of others, developing creative capacities. They should allow internal discussions and admit heterodoxies, apostasies, and conscientious objections that enhance each culture by opening it up and protecting it from its own sclerosis. In two rich and very different perspectives, Alberto Buela defends *dissent* and Fornet-Betancourt advocates for *cultural disobedience*. The diverse experiences generated in the internal conflicts of each community should be included in the education of each culture, as well as the capacity to listen, openness to the new, willingness to change, and dialogue with others.

## Conceptual Constellation

I will present some ideas to consider for educating from a liberating perspective, both *intra-* and *intercultural* aspects. These are different approaches that, together, do not

constitute a system but rather a *conceptual* framework, with *seminal, protean,* and *fermenting* characteristics.

## Geoculture

Kusch (2000, III, 251 ff.) defines culture in these terms: "Culture is not only the spiritual heritage that the group provides to each one, and that is contributed by tradition. It is also the symbolic bulwark in which one takes refuge to defend the significance of one's existence. Culture implies an existential defense against the new; without it, one would lack the elements to face an incomprehensible novelty" (id. 252).

Thus, education can be considered an *intracultural* function of hominization. *Our* culture conditions us; it makes us members of the same *human condition* as others, and, in that very act, *it differentiates us from other humans*.

However, Kusch arrives at this conception by reflecting on his "fieldwork." He feels a great distance between the researcher and the investigation and understands that the difference lies "in the cultural mode that has been embodied in each one." It is "a difference of perspective and code" and, as such, "questions the possibility of real communication." It presents us with the risk of being "untranslatable" and unable to communicate from one group to another. Kusch highlights the difficulty in specific experiences where the interlocutors cannot understand each other due to cultural differences that condition the meaning of life for each. Therefore, "a dialogue is, above all, a problem of interculturality" since "the existence of the interlocutors" is at stake (Kusch, 2000, III, 251 ff.). Thus, it is not only a communication problem or transmitting or exchanging messages; it is a matter of life or death; it is a matter of *dialogue* between cultures.

With the idea of *geoculture,* Kusch intimately links the place of residence with human life. He adds "another matter, which is achieving an *existential domicile*, a zone of habituality in which one feels safe." There is this mutual implication: "the group's thought (…) takes on the task of clothing the habitat with a cultural landscape," which, thus, "is always subject to a culture;" and, at the same time, "it is a thought conditioned by the place." It "refers to a firmly structured context by the intersection of the geographical with the cultural."

The concept of geocultural unity, this "idea of a thought resulting from an intersection between the geographical and the cultural," leads him to question "absolute knowledge." No knowledge that is unlocated, uprooted, deterritorialized, or deculturalized. And it is not about "establishing *ad hoc* a so-called universal thought, but about discovering in the gravity of thinking, that is, in the ground that sustains it, a real picture of itself that encompasses all the variants of its way of being universal." This "constitutes the restitution of a real model."

## Place

It is about working in every specific *place* where *education* occurs: educational places. A "place" is not a hollow "container" within which things and events are placed or occur. No pre-defined "things" are then put in relation to each other.

In other words, a *geo* point of view does not proceed by mechanistic analysis. It does not separate the "simple" parts to consider them outside the relationships in which they are and then reconstruct the complex real unity of, for example, a clock. It proceeds inversely: it ventures into the complex unity of the concrete place that is being constituted as such while at the same time constituting its parts in that relational place. From this perspective, the place implies time, duration, history, change, and incompleteness: it is being constituted and it is under construction. Its plans and projects are not pre-given (no clock is already made at the starting point). Thus, they operate as guidelines for the path rather than as goals to be reached.

On the other hand, no place is *isolated*; it exists in and among others with which it is already in relation, affecting its interior as it influences the exterior.

I propose thinking of *educational* places (formal and informal: every classroom, every experience, every institution -educational system, school, family, neighborhood, mass media, ICTs-) as scenarios that are "among" cultures, where specific scenes *of intercultural encounters* occur,[15] with actors who have been shaped in other *endogeocultural* educational scenes. Each scene has its beginning, *duration*, and conclusion, opening up to *subsequent* spaces that are quite unpredictable.

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15   Of course: also, inter-generational. But all dialogue involves interculturality.

I speak of "scenes" as each of these can be considered a unit in itself: *Temporo-spatial*, *geo-historical*, in which interlocutors, previously forged in different *geocutlures* meet (in the sense of come into contact and in the sense of they are. A contingent, *new, defined, changing, finite* unit.

The idea is to try to understand its own movement *while it* is becoming, in the *meantime* of each concrete scene. Because it is that historical *meantime* that must be understood and acted upon since it is *in* this *meantime* that our existence unfolds, and *from* this contingent condition, we think, act, and live. It does not seem righ to me to try to understand the historical and changing from immutable to eternal. Nor *ordered* by *obedience* from *principles* nor *ordered* by post-historical projects.

## Actors

In every "discovery" that there is another, in every encounter with another, the existence of all interlocutors is at stake. And it is an interculturality problem.

The space *between* cultures opened up when encountering others appears as a void where something unpredictable *occurs*. It is *a place of unexpected encounters with the unexpected*. It is better not *to seek them*. If they happen, one is on alert; mechanisms of defense and mutual distrust operate. It is best to leave the field, cross to the other side of the street, *avoid* the encounter, return to the shell, retreat, and take refuge in that zone of habituality where one feels safe.

The encounter is sometimes *sought* and sometimes *unavoidable* or sought by some and unavoidable by others. Thus, the encounter *occurs*; it happens; it makes a place for itself. This place can be confrontation, fight, violence, or war; a *conflict*, a *clash of civilizations*. For one, the *other* is not a problem: they already know what to do with them. For others, who want to live their own lives, it is a problem. The temptations to *defend* oneself, to kill, or to isolate oneself as *security* measures are strong.

Proposing dialogue is to *seek it, to want it, to want it to last, to want* the other: it is a condition of becoming human. Not wanting the encounter or not wanting it to last is not accepting to be human.

It is not dialogue if it is merely converse between those who maintain their group's purposes, values, or interests and negotiate agreements, provisional armistices of armed peace, and alliances using *strategic reason*. It is not dialogue when it is only *geopolitical*, when pre-constituted entities (state, country, bloc) enter the strategic game, always calculating *against* others, defining *friends* and *enemies*, and turning politics into a weapon of war. That is for those who want the same toy and fight over it, like those German princes and brothers who are equal even in their desire: Milan.

The geocultural perspective does not conceive *subjects or actors as essences of already definitively constituted entities* but as *self-constituting agents* and of the *places* where they are with others. None is in *the* absolute knowledge that they want to transmit to others. It is a matter of advancing *through different ways of being human*, in dialogues, in a permanently open process of human constitution (individual and collective), of *coexistence* among various people.

Our proposal to consider educational *scenes* includes the actors participating and constituting their own movement.

## A Scene of Encounter Between Cultures.

With the outlined perspective, we analyze a concrete *encounter between cultures* in the context of a research project between social scientists and young people from the *cantegriles* (shanty towns in English) of Montevideo. The former was interested in recording and understanding the meaning (or meaninglessness) that the latter attributed to formal education. I will mainly focus on the discourse by one of these, whom they called "Kevin."[16]

## Limitations, Realities, and Potentialities.

A space and time are generated where people from *different cultures* (researchers and the research) *meet*, a *place between* cultures.

16   See hypertext "Educational experiences of a young man in a Montevideo shantytown."

However, the process that unfolds is *internal* to an activity (research) that belongs to one of the cultures that meet there, not the other. The scenarios, the selection of the young participants, the activities to be carried out, and the time to be dedicated to them were carefully designed and prepared (*invented*) by the researchers as suitable instruments to fulfill the purposes of a certain culture.

At the same time, these activities open, create, generate, and produce and are places of *intercultural encounter*. They are *guided* by researchers, who enable the circulation of the young people's words—*make them speak*—and make them *listeners* (and later interpreters) of the voice of others.

It is not an educational place nor one of dialogues. There is no exchange, discussion, feedback, suggestions, decision-making, or proposals for future actions. Nor is there violence or denial of the other. It would seem that once finished, no paths remain open for continuity or follow-up. There is no continuation of activities towards *intercultural dialogue*.

It was a strong *educational experience* for its participants. It will impact those young people who are not usually listened to by others, nor do they speak. It will influence them in unpredictable ways in their future actions. But we will not know that. They are not from our culture, from our group.

For the researchers, it was a tense and productive *educational* experience, learning, thinking, growing sensitivity, commitment, and intellectual demand experience. It will influence their future actions, and we are finding out about this because they communicate it to their communities, paving the way for new *scenes*, which, in some way, will continue their movement in other *places*. I even wrote a joint article with some of them.

However, there still needs to be places for sustained intercultural dialogue.

## What Educational Problem?

What educational problem occurs in this scene? Considering this will enable us to consider how *to reposition the discussion about current educational issues* using the framework of intercultural dialogue.

In the presentation I just made, I assumed that between the researchers and young people from the Uruguayan *cantegriles*, there is a distance similar to what Kusch identifies between peasants and researchers in northern Argentine. This distance is not smaller than that which separates the authors of the Altamira paintings from the tourists who manage to visit them.

It could be misunderstood that the Argentine researcher, who assumes a tradition with Western roots, understands that the difference in crops by peasants of indigenous cultural tradition is evident, which creates an intercultural gap and blocks dialogue. Therefore, this does not apply to the relationship between young people from Montevideo and teachers, professors, and researchers from the same place.

On the contrary, considering the discourse of "the Kevin" about education will allow us to discover the geocultural gaps created everywhere in today's world and lead us to think about educational problems from a different perspective. [17]

In Uruguay, it is believed that one of our primary *educational problems* lies in the difficulty of (re)integrating marginalized young people (the "neither-no," those who neither work nor study) into the formal educational system, which is expected to transmit knowledge and useful skills to compete under equal opportunities in today's world. Conventional *social-educational policies* promote various more or less specific actions for this purpose.[18] Even the Army has offered to *educate them*.

Based on the investigation, it emerges that the issue of school dropout or failure is not the educational problem *of* these young people. It is the failure of an education system that denies their otherness, attempts to change their ways of being, and *transfers them* to cultures, spaces, and groups that are *foreign* to them. They resist this, even if it means staying away, but remaining in the slums, squares, streets, and other "non-places" of the city.

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17    I found this observation by Kusch iluminating: "…our resources are from another culture which is the popular one" and "as I already demonstrated once, it is 'Indigenous' but in the sense of non-colonized, in the same measure as French slang generates Indians in the suburbs of Paris" ("Aportes a una filosofía nacional" 1979, in OC. IV, 27). My proposal is to think of liberating education as places of inter-geo-cultural encounter in dialogues.

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18    At the time of the research, the young people interviewed were in official "reintegration" programs.

## Educational Institutions According to Kevin

From primary school, Kevin feels at least uncomfortable in a formal education strange to his life. He learns to adapt to a world that is not his own: "not to be out of place, to have respect for older people." He learns to remain silent and obey: "They told me something; I kept quiet and did it." Submission and silence are survival strategies too: "I knew it would serve me."

His rejection of a secondary education that rejects him is expressed in a term that marks a radical valuation distinction between the 'us' of the young people from cantegril and everyone involved in education (teachers and students). "They are arrogant, you can tell, the way they talk, the way they look, the way they all stand together," "they are all arrogant." An anthropological and ethical distinction criterion that guides judgments and (re)actions that deny those others. And it suggests violent actions: "It makes you want to… all of them together, tie them all up and slap them in the face!"

 When educational institutions can no longer offer these adolescents anything other than *repeating* courses, they try to *retain them* by making it *mandatory* or *attractive*, and by creating ways to *reintegrate them*. But they drop out, come back in, and gradually withdraw. They are stigmatized: *dropouts*, *failures*, "*neither-nor*" They assume failure as their own.

Kevin finds no place in the world; he will live without meaning, and he will die soon: "I regret being born, I am sick of being alive, I am a bandit, my life is a garbage dump, at 25 I will die".

Soon, the repressive system comes into play. Delinquent (or not), Kevin is interned in a INAU "home."[19] There, he learns to "learn a hard lesson," to have "good behavior," and to avoid punishments. But the rejection deepens: "I hated everyone."

He begins to take an autonomous (supportive, rebellious) moral position: "I do not get anyone's rules; I do not like orders; I make my own rules." Also supportive: "I always helped."

19    Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents"

## The Real School According to Kevin

Kevin says he did not learn "anywhere; everything was on the streets," "all alone, without anyone." A very specific "nowhere" and among many with "the love of my life and my nightmare," "/I learned/ to listen, to give advice, to not feel alone." "On the streets, you will find love, you will find respect, you will find hatred, friends, you will find enemies. You will find many things, but at the same time, you will find nothing." Meeting place: of everyone and no one; of everything and nothing: "This is the school, this is the real school, that of always studying, filling notebooks with words, that is not school, this is school."

When Kevin is asked to imagine an educational place, learning appears in the sense of an *encounter* between humans that enables the configuration of meanings, human lives: "A place where life is learned. You have to learn, learn to walk, learn to see people, learn to listen to them." A place to learn to be human among humans. A place to continue and deepen the vital encounters of *the street*, opening them up beyond the close group in dialogue with others who are geographically, culturally, and age-wise different. Education as vital encounter, reflection, and dialogue, not as the accumulation of knowledge that might be helpful.

It is also a place to learn to *survive* in a world where relationships, the value, and the meaning of things and human beings are subordinated to money: "Learning how to manage money, learning what money is; many things."

## Meanings Attributed to Educations by the Actors

The research suggests that adolescents who have been through the formal public education system perceive it as a "void", a "nothingness", an "absence of meaning", a space and time where nothing happens to them, which "does not affect them." According to this, this experience would have no educational effects. It would be something like a non-education, something that does not take place, a timeless non-space, a non-geoculture, a suspension of the human.

In contrast, they also conclude that these young people attribute to this education the significance of actions against them, "to deny and negate who they are;" they ex-

perience it as an *"alien," "*strange," "arbitrary, absurd or unfair*"* education, which does not allow them to *"form"* or *"transform"* themselves and that inscribes "failure as a mark" in them (Ruiz Barbot, 2015). An institution, then, that affects them, alienates them, a danger that threatens their existence; a form of attack on their way of life from which they must defend themselves. In this line, intercultural conflict and the conflict between different ways of being human are more adequately visualized.

*Meeting* places become areas of conflict, of imposition of some over others. The research observes that educational institutions (their actors, broad sectors of society) perceive these young people as *responsible* for situations of social insecurity. They are placed "as foreigners" or as those who "do not learn," "cannot," "do not know." Or "who do not want to learn, who do not want to be someone in life." Or who have "learning difficulties" or "social pathologies." They are constituted as *the problem*: they are "dangerous," "violent," "aggressive," "anomic," They are "freaks;" they are "what one should not be." "They would have to (...) be corrected, straightened out, normalized, silenced, denied." "The pedagogical order must erase them." They must be taught that it is wrong to be this way and that it is right "to be that which they are not, that which they are not being and that they will never be" (Ruiz Barbot, 2015) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

I am proposing to change the point of view that makes educational spaces places of conflict and imposition of one way of being human, one sense of existence over others. Rethink *public education* as an *agora* that *starts* from cultural diversity and its conflicts among its actors to create *educational places* that are rather places of *intercultural encounters and dialogue*. Each *classroom:* a scene of encounters and dialogue between cultures and people. Discussions on education and places of dialogue between cultures.

## Citizen Geocultures and their Educations

The "globalized" world produces territorial fragmentations. In luxurious gated communities, elite schools, and clubs, the children and grandchildren of the major consumers wall in. Very close (in "blind spots" of the center,[20] in abandoned places that turn into

20   For example, a study of "kilometer 0" (Plaza Libertad or Cagancha) and the "Old City" of Montevideo can be seen (Fraiman and Rossal, 2011).

slums, in nooks and crannies of streets and squares, on the edges of cities, but always at *immeasurable distances*, as in "parallel worlds," invisibilized from each other, speechless, without communication, with mutual fear), the discardable and non-recyclable "waste" of "competitiveness" and consumerism accumulates: garbage, lead, people. Makeshift homes, *cantegriles*, and other types of long-lasting, increasingly extensive, and growingly populated precarious housing units "sprout" in these places, *habitats* covered by the cultures that form human groups in this "intersection between the geographical and the cultural." Human beings *from* and *in* "new" *geocultural units*, where "Indigenous" people are generated in the sense of "non-colonized."

Upon entering school, Kevin is already being shaped by the geoculture of the group to which he has been assigned individually (singularly and collectively with his families, neighbors, and "peers"). He continues to educate himself in *his* group's own ways of being. The *particular* culture embodied in these young people enables them to build their meanings of life through their experiences. He continues to be educated in the *cantegrile,* in the harshness of the *street,* among his own people, despite his mother abandoning him and his father dying. His circumstances condition him, but they do not *dehumanize* him; they enable an *endogenous* development, though oppressed.

From *his* geoculture framework, Kevin responds to questions about the meaning of education with his rejection of formal education, which represents another way of being human. He responds to acts of education that do not fit into his development and change process but rather aim to *make him different*, to erase his own significance (his identity), and to include him in subordination to another system.

## The problem of the continuity of his hominization in an intercultural context is raised

The idea of using the notion of *geoculture* to think interculturally about the educational encounters that take place in small and specific "public education" settings to transform them into spaces of *dialogue*. This highlights potentialities: a) considering everyone as humans; b) viewing educational spaces as places *between cultures*, and not *internal* to one culture that presents itself as universal; c) placing the *teacher* and their *students* in a joint process of improvement through dialogue.

# For Liberating Education from the Perspective of Dialogues Between Cultures

Thinking about *current educational issues* regarding *homanization* processes allows to: (a) outline the *field of education* as a fundamentally *intracultural* process (internal to each culture, which *makes human beings equal as such,* while *making them different from other humans* in the same process); and, therefore, (b) in the multiple places shared by groups and human beings (which today span the world, including "virtual" spaces), it is required to generate spaces *for intergroup and intercultural relations* that consolidate the basic characteristics of the human condition (its variability in diverse societies and cultures of equal condition), and advance in the construction of broader human places.

Although this approach provides a broad orientation criterion for thought and action,[21] it seems to me that adopting the proposal in the educational field is, on the one hand of particular importance and, on the other hand, perhaps less difficult to *try.*

## An Intercultural Perspective for Education

I propose to view educational settings (particularly classrooms) as places of *encounter between* different cultures: (a) the one that gives meaning to the school institution as responsible for incorporating new generations or people who are born or arriving in the territory of a country; and (b) the multiple cultures in which the members of the groups coexisting in formal education are simultaneously being educated ─in very different spaces and ways─.

*Public education*, in various nations endeavored to eliminate the *domestic* (separate, private) educations, which were restricted to socioeconomically diverse groups and endowed with *privileges* over others and *open the world* to everyone in the *non-domestic space* of the *public school.* By seating the child of the rich and the poor at the same school desk, giving them the hope of consolidating a nation in internal peace. It sought to homogenize the national culture based on a homogenization that would ensure coexistence within the nation by providing the same education to the children of *gauchos*, doctors, and migrants from the most diverse origins and cultures. The assumption of a universal culture and the ignorance of the *cultural* diversity it entailed

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21   It can impact academic discussions (interdisciplinary, intercultural) and public discussions of policies and regulations at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

led to conflicts linked to religious issues considered *private,* turning *public* education spaces into places of neutrality, reluctant to discussion and dialogue. This, however, gave rise to long and unresolved debates.

Currently, *public* education tends to be reduced to the most impoverished and marginalized sectors, more along charitable lines to address the knowledge gap between these sectors and the privileged ones. It *provides them* with tools to solve their "deficiencies" (not the material ones, of course) that allow them, individually, to "compete" on "equal opportunities" with others to "insert" themselves into the same system that produced their impoverishment and that shows no signs of stopping the creation of spaces such as the *cangetriles*.

Nowadays, public education is not discussed by assuming dialogue as a central function. Rather, discussions about it are not *public* and almost never focus on medium and long-term aspects. Similarly, private education is also removed from *public* discussion. Thus, the education of the *elites* is entrusted to *the private* sector. This effectively returns us to a situation analogous to those before the institutionalization of public education.

Globally, education plays an important role in reproducing the current system. It shapes human beings as if they were of a single universal culture, consistent with the current system, supposedly necessary, desirable, and a guarantee of continuous progress. It transmits ways of thinking, behaviors, knowledge, and skills suited to survive in that world and sustain it with their work.

I suggest considering that current education, both formal and informal (of schools, of various educational settings in which we still call "families," neighborhoods, and streets, and through the media). It must not be thought of in the various ways of imposing a single type of human being, integrating into a single "world-system," or a "culture" or "civilization" considered universal. I propose to think about, discuss, and act upon *all education* as a place of *inter*cultural *dialogues*, moving through the different *logos* in which humanity exists.

Euclides Mance proposes the concept of *bem viver* (good living in English) as a "horizon of meaning for the integrated realization of public and private freedoms and for the praxis of liberation aimed at expanding and always improving them" [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Along these lines, I hope that my proposal contributes "to the critical understanding of the concrete realization" of these freedoms and praxis

and that the criteria I propose below can operate as "indexes of concrete reality, affirmed or denied in the life of every person at various levels". Hence, it enables criticism of "relationships of oppression and injustice" and allows, "especially, the criticism of one's own praxis of liberation."

I propose discussing some *criteria* for thinking, conducting, and valuing liberating education from the perspective of intercultural dialogue. I attempt to articulate this perspective by transforming educational spaces into places of 'intercultural dialogue' with reflection and practice on *philosophical education* experiences that demand, promote, and develop education in dialogues, taken to their deepest and most radical levels.

## A Philosophical Function for Dialogues Between Cultures

The last generations of philosophy teachers in secondary education in Uruguay (in dialogue with colleagues from other countries) have collectively experienced the challenge of facing the responsibilities of "teaching philosophy" and "teaching how to philosophize" in a liberating way in the current challenging global, regional, and national contexts. In our teaching practices and in reflecting and debating them, problems emerged, and perspectives opened up that progressively led us to change the most usual ways of conceiving, planning, practicing, and valuing the teaching of philosophy, understanding it as a practice that is both philosophical and educational, as philosophical education. We have been modifying the ways of approaching it and the contents of its curriculum. We groped our way through *didactic-philosophical* paths and innovative experiences, and we focused on the concept we call the philosophical function, the essential philosophical contribution to any liberating education. A complex, problem-posing to all knowledge, radical, intellectual, and ethical demanding function, which education, in different degrees, fulfills or denies. Although partially, this notion materialized in creating the fertile curricular space called "Critique of Knowledge."

Furthermore, philosophy, in its strict sense, is intrinsic to the genesis and development of the so-called "Western" culture. It is the *most critical and controversial space* within that culture, where opposing cultures attempt to engage in dialogue. For this reason, the role of philosophy becomes empty when it is enslaved to serve purposes taken for granted or socially legitimized at a specific moment in its history (theology, science,

revolution).[22] Philosophy is not a means or an instrument; it is a space for radical discussion among the most divergent conceptions and disciplines, a space where the beliefs, convictions, and certainties of each time, each group, and each individual are intertwined; however, it is never completely confused because its *critical radicality*. In other words, philosophy is the space of *non-closure* in any culture or certainty, the space where each one —without denying itself— *opens* up to *dia-pathos* (per-pathos in English), *dia-ethos* (per-ethics in English), and *dia-logos* (per-logos in English) with others; of breaking the war, of *opening* up to the uncertain, to a future that is not merely repetitive, and therefore, risky. Unsurprisingly, it unfolds in a multiplicity of opinions and practices, always in conflict with each other and always fruitful.

Simultaneusly when "Western culture" (also a *product* of its *philosophy*) can present itself as the embodiment of universal culture, factually enabled by the scientific-technological "revolution," paradoxically,  philosophy appears as a completed task,[23] as already useless. This is because the accumulation of technologies and methods (which daily open up unprecedented problems) also seems to guarantee the *continuity of innovations* that (on the condition of not thinking about them, making their context invisible, or disregarding them; their effects and consequences; of the harmful aspects generated by their deployment) would be sufficient to achieve *well-being* and to maximize the *benefit* of each and everyone. Thus, there would be no *place* for *dia-logos*. Nor for a *philosophy* that is, once again, servile.

The belief in philosophy's obsolescence rationalizes the constant severings of its teaching (or its banal curricular "mainstreaming"). This is not because one must release from something nonessential but because it is an inconvenient space. Philosophy can be *a place for dialogue* and collective processing of conflicts, through diverse feelings, values, words, and reasons. It can be a place for listening, doubt, questioning, argumentation, dialogue, experimentation with alternatives, and liberating education. But to dominate others requires certainties.

However, philosophy's liberating potential does not occur automatically or mechanically simply because there is (or is not) a formal curricular segmentation

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22   The scholastic formula *Philosophia ancilla theologiae* (philosophy is the slave of theology) does not change this subordination (which reduces it to rhetorical tricks to convince of what is already accepted) because it is considered a slave of science or a weapon of revolution. The idea of "philosophy" is permanently in question.

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23   A key text in this regard is Heidegger's: "The End (or end) of Philosophy and the task of Thinking."

called "philosophy." In research conducted with colleagues, we advanced in *didactic-philosophical* aspects, which enable and provide a foundation for *orientation criteria* that originate in *our* culture but also manifest possibilities to influence the opening and development of intercultural dialogues. Radical reflection and debates require an awareness of one's own limits, the need and search for *others*, and *the other*, paths of coexistence.

## Some Characteristics of Philosophical Education

We have been developing tentative criteria to educate in groups of teachers concerned with philosophical education in our specific context, in dialogue with others. In our school classes and courses at the secondary level, we have students who will pursue a wide variety of professions, trades, or jobs. We want to make them and the areas of professional training in philosophy and its teaching become *philosophical spaces*. We want them to have in themselves the characteristics of the philosophy, aiming for those who go through this experience to have the possibility to act philosophically in the public and private spaces where their lives develop.

This collective effort impacts several fields that we will not delve into here.[24]  I will limit myself to briefly outlining some of the *characteristics of philosophy* that we consider relevant as criteria for guiding and evaluating educational spaces that aim to be emancipatory. Perhaps they can be synthesized in the *abnormal* nature of the philosophy, in the sense of not taking any *norm* for granted without critical analysis, without discussion, and without considering alternatives.

 *Fermentality*. The *philosophy* must be and remain "in a state of *ferment*": "more amorphous, but more plastic, alive and fermented" (Vaz Ferreira, 1938) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]. Something must *happen* in philosophical classrooms; it should be a vital experience for everyone. To be amazed by the unknown and barely glimpsed, shake the rigidity of what is already known, question the obvious, encourage the questioning and restless impetus, and give rise to the boiling of proposals and the demand to strive to find paths. It cannot develop within predefined shackles nor

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24    For example, in efforts, which are quite successful, to effectively transform the teaching of philosophy so that it would have these characteristics, to include elements of such education from early childhood and throughout life, to guide the training of teachers in this regard.

culminate in unmoved answers, absolved from criticism and closed to new problems. The life of this trait in classrooms enables the recovery of education from its confinement in an excluding, classifying, selecting, elitist *normality*, or supposedly inclusive in its immobility, but denying others. The philosophy must recover and maintain its *state of ferment*.

*Originality*. Every *philosophical work* is an original. It does not reiterate the previous stories that feed it: it *updates* them. Every philosophical experience in education is a philosophical original. Even in routine, even in repetition, its originality lies in the unique character of the ephemeral place and time that educational spaces are, which move encounters and disagreements, misunderstandings and aggressions, ideas and debates, and interpretations and inventions among different people. Each classroom is *an educational work* between teachers and students. A living work enjoyed or suffered and then valued and discussed, with *original* and unpredictable *philosophical effects*.

*Insecurity, fallibility*. The *rigorously philosophical* is and is known to be fallible and debatable. There are no *norms* that guarantee the intended or projected *effects*. There is no *resource* that always works: every success can be turned into an obstacle; every failure can open paths. There is no educational *mandate*. The philosophical classroom lives in the open, in uncertainty, without guarantee, at risk. That is why it is *educational*.

*Non-obsolescence*. Every philosophical *product* (every *work of philosophy*) is current, and all its *instruments* are valid. The philosophical restarts each time with radical ruptures regarding something that does not thereby become obsolete. It lives in dialogue and debates even when it tries to make it impossible.[25] Technologies quickly become obsolete, replaced by more efficient ones that make them useless, broken, irretrievable, and abandoned. The philosophy discusses meanings and purposes that are not technical matters. Its questions can always be reconsidered, its conclusions questioned, its works revisited, and its instruments reused. It is not, for example, about replacing one philosophy (or one education) with another "new," more effective, as one discards an old cell phone to acquire the most powerful and newest one (or does not, waiting for the *future* novelty), or does not know where to throw away their ephemeral *fax*. It is a matter of thinking, questioning, discussing, dialoguing, creating. In this task, no resource can be discarded.

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25    Deuleuze and Guattari say that philosophy makes dialogue impossible. By asserting this, they enter into dialogue with those who claim (like Castoriadis) that philosophy is dialogue.

*Radicality.* It is the challenge of addressing underlying, principle, radical, and in-depth problems. It is not merely about liking and positively valuing one's own culture but also recognizing it as problematic, limited, and in need of change. Radicality is a risky challenge in education because it educates vulnerable human beings and this occurs in places of conflicting encounters between cultures and generations with different degrees of power. It is necessary to find ways to unite radicality and care for each other and oneself, ways of building spaces of *experience*, and ways of facing dangers together. But truly *overcome them*. There is no radicality without *care*, and without radicality there is no true care.

*Democratic, egalitarian criterion*: *No selection of interlocutors.* Educational and philosophical institutions *selected*. Often, they were designed to justify and consolidate social differences. Even today, it is difficult to conceive educational and philosophical forms that do not hierarchize, that privilege some over others, the teacher over the student, the "wise" over the "ignorant," the philosopher over any *sophos* (wise person in English). And this is beyond the intentions. The enduring idea that *merits* justify *privileges* —even the privilege of simply existing. But *philosophizing* is everyone's activity; *educating* implies that we are all *educated, educable, student,* and *educators*. Selecting interlocutors is closing oneself off to dialogues. In the Socratic *back-and-forth* education, the teacher selected disciples from "*suitable souls.*" Plato *writes* his dialogues, thus making them for everyone; he exposes his *philosophical work* before "anyone" (even his un-pre-dictable future) who wants to discuss *with*, *against,* or *despite* it, keeping the dialogue open between new discourses and new interlocutors. For the philosophical—as for the educational and the human—everyone is competent and, at the same time, fallible. That is the foundation of democracy. Not a universal noise in which everyone speaks at once, but a multiplicity of intercultural spaces of in-depth dialogue without restrictions or end. Nothing human is external to any human; thus, everyone is competent in the philosophical. *Nothing human is external to the philosophy*, and everything human concerns it. It is the basis of all democracy and education.

*Dialogicity.* The activity of *philosophizing* that gives rise to different *philosophies* emerges as a *critical reflection* on itself and as the *creation and refinement of concepts and tools* to better understand (ourselves). *Philosophical radicality*, which questions its own principles, must also engage in *discussion with others*. It is not about *reducing differences* between interlocutors so that everyone knows and thinks the same thing but rather about progressing in dialogue. A philosophical classroom should not be monological. In reflecting on dialogical philosophy classrooms, the necessary elements for advancing toward an education in intercultural dialogue begin to emerge and develop.

*Openness*. Dialogue has *no tribunal*. A process of building a life together in dialogue cannot admit a final ruling, a final arbitraion, or a final judgment. It is always under-stood as fallible and open to debate by everyone. It remains open to new internal and external dialogues. Openness is both the cause and result of a process that contin-ues to be contingent, historical, and "unfinished." Humanity is real in its duration and its *place*.

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# QUESTIONING THE COMMON IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

*Egle Pitton*
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# ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a research study on including students with disabilities in schools in the city of Buenos Aires. This study aimed to investigate practices oriented toward inclusive education. This research followed case study guidelines, conducting interviews with students, families, teachers, and school administrators. Classes and breaks were observed and analyzed, which allowed for addressing the complex interactions between policies, regulations, and pedagogical practices.

The first phase of the fieldwork provided visibility to the effects of incorporating inclusion support agents from both Special Education and the healthcare system in classrooms. The monitoring of the school trajectories of three students with disabilities at the time of transition between educational levels contributed to understand the complexity of this topic. The analysis of the transition from primary to secondary school for two blind students contributed to conceptualizing teaching as a structuring axis in articulating actions between regular and special education teachers. Finally, the school experience of a teenager with motor and cognitive disabilities allowed for a critical reflection on the idea of regular school as the only desirable goal to consider in the schooling of students with disabilities.

This chapter aims to contribute to the debate on the conditions of schooling for students with disabilities in regular schools and serve as a bridge for dialogue between Special Education and inclusive education.

# INTRODUCTION

Policies and practices aimed at the inclusion of students with disabilities in common education[26] schools have spanned more than 30 in the city of Buenos Aires. In recent years, conceptual transformations regarding disability, advances in the rights of people with disabilities, and the social mandate to achieve inclusive schools have generated significant changes in the educational system. The most evident aspects of these transformations include the development of regulations to guarantee access

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26    In Argentina, the term "common" applied to the modalities of the Educational System is equivalent to the term "regular" used in most education systems in the region.

to students with disabilities to regular school, a sustained increase in the number of those students in institutions, and the incorporating of health professionals into the school dynamics. These processes are supported by a new paradigm of inclusive education that promotes the right to schooling and, therefore, the full participation of children and teenagers- whether they have disabilities— in regular education schools. This model proposes an educational system with schools that reject any form or mechanism of selection and segregation and reflect on the problems associated with these processes to avoid their reproduction.

Recognizing the need to focus on practices as one of the conditions to dismantle logics of exclusion, the research from which this article includes part of its final report focused on school practices that promote the participation of all students in the issues addressed in the classroom. Thus, the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the inclusion processes in primary and secondary common schools of state management in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. The systematization and analysis of the educational trajectories of three students with disabilities have allowed for the identification and comprehension of the forms that their schooling may take, which results from a complex regulatory framework, jurisdictional and institutional policies, institutions of regular and special education, healthcare institutions, teaching practices, and family decisions.

The conditions of schooling in the seventh grade, where these three students were enrolled, changed substantially —in terms of institutions, resources, approaches, and practices— compared to those they encountered in the schools where they continued their studies. In this regard, although the study focused only on these three cases, the data collected during fieldwork allowed to compare approaches, pedagogical conditions, and support mechanisms, which opens up the range of possibilities for reflecting on:

- the institutional conditions that promote educational inclusion processes;

- the role of teaching as a structuring axis on which actions between regular and special education schools are articulated using the figure of the inclusive teacher;

- questioning the critical examination of the regular school's idea as the only desirable destination to think about the schooling of students with disabilities;

- the identification of conditions, practices, and mechanisms of special education schools that contribute to democratizing and reforming the field to facilitate in-

clusive education (Ocampo González, 2016). It understands that such reformation cannot ignore knowledge about institutional practices in these schools. General criticisms of this sector are based on a monolithic view of special education as an offer incompatible with inclusive education. This research analyzes assumptions and pedagogical practices of teachers in these schools that question the hegemonic idea and state that special education as a whole is structured under the logic of a discriminatory and segregationist model.

Finally, special education is systematically criticized for segregating students from regular education and having deficiency-focused approaches rather than educational ones. This study provides elements to question these generalized ideas, as the research has shown pedagogical solid intentionality as a guideline for teaching practices in the studied institutions.

## Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative approach aimed at reconstructing institutional practices related to the schooling processes of three students with disabilities: M and F, two blind adolescents, and T, a student with motor and intellectual disabilities, during the transition from the regular primary level to the next stage of schooling.

Through a case study, it was sought to systematize and analyze these practices from the perspective of various actors (supervisors, professionals involved in school orientation, school principals, teachers from regular and special education, families, and students), specifically focusing on the transition from primary education to secondary school for M and F and to the Comprehensive Interdisciplinary School (EII in Spanish) under the Directorate of Special ducation for the case of T.

The fieldwork was conducted between 2017 and 2018, involving institutions and agents from regular and special education, and those schools recognized for their educational inclusion trajectory were selected. Given the interest in analyzing the transition between educational levels, fieldwork began in 2017 in a seventh-grade section where the three students with disabilities attended. It continued in 2018 at the institutions where these students continued their educational path.

The information collection strategies mainly consisted of in-depth interviews with various actors involved in the research schooling processes and classroom observation. As for the observations, it should be noted that two researchers carried them out: one focused primarily on recording the classroom atmosphere and the interaction between teachers and students regarding the teaching content, while the second focused on interactions between teachers, integrative teachers, and students with disabilities, and their classmates. Audio recordings, written records, and photographs of student work during classes were made.

In 2017, 23 interviews were conducted with the school management, teachers from various areas, the integrative teacher, Non-Teaching Personal Accompanying, the security guard, families, and students. Six classroom observations were conducted in the language practices, mathematics, social sciences, physical education, English, and plastic arts courses. Additionally, two interviews were held with specialists in the educational inclusion field to contrast preliminary analyses with their experiences in the inclusion work in educational system schools.

During 2018, fieldwork was carried out at the high school where M and F attend and at the EII where T attends. Eight interviews and three classroom observations were conducted at the high school, two in the language and one in the mathematics courses. The interviews were conducted with teachers of these courses, instructors, tutors, the management team, the pedagogical advisor, the inclusion support teacher (MAI, in Spanish), and the secondary-level supervisor. In the EII, four interviews were conducted with the school management team, the teaching team of T's group, the speech-language therapist, and the psychomotor therapists, and basic subject classes and breaks were observed.

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND THE REDEFINITION OF THE COMMON

The first experiences and integration projects in Argentina began in the second half of the last century and were aimed at students with visual and motor disabilities. From their beginnings until today, these practices and their respective regulations and policies have taken different meanings as they have responded to various paradigms.

Similarly, the schooling of students with disabilities in regular schools has a long history in the Buenos Aires'[27] educational system. The studied experiences express the issue's complexity by highlighting the difficulties that inclusion practices have experienced throughout different periods. They also reflect the strategies of the actors involved in aligning these practices with the various paradigms leading up to the current level of inclusive education.

Not long ago, the term integration was used to refer to the educational processes of students with disabilities in regular schools while the term "inclusion" was reserved for policies aimed at socially disadvantaged groups.

Beyond the terminology used, both integration and inclusion reveal the exclusion processes of the individuals. In the last two decades, there has been a change of perspective in the educational system regarding the schooling of students with disabilities, which advocates for quitting the integration paradigm. This change overlaps with full inclusion policies aimed at student populations exceeding those with disabilities. It is crucial to theoretically differentiate between these two movements, as it is more complex in practical terms, often leading to confusion or overlap.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the theoretical developments established as references within the educational inclusion field of students with disabilities to reduce how the different categories that constitute it are applied.

In the literature on the inclusion field, two key moments are usually identified based on international conferences, which established guidelines adopted by the educational community for the schooling of students with disabilities at various educational levels. However, school integration of these students in regular schools has already been a frequent practice in many European and American countries for decades. The first moment refers to the Declaration of the World Congress on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca, 1994), and the second milestone is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New York, 2006).

From the first to the second moment, the concept of *Special Needs Education* was replaced by the notion of *Barriers to Learning and Participation*, as adopted in the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2000, 2008). The adoption of this new terminology

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27    In the case of blind students, the first integrations began in the 1960s, following the 3rd Pan-American Congress for the Blind, which addressed the integration of blind or visually impaired children into regular schools.

shifted the focus from students' learning difficulties to the interaction between policies, cultures, institutions, contexts, and individuals.

In line with this perspective, the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities proposed, as far as education was concerned, the abandonment of the integration paradigm, which involves an individual intervention focused on the integrated student and the adoption of the social model for full inclusion aimed at reducing the barriers present in the context.

It is necessary to briefly clarify both terms to highlight the underlying concepts in each of them. The concept of integration is centered on the individual and stems from the idea of normalization inherent in the medical paradigm of disability. In this framework, the individual—with the help of a special school— "must" adapt to the operational rules of common schools (Parrilla Latas, 2002; de la Vega, 2010). In contrast, the inclusion paradigm, emerging from the social paradigm of disability, focuses on the changes that must occur within society and institutions. In this case, educational institutions—as part of an educational system—are responsible for creating the necessary conditions to eliminate any form or mechanism of selection or segregation. Similarly, they are responsible for being an object of reflection before problems associated with these processes, thus avoiding their reproduction.

This paradigm places the inclusive education concept as its core, a term that emerged in 1990 in Jomtien (Thailand) during UNESCO's World Conference on Education for All.

Based on the international regulatory requirement in Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the subscribing states reconfigured their national education laws in alignment with the inclusive education paradigm. Additionally, theoretical developments and research in the field of inclusion focused on analyzing the forms that inclusion processes took, emphasizing the barriers that prevent them (Echeita, 2006; López Melero, 2011).

However, it can be observed that the prolific production of recommendations and materials developed by international organizations and authors representing official inclusive education discourses has not significantly impacted practices or the educational community's perceptions about inclusion. Experiences indicating a change in approach are relatively scarce, even though different terms are used in the regulations and international, regional, and national documents.

As noted by authors from various disciplines, theoretical currents, and perspectives (Sinisi, 2010; Skliar, 2005; Kiel, 2018; Ocampo, 2018), the gap between these principles and practices may originate from the fact that the ideas and guidelines regarding inclusive education do not challenge the core of the educational system and fail to question the established notions surrounding inclusion processes. As a result, these recommendations continue to manifest in practices that reinforce the intervention paradigm on the individuals to be included rather than addressing the logic of the constitution of school collectives that consider the various ways of participating in classrooms.

From the years following the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the present, various authors, including those mentioned above, have worked on highlighting the complexities of implementing inclusive policies, both in their theoretical works and in their dialogue and exchange with the educational community.

In recent theoretical works, Laura Kiel (2018) and Aldo Ocampo (2018) bring visibility to critical issues within the field of inclusive education. On the one hand, the paradoxes generated in practices due to the coexistence of the integration and inclusion paradigms. On the other hand, there is a lack of investigations addressing the topic from an epistemological perspective that delimits a disciplinary field specific to inclusion.

The authors agree on the need to think about the inclusive education field from an epistemological perspective that transcends disciplinary limits, appealing to interdisciplinary to build and generate new knowledge, which is not conceived as a sum of already established knowledge. Instead, it is proposed that the limits and gaps of disciplines be worked at (Ocampo, 2018), which puts tension on the framework of the Educational Sciences (Dubrovsky, 2019) without denying the inherent impossibility of educational action. Embracing the dimension of impossibility at the center of interdisciplinary exposes, in the production of scientific knowledge, the absurd pretension of *knowing all knowledge* (Kiel, 2018).

At this point, it is evident that the use of new terminology, adherence to international agreements, and standardized recommendations are insufficient to make education truly inclusive. As verified in the context of this research, the uncritical incorporation of prescriptive guidelines carries the risk of creating regulations and practices that generate effects contrary to those intended; i.e., in the name of inclusive education, different forms of segregation are produced instead of inclusion. Such is the case of the incorporation of accompanying figures that reinforce the intervention on the student to be included, leading to effects of "inclusive segregation" (Castel, 1997) or

the indiscriminate use of *reasonable accommodation* resources as occurs in the City of Buenos Aires with the growth of Individual Pedagogical Projects (PPI in Spanish).

Avoiding paradoxical effects requires focusing on the barriers that prevent learning and fundamentally elucidating the logic that structures school collectives and how differences are addressed within them. In other wordis, the focus should be on coexistence and living conditions in school environments, not concerning each student but the collectives (Kiel, 2018).

This requires researching the collective logics to identify and analyze the matrix on which the social links are set. This matrix accounts for what is considered *for everyone* in a certain collective, from which the common emerges.

Thus, the common would not be something prescribed by a higher authority for all institutions but that which can be shaped by the contingency and particularity of each collective (Alemán, 2012).

The notion of the *common or the common* has been broadly studied in the social sciences in general and, in particular, in education. It is used to address a variety of topics. Thus, the concern about the meanings attributed to the common and the processes involved in its definition must be one of the main objectives of an interdisciplinary epistemological field of inclusive *education* in order to avoid the risk that its meaning slips toward *the normal* or *the universal* understood as complete and equal for everyone (Terigi, 2008; Diker, 2008).

In this regard, as Gabriela Diker and Laura Kiel point out from different perspectives, we should delve into the operations involved in defining the common, always bearing in mind that it also involves other logical operations as a counterpart. They include differentiation, exclusion, and segregation. Hence, it is key to elucidate the relations between the universal and the common.

Given these warnings, it is concluded that the tendency to standardize inclusion practices, that is, expecting them to be the same for all individuals without questioning the conditions under which collectives are formed, is a strategy that risks producing segregative effects.

As an inclusive concept, education requires questioning the declamatory meanings assigned to the universal to investigate its logics and propose approaches where the common constructed respects the singular dimensions of each individual,

in unavoidable tension with the particularity of the collective, which should not necessarily be totalizing.

# SCHOOL TRAJECTORIES

For more than two decades, the study of the school trajectories of children and adolescents has been the subject of quantitative research and macro analysis. They address the issue of the gap between what the education system expects students to enter, stay, and graduate from compulsory levels and the path they achieve in the particular forms and times it demands to them. However, conceptualizing the problem of the mismatch between theoretical and real trajectories as a systemic issue —and not as individual responsibility— came later and led to school trajectories becoming a subject of pedagogical reflection (Terigi, 2007).

The conceptualization of school trajectories has made it possible to overcome the concept of school failure, which is so widely questioned both for designating very diverse phenomena —such as grade repetition, older people, low performance, and dropout— and for being interpreted from the individual pathological model.

The homogenizing model's difficulty in successfully educating specific groups of subjects has been widely studied and characterized from different perspectives (Padawer, 2008; Terigi, 2009). As is well known, since its inception, the homogenizing and normalizing model has been unable to educate everyone. Regarding individuals with disabilities, the creation of special schools for students with specific deficiencies is evidence of this. In Argentina, the first special school for deaf-mutes was established in 1857, and the first for blind children in 1887. In other words, from its beginnings, regular education achieved homogenization by segregating those who deviated from what was expected.

At the beginning of the 20th century, psychology was used as a science to provide the parameters of normality to classify those who, despite not having any organic deficiency, were unable to attend school successfully. Tests and intelligence tests were expected to provide scientific evidence of a student's intellectual development, which would explain their difficulties in learning at school (Terigi, 2009). This individual pathological model for addressing the issues of students who do not meet school expectations, was functional —as mentioned— the homogenizing and normalizing model of modern

school by providing explanations that did not question the conditions or assumptions under which pedagogical practices were developed.

The potential of the concept of school trajectories lies in linking two levels of analysis that were separated in educational research: the structural aspects—the homogenization produced by the institutionalized school—and the biographies of individuals, incorporating into the analysis the institutional conditions of schooling (Terigi, 2018).

This concept is central to this study, as it makes it possible to think about the schooling conditions required for students with disabilities to learn what allows them to advance in their autonomy and define their own life project. Likewise, it can be a theoretical tool to overcome the *regular education-special education* dichotomy, as the theoretical and political concern should focus on the institutional, pedagogical, and didactic conditions that need to be generated so that each and every student can learn in school, rather than on the system modality in which they do it. In other words, this concept allows for analyzing the limits and potentialities of each of the paths that students with disabilities may take according to their social, family, and subjective conditions that the system can offer at different stages of their schooling.

The study aimed to characterize and analyze real school trajectories of students with disabilities, intending to question the idea of standardizing desirable paths.

## THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN ARGENTINA: CENTRAL FEATURES AND REGULATIONS DRIVING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN THE AUTONOMOUS CITY OF BUENOS AIRES

The Argentine educational system is governed by the National Education Law (LEN in Spanish) 26.206, enacted in 2006. It established education as an individual and social right while also defining one of its objectives as guaranteeing educational inclusion. The law comprises state-run and privately managed educational services, as well as cooperatively and socially managed services across all jurisdictions in the country.

The educational offer is organized into four levels of education: early childhood education, primary, secondary, and higher education —tertiary and university— of which the first three are compulsory from 4 years of age. Additionally, there are eight education

modalities, with special education being one of them. Educational modalities are de-fined as:

> Organizational and/or curricular options of regular education within one or more educational levels. They aim to respond to specific training re-quirements and address characteristics of a permanent or temporary nature, personal and/or contextual, to guarantee equality in the right to education and comply with the legal, technical, and pedagogical require-ments of the different educational levels (LEN, Article 17[28]) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish].

Based on the data relevant to this article, it should be noted that, at the compulsory education levels, the Buenos Aires education system has regular and special educa-tion schools under both types of management.

State-run special education schools are institutions that guarantee the schooling of students with disabilities at the early childhood, primary, and post-primary levels[29]. Likewise, they are also responsible for the integration teachers accountable for the in-clusion processes in the regular school. These schools fall within the Directorate of Special Education and are organized into two categories based on the specific needs of their students[30]. Category B groups schools whose students —with or without dis-abilities— experience learning difficulties and require flexible teaching methods. Their goal is for these students to be able to enter or re-enter common primary schools be-fore completing the level.

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28   Article 17 of the LEN establishes the structure of the National Educational System by levels and eight modalities: Technical-Professional Education, Artistic Education, Special Education, Continuing Education for Youth and Adults, Rural Education, Bilingual Intercultural Education, Education in Contexts of Deprivation of Liberty, and Home and Hospital Education.

29   It should be noted that the state-run subsystem does not have special education schools that accredit the se-condary level.

30   The Directorate of Special Education is also responsible for door-to-door and hospital schools, which serve children and teenagers with or without disabilities who are unable to attend school due to health reasons. These schools are grouped under category A in the education ranking system.

Category C schools serve students with motor, hearing, visual, and cognitive disabilities, severe personality disorders, and multiple disabilities. According to the official website of the Ministry of Education of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA in Spanish)31, these schools guarantee early care (initial or primary care) education for children and young people with disabilities aged 45 days and 14 years through the development of pedagogical projects according to the particular needs of each student or school group.

In the case of sensory disabilities (blindness, visual impairment, deafness, and hearing loss), primary-level education is also provided for youth and adults without age limits. Additionally, special education schools offer comprehensive training for young people and adults aged 13 to 30 with mental, visual, and/or hearing disabilities.

As previously mentioned, for more than three decades, the Ministry of Education and the special education institutions of the CABA have been promoting policies that address the various issues associated with educational exclusion processes, including those aimed at the school integration of students with disabilities. Despite the extensive international and national regulations directed toward educational inclusion, the research reveals its realization's complexity.

## THE SCHOOL TRAJECTORIES OF M, F, AND T: PATHWAYS BETWEEN COMMON AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

As discussed in another section, the concept of *school trajectory* enables the reconstruction of the educational paths and forms adopted by the students' schooling. The study of the school trajectories of three students with disabilities has allowed identifying and characterizing the pedagogical conditions that make it possible for these students to access their right to education through meaningful learning. For further analysis, we will present the trajectories of M and F, blind students, and then the trajectory of T, a student with motor and intellectual disabilities.

M and F school trajectories are developed between regular and special education schools. Both students attended the same grade section of a primary regular

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31   https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/educacion/estudiantes/inscripcionescolar/especisal

education school recognized by various systems actors as "open-door," which, over the past decade, has been increasingly incorporating students with different disabilities (School A). During the school day, a teacher who supports inclusion (MAI), assigned by the special education school, accompanies them within the grade four times a week, and in the afterschool session, they attend the special education school for blind children (School B), which F has been attending since the age of six and M since the age of eleven. Schools A and B have been working together for more than ten years.

As the term "school support service for inclusion" suggests, this afterschool session aims to provide the necessary support to assist students in their primary school education, where they will receive accreditation for their learning. It is important to clarify that these institutions also have a key role in relation to the included students[32] by offering specific curricular instances of the education modality to teach skills that enable them to achieve independent living.

In the morning session, they participate in all the common grade-level activities. The MAI's pedagogical work aims to transcribe instructions, texts, and the work of M and F from alphabetic to Braille and vice versa. They also aim to make educational materials —maps, graphics, etc.— accessible, and eventually, clarify instructions or explain specific topics.

The teachers of the four core subjects (Mathematics, Language Practices, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences) state that M and F can follow the classes without any difficulty. Therefore, from the perspective of the classroom teachers, there is no need to adapt their proposal or review the selected contents. The teachers' concern focuses on verbalizing what is written on the blackboard and being attentive to language expressions such as those that are not sufficiently descriptive or that rely on images as references.

In contrast, in Physical Education, for example, the teacher adapts the teaching to the particular needs of the group. According to him, when he was assigned to the class of F and M, he had discussions and counseling with a teacher from the same discipline at School B.

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32   The educational proposal of both special schools are extensive, and their actions are diverse because the needs of their students are also varied: from those who complete all their schooling exclusively in the Special Education school to young people and adults who have not finished primary school or those who acquire a disability as adults.

Upon completing primary school, F and M continued their studies together: attending a regular high school in the morning (School C) and, in the afternoon, a Special Education school for young people and adults with visual impairment (School D). The MAI from the latter institution supports both students' schooling with an intervention model different from that of elementary school: the primary interlocutors are not the students but the teachers of each subject. This mode of intervention favors the creation of a *support configuration* as a working logic among teachers.

At the time of defining the 1st-year courses for M and F, the pedagogical advisor (School C) and the MAI (School D) decided that both students should be in separate groups to encourage interaction with their classmates and prevent them from exclusively associating with each other. Another significant difference from previous years is that the MAI, when working with the teachers, is not present or directly intervenes in the classes unless there is a special need or a prior agreement with the subject teacher. Finally, M and F voluntarily attend the support classes at School D according to their study needs.

During fieldwork at School C, it was observed that both students navigated the different areas of the institution with ease, could keep up with the pace of the class, communicated weekly with the MAI during recess, began to connect with some classmates, and their performance was on par with or even above the average of their group, in F's case.

According to the interviewed teachers at the school—the pedagogical advisor, Language and Mathematics teachers, tutors, and monitors of both divisions—educational inclusion is a central objective of the school's pedagogical project. In recent years, the presence of blind students has involved the challenge of teaching these students with the support of the MAI, both for planning the teaching and for text transcription.

The transition for F and M from primary to secondary education—new schools, new classmates, changes in work mode and the support of the MAI—was a manageable challenge for the students, despite the uncertainties it caused for both the students and the primary school teachers.

T' s school journey began in the nursery school of Early Childhood Education. At the end of the 5th grade, the school guidance team under the Ministry of Education proposed that T stay another year at this level.

In the transition from Early Childhood Education to primary school, the school guidance team recommended that T continue his schooling in a Special Education institution. However, T's family, supported by regulations and evaluations from health professionals who had been treating him since early childhood, decided to enroll him in a nearby state-run Common Primary School (School A).

This family decision to ensure T's right to an education in a mainstream school was possible thanks to the support from the private health system and Special Education support. As a result, T attended primary school with the assistance of two adults—a supervisor and a Personal Non-Teaching Assistant—who provided "full-time" support in mobility, transfer, and learning assistance. Although the external support professional is a non-teaching staff member, they functioned as an integrative teacher in practice, responsible for planning and developing the teaching proposal in T's later years of schooling.

Opposition to the orientation of the interdisciplinary education team marked a certain imprint on the family's vision of T's ideal educational path, which initially seemed to confirm their expectations. A turning point that shook the foundation of this decision was directly related to the fact that, from 4th grade onwards, the school, family, and professionals observed no progress in T's initial literacy process.

In the last two years of primary school, a tailored proposal was created for T, consisting of alternating school days between Common School and Special School at a state-run Interdisciplinary Comprehensive School (EII in Spanish) for students with motor and intellectual disabilities (School E). This alternation allowed T to experience new ways of "experiencing school": different times, spaces, relationships with adults, and autonomy within the school without an abrupt break from the valued connections formed at his primary school. It also enabled the family to find a trustworthy and suitable environment for T in this institution. At the end of 7th grade, T expressed his desire to continue at the EII.

After finishing primary school, T attended School E[33] full-time, maintaining the peer group he had been with for the previous two years.

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33    School E is a full-time institution. Almost half of the population attends the institution, and the other half attends primary and secondary schools with inclusion projects accompanied by the institution's MAI. In these cases, inclusion is implemented through devices that vary according to the student's requirements, the characteristics of the school they attend, and the support that is configured.

A distinctive feature of EIIs is the flexibility in their institutional proposals, allowing them to modify their offerings and create programs based on the needs of their population. This flexibility is evident in the criteria used to define student groupings, reflecting the importance given to subjective factors in organizing learning groups. That is, not only chronological age and academic progress are considered but also students' affinities. Additionally, each group is made up of a small number of students and is always led by two teachers.

T's group consists of eight teenagers, only two of whom have achieved literacy. At the start of the school year, the two teachers aimed to create conditions for forming a learning group based on the students' ages and interests and the challenge of integrating them into written culture to advance in the literacy process.

Finally, one of the distinctive aspects of schooling at School E is the students' ability to move freely through the spaces, as they are equipped with the dimensions, furniture, and resources needed for students to develop with the greatest possible autonomy in both educational and recreational times without needing adult assistance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Considering the schooling of all students—whether they have disabilities or not—requires analyzing the characteristics of the pedagogical situation within the context of the jurisdiction's school system. Following Terigi (2009), it is necessary to reflect on teaching from the constraints faced by graduated schools in including all students.

The author emphasizes the need to build a pedagogical response to the problems that the school encounters in teaching certain students. This implies moving away from disciplinary *solutions* imposed from an application-based logic, ignoring the complexity of school processes and the educational field's own knowledge production.

Based on the analysis of the school paths of the three students with disabilities and the conditions of their schooling[34], it is interpreted that generating adequate pedagogical and didactic conditions for all students to learn is linked to at least three issues: the

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34    The full analysis of trajectories is not included in this article. It will be available in the final report of the research to be published on the UEICEE website. Ministry of Education of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

features of school grammar—the grammar of Common Education and Special Education—the institutional culture of the school where teachers develop their teaching practice, and the position assumed by the teachers in charge of a certain group of students, which is influenced, among other factors, by their professional background and biography.

The concept of school grammar by Tyack and Cuban (2001) refers to the set of stable rules that define how schools structure time and space, classify students into specific classes, determine what should be taught, and how it should be assessed. This grammar—like language grammar—gives stability to the system and makes it resistant to attempts at change.

Despite policies, regulations, and pedagogical discourses aimed at breaking the homogenizing logic of graduated schools, Common Education schools maintain the core features of the modern school grammar. Examples include simultaneous teaching, one teacher responsible for a large group of students, standardized assessments, alignment between teaching content and grade level, and exclusively individual approaches to students with disabilities or those who do not learn within the expected timeframe.

These more or less visible rules regulate the pedagogical practices of teachers, even when they are called upon to work towards inclusion. As seen in the Common Education school attended by the three students with disabilities, the individual approach—enhanced by the presence of the MAI, APND, and supervisor providing constant support—should be understood within these coordinates. This approach hinders the student's participation in class activities and interactions with peers and teachers about the content to be learned as their classmates do.

In contrast, as observed in the Interdisciplinary Comprehensive School, other rules, such as forming small groups with two teachers, facilitate the inclusion of all students in the group's learning, as it operates with a school grammar—specific to the Special Education Scale B—that considers both the group and the individual situations of each student.

Although the creation matrix of Special Education schools aligns with the medical model, organizing them by disability (sensory, motor, cognitive, multiple disabilities),

the logic operating in the studied school is pedagogical: teaching curricular content based on each student's uniqueness within a group dynamic.

Regulations promoting processes towards inclusive education—that is, attempting to impact and modify the homogenizing grammar of schools—become tools for action when the institutional culture is underpinned by principles directing practices towards the rights of children and adolescents.

In the case studied, it is significant to question how adolescents with disabilities are conceived in the schools attended. In the institutions where the students continued their education after primary school, teachers think about the class by linking the content to be taught with the students, considering them as adolescents—with their interests, needs, and particularities—rather than focusing solely on their disability. This approach emphasizes the students' possibilities over their limitations. These limitations are considered when designing teaching situations to generate meaningful learning conditions.

In other words, the principle of inclusion is not *established* or institutionalized by decree but is interwoven with organizational and institutional conditions, broadly speaking, which serve as support and scaffolding.

The study of the trajectories of the three students allows for a re-evaluation of the concept of full inclusion as a universal mandate that *all students should attend common education schools*; that is, as the only alternative for all individuals with disabilities and the sole way to approach inclusive education. In this discursive and normative context of *full inclusion*, questions arise about the unintended effects produced when the conditions of teaching and the students' particularities are not addressed. Additionally, analyzing the potential of Special Education schools to create experiences for their students that are *similar* to those experienced by students without disabilities is inspiring, understanding that commonality is defined by experiences that, by being *shared*, equalize.

Regarding schooling, the experience that equalizes diverse subjects is the ability to participate in what happens in the classroom; in other words, having the opportunity to be a student, which involves, among other things, being able to participate in the classroom conversation. When students cannot interact with their peers and teachers about the content—despite efforts from both sides to include them—it is necessary to

reconsider the universal mandate that *all students should attend common education schools*, as it may overlook the particularities and needs of individuals. The universalizing mandate risks standardizing inclusion practices, expecting them to be the same for all subjects without questioning the conditions of group formation.

In Common Education schools attended by students with disabilities, teaching practices can become the structuring axis of support configuration when the intervention of the MAI or the APND is part of a collective working logic, considering both the role of adults in the classroom—who conceive work as a task to be developed with others—and the place of the student with a disability as part of the school group.

In contrast, when the prevailing logic is an individual approach to teaching and solitary work, the presence of support professionals in the classroom impedes joint work between teachers, a condition that allows approaching the idea of support configuration understood as scaffolding and support for inclusion processes. The one-on-one work of the support professional reinforces the perception among classroom teachers that the Special Education teacher or even the APND is the appropriate person to take care of students with disabilities while they focus on the *rest* of the class, which is understandable in large classes. On the other hand, the one-on-one relationship favors the support professional acting as a crucial element in communicating content between students with disabilities and the classroom teacher and vice versa. However, as they act as a *prosthesis*—providing, for example, their eyes to blind students—they reinforce the illusion that these students are *the same as the rest of the class*, reaffirming the homogenizing perception that expels subjective differences.

Observing practices, analyzing them, and producing knowledge from them helps dismantle linear arguments based on prescriptive discourses and normative references about how inclusion should be implemented. It provides the opportunity to understand the inherent complexity of the processes involved in the schooling of students with disabilities, identifying the institutional modes in which these practices are intertwined and the effects they produce.

When institutional conditions are built from a political-pedagogical positioning of the management and teaching team that places the rights of children and adolescents at the center, empowering and subjective institutional practices are generated for all students. This positioning accounts for a logic that moves away from the inclusion-exclusion, common-special, or ability-disability binarism, ensuring that the interaction between the subjects' organic deficiencies (sensory, motor, and intellectual) and the environment does not reproduce disabling views and approaches.

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# AUTONOMY, NOTION OF BEING AND ETHICAL EDUCATION: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAULO FREIRE AND RODOLFO KUSCH TO LATIN AMERICAN EDUCATION

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# INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to contribute to the pedagogical process occurring in the classroom, both in teacher training courses typically offered at universities and in practical teaching as it unfolds in schools. As a preamble to the discussion, we start from the premise that when teachers and students enter a classroom, they carry with them a set of ideas, values, convictions, beliefs, etc., which guide their behaviors and choices, and give meaning to their lives. In this process, it is assumed that reality and educational issues must be addressed and resolved considering the history and existential particularities of the teachers and students who are the subjects of the educational process. This means bringing the themes of alterity and ethics into the field of education.

The school is not a space dedicated solely to transmitting contents, concepts, and theories as we want it to be; we need to consider other elements and aspects that drive the existence of each individual there. If a process has prevailed in which rational and epistemological capacity has set the guidelines, we must also consider that students and teachers are driven or at least moved by passions, feelings, and desires that we do not always know where, how and when they come from. In addition, students and teachers are bearers of values and attitudes that have been acquired over their lives, with the school contributing only in part, perhaps the smallest part. It is therefore within this horizon that the pedagogical process takes place, indicating the inadequacy of a position almost exclusively based on the epistemological dimension in the classroom.

Thus, from teacher training to classroom activities, the search for and transmission of truth have occupied a predominant space, leading us to question whether we should also approach alterity as an aspiration for ethical action, presenting it as a possibility to be worked on in the pedagogical process, and even as a solution to the problems that schools face in their daily routines. If we agree, epistemology, along with ethics, could be viewed as two sides of the same coin, or the same reality, in such a way as to facilitate a better understanding by teachers of themselves, their students, and the actions they undertake. Addressing the unpredictable, including the sensitive and passionate world in our pedagogical practice, can contribute to a broader and more integrated educational process.

The challenge we aim to address here is to problematize this predominance of the epistemological dimension in education, but also in other areas of knowledge where the human being is interpreted and regarded as a subject of knowledge capable of effectively performing their functions based on a faculty reserved solely for them—reason,

or *logos*. It is as if reason, understood or reduced to the idea of consciousness, could know everything. Consequently, students are often seen by teachers, and teachers by students, as purely epistemic beings guided by reason. However, I believe it is possible to go a bit further and deeper and recognize that we are not only epistemic *ser*. In the specific case of teachers, if they suspected from the beginning, that is, during their training courses, that we are not governed all the time by reason, perhaps we would have more just, friendly, affectionate, and autonomous interpersonal relationships in the classroom, as Paulo Freire advocated. And if we approached this issue from a place like Latin America, following the ideas of Rodolfo Kusch, we might be able to create a new critical, decolonizing, and intercultural pedagogy.

In conjunction with the ideas of these two Latin American thinkers, this chapter will explore the dialogue between epistemology and ethics. The goal is to contribute to both the understanding and the formulation of a pedagogy that redefines and considers the human being and the context in which they live.

## AUTONOMY AND HUMAN FORMATION IN PAULO FREIRE

A cornerstone of Brazilian education, Paulo Freire was born in Recife on September 19, 1921, and died in São Paulo on May 2, 1997. Recognized as one of the major intellectuals of the 20th century, his contributions to the renewal of educational thought and practice are acknowledged worldwide. As an educator and philosopher, he authored a series of books and texts that continue to significantly influence the development of new approaches to human formation, including in schools. Critical of traditional pedagogy—teacher-centered, elitist, and epistemic—Freire proposed a humanistic education that considered individual problems, experiences, and the social context in which students were immersed. He believed that this process of conscientization was crucial for ensuring a transformative attitude against oppression and in favor of freedom and human autonomy. According to Freire, the technical and alienating education resulting from a "banking education" should be replaced by the possibility for students and individuals in general to think and act with political awareness, following and creating their own learning paths. For him, the pedagogical process is inseparable from action and ethical commitment.

One of his most well-known books, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), written in 1968 and banned in Brazil by the military dictatorship, exquisitely summarizes the journey

he had undergone in the preceding years, both in the field of popular education, where he focused on what he termed "the ragged of the world," and in his experience as an exile in Chile, where he experienced the oppression of a political system that excluded human freedom from its horizon.

Arguing that the oppressed also need a theory to achieve freedom, Freire believed that human education must be linked to a process and a pedagogy that liberates individuals from the clutches of an oppressive and manipulative ideology, transforming the reality in which they live. This led him to develop a highly innovative literacy method in the early 1960s, inspiring educators, teachers, and social scientists from Latin America and Africa, and later from around the world. With this method, he aimed to counteract the traditional teaching system, based on primers and content that hindered the learning of reading and writing, where the most common practice was the repetition of isolated words that had no meaning for students' realities. Fundamentally, the method followed steps intended to help students overcome their magical and uncritical view of the world, leading them towards a conscious, critical, and liberating attitude.

Finally, the transition from magical to critical consciousness does not occur naturally but is the result of a dialogical educational work that allows learners to interpret problems, set aside prejudices, experience freedom, and prepare for democracy.

> Therefore, consciousness and literacy are closely linked, as the goal of an individual in becoming literate is not just to recognize letters, syllables, and be able to read a sentence. It is also to become a subject of their own history, engaged in political and cultural struggles (Brighente and Mesquida, 2016, p. 167). [Quote translated from its original in Portuguese]

In Paulo Freire's view, human education is not neutral but rather a tool that problematizes, denounces, and challenges the logic of a social system aimed at integrating individuals into the interests of capital, thereby shaping them and restricting their ability to act freely as subjects of their own history. For this reason, he strongly opposes a formative process or pedagogy that eliminates any possibility of autonomous human action. Thus, an education that treats students as a mere empty space to be filled by the teacher is misplaced and subject to all criticism, since it transforms them into passive receivers, controlling their thoughts and actions, adjusting them to the world, and inhabiting their creative potential.

In this context, we can delve further into Paulo Freire's ideas, particularly his conception of autonomy. Freire argues that respecting individuality, experiences, and

worldviews, and taking into account what each student brings to the learning process is fundamental to human formation and emancipation. As Brazilian philosopher Marilena Chauí explains, "autonomy means the right to govern oneself by one's own laws or rules; independence; it refers to the path of those who are free or independent. Autonomous: that which is governed by its own laws, independent, self-directed" (Chauí, 2002, p. 496).

Freire's final written and published work, *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (1996), aims not only to define this concept but, more importantly, to propose a set of knowledge and practices that could be ensured in the pedagogical process to build students' autonomy. Thus, it is understood as the capacity of individuals to act and make decisions through voluntary actions and considering their own reality. Autonomy, from an educational perspective as defended by Freire, aims to promote and transform the student into a conscious subject of their own historical and social condition. This conception seems to align with Kant's context when he refers to the Enlightened individual.

> *Enlightenment [Aufklärung] is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere aude! "Have courage to use your own understanding!" -- that is the motto of enlightenment.* [*Aufklärung*] (Kant, 1974, p. 100). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

The enlightened and autonomous man is the one who has transcended their immaturity and, in contrast to their condition of heteronomy, that is, being guided by another or by rules different from their own, thinks, decides, and acts using their own reason and independently directs their choices and actions. (Zatti, 2007).

Without seeking a deeper alignment between Kant and Freire here, for the Brazilian educator, autonomy is connected to the idea of liberation from the oppressions of an unjust social reality brought about by the capitalist system. Autonomy would be the result of a process of awareness in which individuals cease to be treated as objects, becoming subjects who can and must intervene in the course of history and their own history.

> In the classroom room, for example, the teacher must engage with students, being open and available to their curiosity; therefore, they

> cannot adopt a rigid stance (..) It is precisely through their liberating pedagogical practice that the educator can combat the fatalism imposed by capitalist society, whether it be against unemployment, poverty, or high illiteracy rates. Education must not be the one that deposits, fosters mechanical memorization, or trains (banking conception), but rather the one that helps men and women, as subjects of history, to think critically, presenting challenges, providing space for their curiosities and inquiries (Brighente and Mesquida, 2016, p. 165). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

For Paulo Freire, autonomy results in a human formation in which the individual is capable of exercising their freedom and self-determination, ceasing to depend on thoughts, norms, ideals, and projects that are not their own. The educator committed to such an education must be aware of the challenging transition from heteronomy to autonomy, helping students to "think correctly," that is, moving from a state of passivity, submission, naive curiosity, and common sense to a level of determination and epistemological curiosity, where they formulate their own knowledge and judgments (Freire, 1996, p. 16).

To be autonomous is to understand, confront, and overcome discourses and practices that seek to oppress, adapt, and "ideologically soften" individuals, leading them to believe solely in values, behaviors, and attitudes driven by the market ethic, grounded in profit where the freedom of commerce takes precedence over human freedom. Autonomy is an achievement that education must realize through a liberating pedagogical praxis that regards humans as unfinished, incomplete beings who need to be formed and humanized.

> What I mean is that education, as formation, as a process of knowledge, teaching, and learning, has, throughout humanity's journey in the world, become a connotation of its [own] nature, developing through history as a vocation for humanization (...) It means recognizing that we are conditioned but not determined (Freire, 1996, p. 11). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

Thus, according to Freire, a pedagogy of autonomy must be grounded in ethics, respect for the dignity and autonomy of the learner, which requires the educator to practice listening—to engage in dialogue with students without authoritarianism or licentiousness, but by problematizing and supporting the construction of knowledge and the responsible and rational exercise of freedom. It is necessary to foster curiosity

and criticality in students that lead them to uncover and understand what is most hidden in the things and events they observe and analyze, without preconceived certainties that often imprison them and render them mechanical beings.

> Listening is clearly something that goes beyond the hearing possibilities of each individual. In the sense discussed here, listening means a permanent availability on the part of the listener to be open to the other's discourse, gestures, and differences (Freire, 1996, p. 61) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

As a consequence of becoming autonomous, the next step is to envision, as hope and utopia, a transformation of the world and society itself. This is where the ethical-political character of education lies. Thinking politically from an autonomous perspective is about reinventing the current world, which requires commitment and coherence from the educator and entails, in addition to knowledge of content, an effort to unmask the dominant ideology that immobilizes and hides truths. An autonomous educational practice demands taking a stance toward the world with the aim of transforming it, thereby overcoming heteronomous conditions.

Therefore, human formation is not solely epistemological, where the learner assimilates a set of knowledge developed and formulated over time, but also constitutes and requires an ethical stance, reflection, and conduct, as Paulo Freire explains:

> The necessary promotion from naivety to criticality cannot and should not be done apart from a rigorous ethical formation [...] Men and women, as historical-social beings, have become capable of comparing, valuing, intervening, choosing, deciding, and breaking; for all this, we have become ethical beings. We are only because we are being. To be being is the condition, among us, of being (...) Therefore, to transform the educational experience into mere technical training is to underestimate what is fundamentally human in educational practice: its formative character. If we respect human nature, teaching content cannot be separate from the moral formation of the student. Educating is substantially forming (Freire, 1996, p. 18. Grifo nosso). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

At various points in *Pedagogy of Autonomy*, Freire uses the term "being" precisely to illustrate the moving, unfinished, and incomplete nature of human existence and history, but also the ethical character of educational practice, with which it is possible to recognize human presence in the world as something original and singular. That is, more than being in the world, the human being has become a presence in the world,

with the world, and with others—always in the state of becoming. For the teacher, this means being open to students' inquiries, curiosity, questions, and inhibitions. This individual must be a critical and investigative being, restless about the task of teaching, rather than merely transferring knowledge. As Argentine philosopher and anthropologist Rodolfo Kusch also explains, being or becoming is a movement and a philosophical, political, epistemological, and ethical stance relative to a tradition and perspective that predominates in the conception of human beings, philosophy, science, and education in Latin America, marked by the presence and influence of Eurocentric thought, which is based on the idea of being, *"ser más"* (becoming more), or *"ser alguien"* (being someone) (Asprella & Gerónimo, 2017).

In Freire's framework, the concepts of *"ser más"* (becoming more) or *"ser alguien"* (being someone) are not predetermined a priori as an essential human essence that will inevitably be realized. Instead, they should be viewed as expressions of a human life in the process of becoming, allowing us to rebel rather than resign ourselves to offenses and violences that deny and destroy us. It is not in resignation, but in rebellion against injustices, that we affirm ourselves. This affirmative process, as an ethical-political commitment, unfolds through autonomy and freedom, in dialogical situations, and in formative moments where teachers and students share their ways of being in the world, without estrangement or distance.

> I reduce the distance between myself and the harsh life of the exploited not with angry, sectarian discourses that are not only ineffective but also further complicate my students' lives. I reduce the distance separating me from their negative life conditions by helping them to learn, regardless of whether the knowledge comes from a machinist or a surgeon, with a view to changing the world and overcoming unjust structures, never with a view to their immobilization (Freire, 1996, p. 70). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

In their studies, both Freire and Kusch, start from an ordinary thought, permeated by marginalized wisdom, revealing a richness and diversity of ideas, values, and knowledge derived from a deep relationship with the land and reality. This provides valuable contributions to a new perspective in the field of education.

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## *ESTAR SIENDO*[35] LATIN AMERICAN: THE CONTRIBUTION OF RODOLFO KUSCH [36]

In Rodolfo Kusch's thought, the idea of *estar siendo* also plays a significant role, indicating both his critique of Western reason and the possibility of understanding and diagnosing Latin American culture, always from the perspective of mapping what is historically and culturally specific to the peoples of that other side of the world. Kusch seeks, among other things, to highlight the presence of a new thought rooted in manifestations of popular and American culture. If the hallmark of the West is to universalize its values, beliefs, and thoughts, perhaps we should practice delineating what is specific to us, particularly from the place where we are *"estamos siendo,"* which is the Latin American continent.

Rodolfo Kusch was born on June 25, 1922, in Buenos Aires and died on September 30, 1979. He was the son of Germans settled in Argentina. He graduated in philosophy from the Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1948 and conducted extensive field research on indigenous and popular American thought as the basis for his philosophical reflections.

To develop the notion of *"estar"* (being), *"estar siendo", "estar nada más"* (just being), Kusch argues that, while European-influenced rationalist thought dominated the establishment and interpretation of our culture, it is now necessary to deconstruct this logical structure, which is positioned as superior, to the detriment of the native and indigenous American cultures. At the core of his reflections is the idea that Western rationality is based on *ser*, the entity, the thing, while indigenous rationality would be based on *estar*, the domicile, and the habitat. Adopting methods of observation from anthropological science, he went into the field to deepen his intuitions to think and extract authentically American philosophy, concluding that indigenous peoples exhibit a unique ontological and epistemological situation characterized by the predominance

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35   These terms are used in Spanish because it is the only language that offers two possibilities of existence: ser and estar. According to Kush, "ser" refers to the ontological and essential dimension of existence, that is, the fundamental condition of being human. On the other hand, "estar" is the existential and temporal dimension, the way in which the individual relates to the world in determined situations.

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36   This topic, with modifications, is part of a paper presented at the VIII Jornadas O pensamento de Rodolfo Kusch - territorialidades e interculturalidades: movimentos seminais na América Profunda, held in November 2018 at the Universidad Federal de Río Grande del Sur, in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

of *"estar"* over *"ser"*. European rationalist thought, by denying or completely dismissing American thought, turns it into a lifeless and historyless object, compelling us to build a movement of resistance and self-affirmation in the search for emancipation from discourses and practices that prevent us from expressing our own culture in an integrated and autonomous way.

In light of this diagnosis, fear is an emotion that must be acknowledged and fully experienced, as it offers us the opportunity to feel, experience, and contemplate our essence. For indigenous peoples, experiencing fear is not a problem, as it forms and defines them. This is in contrast to overseas philosophical techniques that seek to control and submit it to the dictates of reason, even adopting pedagogical perspectives. In other words, original Latin American thought does not require a technique or logic to guide it towards a knowledge that tells us how things are, aiming to grasp the "what" of things—their essential form. Instead, it seeks to approach the sense, meaning, content, and vital dynamics that drive the land, nature, and people.

> The situation of intellectual thought versus ordinary thought seems symmetrically inverted. If in intellectual (Western philosophical) thought, technical aspects predominate, in ordinary thought, technical aspects take a back seat while semantic aspects dominate. In summary, if in ordinary sectors *something* is said, in intellectual sectors, it is about *how* [...] It is natural that there should be a correlation between "something" and "how" in discourse, but it is not natural for the two to diverge so significantly and for the "how" to be overvalued over the "something" [...] Returning to philosophy, the intrinsic problem of this activity is not merely technical, that is, the "how," but also the "something" that constitutes it [...] Intellectual thought inverts the direction, focusing on the "how" rather than the "something" of the discourse (Kusch, 2000, p. 9-10). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

For Kusch, a balance between content and form is necessary to de-fetishize the technique and logic that promises progress as a consequence and that has even marked bourgeois education by grounding teaching in the idea of progress and advancement, i.e., in a conception of reason that considers everything susceptible to being dominated, controlled, and predicted.

> One faces chaos to find what is predictable. And to ensure this, techniques are used. This wastes time because it removes the possibility of novelty. The fear that what appears might be something different is lost. Thus, our

education. We educate young people to pre-vision, to see before, to already know what is given, and thus stop time, avoiding the burden of sacrifice (KUSCH, 2000, p. 12). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Desde esta perspectiva, lo que se ha visto en América sería un gran desnivel entre lo que este continente era y lo que el Occidente trajo. Por un lado, el inferior, el inútil y, por otro, el superior y el útil, que tiene como objetivo el progreso, el ascenso, el ser alguien, no importa a qué costo y a qué precio.

> *To be someone* implies the *desire to* be so and that *desire* is identified, in this context, with progress, with the substitution of fruits for (the *accumulation* of) simple things, with the obsession of *adding objects*. Thus, the *perfection of ser* ultimately implies *having* [...] The *individual* seeks *perfection*, which is identified with an *infinite desire for progress* related to *objects*, a *progress* that implies the *denial of the old desire for a minimum* that simply sought *to preserve life*, committed to *mere estar* (Cullen, 2003, p. 53). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The Latin American person, formed, educated, and influenced by this European worldview, cannot endure fear and existence, as it causes anxiety, unlike the indigenous person who, when feeling fear, sought help from shamans. For them, embracing our human dimension means living at the level of the earth and confronting our fears. For us, this is not enough because we want everything to be clear, elucidated, and susceptible to understanding by reason. It is as if there were an imperialism of rationality that actually reveals our weakness and impotence in facing the totality of what we should think and live. We are incapable of conceptualizing thought in Western terms because we want to reduce everything to a cause-and-effect relationship.

> [...] What we call culture does not provide us with a total knowledge [...] Culture, in daily life, assumes knowledge from books and data just as in science. The best example is the library. Entering it, we always feel our inferiority in the face of so much knowledge poured into the book object. We continue to live the scientific encyclopedia at the level of culture [...] The accumulative knowledge present in education and crystallized in the library is seen as an advantage of the century [...] What is called culture in the 20th century is thus reduced to mere fetishism (Kusch, 2000, p. 21-22). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Given this context, we can observe a dual polarity in our Latin American society: on the one hand, or *"estar nada más"* (just being), or *"estar siendo"* and, on the other hand, or *"ser alguien"* (being someone) according to Kusch's expressions, or simply *"ser más"* (becoming more) a priori, as Paulo Freire suggests, being deprived of our presence in the world. We seem accustomed to accumulative, quantitative, competitive, and encyclopedic knowledge—partial and incomplete—because we, things, and the world are more than what is conceptually defined, a scope that no philosophical, scientific, or pedagogical technique can fully capture.

This idea of merely being in the world (*"estar nada más"* (just being), *"estar siendo"*) whether as a characteristic of American culture or as a critique of Western reason, as Kusch proposes, invites us to revisit the history of philosophy itself and observe the effects of the hypervaluation of reason at the expense of other human dimensions, such as passion.

From Kusch's perspective, disregarding human passions, such as fear for example, as a counterpoint or alternative to reason or being, is to undervalue an original state that needs to be examined in its uniqueness and depth. To do this, we must consider the ground we inhabit, which supports life and provides spiritual sustenance. Culture must have a margin of rootedness and be considered as situated in a geographical space. From the ground emerges an entire culture and a way of being, thinking, acting, and speaking—a true ethos. Hence, the idea of creating a geoculture for Latin American people and reclaiming the philosophical dignity of indigenous American worldviews.

> Behind every culture is always the ground [...] And this ground, as stated, which is neither a thing nor a touch, but weighs heavily, is the only answer when one asks about culture. It symbolizes the margin of rootedness that every culture must have [...] There is no other universality than this condition of being grounded, whether it be in the highlands or the jungle. Hence the rootedness and, more critically, the necessity of that rootedness, for without it, life loses its meaning (Kusch, 2000, p. 109-110). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Therefore, the ground, passions, fear, emotions, the here and now, the flow of our lives, magic, and the symbolic are central characteristics for understanding and conceptualizing the uniqueness of Latin American culture. It is the *"estar siendo"* as an existential structure and cultural decision. Unlike *"ser,"* which defines, colonizes, and refers to essence, *"estar"* marks and indicates the condition, the external mode of all that exists (being), without concern for interiority, universality, and immutability.

According to Kusch, the American symbolic horizon highlights the predominance of *"estar"* or *"estar siendo,"* which implies more than what *ser* states or says; it is pure living, being domiciled, and "attached to a ground considered inalienable" (Kusch, 2000, p. 238). By neglecting this, we reveal our own lack of authenticity. "Our authenticity does not lie in what the West considers authentic, but in developing the inverse structure to such authenticity, in the form of *"estar siendo"* as the only possibility [...] Only the recognition of this will grant our authenticity" (Kusch, 2000, p. 239).

This means, as Kusch explains, that in Western cultures, and as is clearly manifest in America, *"ser"* has overshadowed *"estar,"* conquering and colonizing it. However, the trajectory of *"estar"* merges with the chaos of a world that is distressing, a "world that is as it is" and must be contemplated and lived, not merely in terms of progress and scientific explanations.

While the European world of *ser* has seemingly resolved the issue of hostility and fear through theory and technique, the American world of *estar* does not transcend reality but invokes it, placing itself in front of it. Whereas the West creates science and education to oppose and confront fear—what we might call passions—the indigenous peoples remain in their "magic," their rituals, preserving the reality of the world, interacting with nature and taking the best out of it with deep respect.

Therefore, a critical and Latin American pedagogy, as presented by Kusch, must include and consider the human being in its always unfinished relationship with the ground, that is, in its existential dimension of culture, which is transient, uncertain, if we are to achieve its realization and, according to him, our own mission in America. This presupposes the field of possibilities of *"estar siendo,"* as Paulo Freire also proposed.

## THE QUESTION OF ESTAR, AUTONOMY AND EDUCATION: TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF ALTERERITY

To conclude these reflections, we would like to emphasize that the ideas of Paulo Freire and Rodolfo Kusch enable us to engage not only with the Latin American historical context but also with the philosophical and educational tradition from which we are heirs. This engagement aims to confront and overcome this tradition in pursuit of an education oriented towards an ethics of alterity. As we have seen, the notions of *autonomy* and *estar siendo* serve as parameters that can help us, on one hand,

understand the process of domination and disrespect endured by indigenous and oppressed peoples throughout the history of America, and on the other, overcome the dualistic and Manichean view that is often adopted in the educational process. In the first case, the colonizing project disregarded and devalued existing cultures, customs, and traditions in the name of a conception of humanity and the world from elsewhere, namely Europe. In the second case, indigenous or aboriginal peoples were classified as barbarians, distant from civilization, and therefore required education and conversion. It was as if there were a human essence that needed to be taught, assimilated, and internalized by those inhabiting the American soil. This perspective seems to still prevail in current educational projects.

It seems to us that Freire and Kusch specifically opposed this practice. In his text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire argues that human beings are products of their history, meaning that there is no room for essentialisms; in other words, the human subject is not conceived as something predetermined *a priori* and by nature. On the contrary, the oppressed must be educated from within their own culture, ethos, and way of *being in the world*, not from a model of the human subject given and imposed by the oppressor. Therefore, the autonomy of the oppressed is not built through a process of identification, reproduction, and internalization of the oppressive image and consciousness, but through the search and historical realization of their authentic subjectivity from a humanistic and liberatory pedagogy.

> The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and liberating pedagogy, will therefore have two distinct but interrelated moments. The first, in which the oppressed discover the world of oppression and commit, in practice, to its transformation, and the second, in which, once the oppressive reality has been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to be of the oppressed and becomes the pedagogy of people in a state of permanent liberation (Freire, 1972, p. 35). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The oppressed themselves, with their emotions and fears, should be the protagonists of their own path to liberation and self-reflection. Similarly, although in another historical context and from another starting point, Kusch also seeks to understand in depth the process of domination and exploitation of peoples, especially indigenous peoples, in the Americas. However, this understanding cannot be based on a mere classification, where indigenous peasant culture is on one side and Western European culture on the other: barbarism and civilization. Referring to the formation of Argentina, Kusch believes "this classification is outdated. It was useful in the early years of our national formation and had been proposed by a positivist and liberal generation that honestly

aimed to incorporate our nationality into the congress of nations" (Kusch, 2007, p. 201-202).

As Paulo Freire looked at Brazil in the 1960s and Kusch at Argentina of his time, we must now consider the cultural guidelines into which individuals are inserted. The peasants of northeastern Brazil and the indigenous peoples of the Andean highlands must be educated and formed based on their own culture and way of life, built and guided through a long historical process. The positivist attempt to find a synthesis between civilization and barbarism generally indicates a desire for superiority of the former over the latter. In this process, the barbarian—the indigenous person, the peasant, the oppressed, the black person, etc.—is considered an other who needs to be overcome and educated according to civilizational standards. In the colonizing view, being good and being a citizen means conforming to the civilized world. Kusch cites the example of a shaman who performed a very important ritual when sending his son to study at a military school, or when a neighbor in Maimará was very happy to send her son to study in Tucumán. In both situations, there was a manifestation that the children were overcoming their state of barbarism. Was that necessary? Is it the only synthesis to be made? No, Kusch replies.

Certain Quechua communities in Bolivia want to establish their own university in Quechua. Evidently, there is no need for us to be troubled; we want to seek a synthesis, and the people are experimenting with different approaches [...] What is going to happen will not depend on us, the wise ones who are so concerned about the future and the past, but on those who are not wise, perhaps the Bolivian shaman, my neighbor, in short, whether we like it or not, on those who are educated according to other cultural guidelines. The solution might emerge when the educated from one side, that is, the good [the civilized], who suffer from pride and anxiety, talk to those others (Kusch, 2007, p. 203). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Therefore, synthesis is not a matter of one being superior to the other, but the result of a deep dialogue, leading to a total authenticity of the participants. When this authenticity is exerted "one discovers the human in all its degradation as the humble, finite and discouraged person who timidly rehearses his culture and sometimes adds, as a substitute, a clumsy pride because he believes himself to be very good" (Kusch, 2007, p. 204).

As can be observed, both thinkers place significant emphasis on the issue of alterity. Their reflections on autonomy and *estar siendo* lead us to consider an education that takes the other into account. For Paulo Freire (1996), the teacher must respect the

student's right to be curious and restless, their aesthetic tastes, concerns and fears, language, values, beliefs, and symbols. It is in this sense that true dialogicity—where dialogical subjects learn, grow, and respect differences—is revealed, as they are being and acting autonomously, as beings who, unfinished, assume themselves to be radically ethical and historical (Freire, 1996, p. 31).

Kusch also acknowledges an alterity that has been obscured, exploited, oppressed, and exterminated in Latin America. There is a process of denying the deeply rooted nature of the culture of Latin America's indigenous peoples, their dignity, their history, and their ways of living, coexisting, and inhabiting the land where anything is possible. In its modern inception, the "New World" was marked by invasion, imposition, and violence, all in the name of progress and an unmeasured *"ser alguien"* (being someone). All those native peoples—Aztecs, Mayans, Aymaras, Incas, etc.—were stripped of their unique historical identities and defined as inferior, primitive, and epistemologically archaic.

While there may be differing viewpoints and perspectives on developing a philosophy of education and a humanizing pedagogical project (GIULIANO, 2008), it is evident that Paulo Freire and Rodolfo Kusch are aligned in their analyses and studies of a historical and geo-cultural reality of domination, denial, and extermination. Both sought to understand and conceptualize an America shaped by political, economic, social, and cultural practices, as well as epistemic, ethical, and aesthetic conceptions grounded in notions and references formulated in other contexts, disregarding the problems, particularities, and tensions inherent to our territory.

Therefore, it is high time to consider a Latin American education that includes the other, moving towards a more just, tolerant, and respectful world. The different, the excluded, is not a threat but an opportunity to build a new identity, new connections, and a new way of coexistence. To this end, it is essential that we revisit the topic of alterity or the issue of the other in depth. To conclude this chapter, we will offer a brief observation on the subject to stimulate future discussions.

It can be observed that the philosophical tradition has not addressed the issue hegemonically. From its inception, alterity as an ethical issue has been secondary, especially when viewed from a Eurocentric perspective. Today, it is increasingly acceptable to consider that philosophy is not confined to the Greek world, and thus, it may be necessary for us to reposition ourselves regarding ethics and what it constitutes. Indeed, since the Greeks, depending on the school of thought, the issue of alterity has been present, at least by exclusion and as a conceptual and epistemic representation.

In this regard, when Parmenides asserted that being is and non-being is not, one can discern, ex negativo, an early notion of what has gained unprecedented relevance in contemporary Western thought. In Parmenides' proposition, "non-being," the other, only acquires "existence" in relation to a "self" that totalizes and represents reality. The only chance for the other to exist is when it is reduced to or becomes similar to this self. Over time, this conception seems to have become hegemonic, essentially becoming a customary and unquestionable representational practice. In the specific case of human beings, we have the idea and conception that we are alike and that all other individuals are similar to me, that is, there is a human essence that extends and is present in each one of us; we would be of the same species.

At the beginning of modernity, this idea manifested through the notion that we are all equal, with equality emerging as the solution to conflicts in a hypothetical state of nature, where there was "a war of all against all." To prevent mutual extermination, it was necessary to establish a contract and create an institution to effectively control and preserve each individual's life and, by extension, everyone's. Thus, the modern state was born with the function of guaranteeing equality among all.

At the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the figure of the other, or rather, the issue of alterity, acquired a new meaning. Not similar nor equal, but different. This is the leitmotif of an emerging debate, provoking new attitudes and perspectives for human coexistence. By forgetting to consider the other as another and now placing them at the center of our practices, the issue acquires new meaning and becomes a subject for a new field of reflection: ethics.

Ultimately, both Paulo Freire and Rodolfo Kusch seem to adopt this perspective in their analyses and reflections. For them, as I understand it, a liberating education committed to the history of Latin American peoples must be essentially ethical, as it would be quite regrettable to disregard the other, the different, and only treat them as subjects to be excluded, oppressed, and denied. In line with Levinas' views, they agree that the other is not an abstract concept or a category of thought but has a face that reveals itself and must be welcomed and recognized. "The epiphany of the face as face opens up humanity. The face in its nakedness presents to me the plight of the poor and the foreigner" (Levinas, 2000, p. 190). To think, recognize, and embrace the face of America is to undergo this epiphanic experience, in which the other manifests as someone unique, singular, and different. The other is no longer a stranger but has become our *neighbor*. Their presence within me is a call that cannot leave me indifferent to their fate. This appears to be the commitment and call that our two Latin American thinkers are making and proposing, including in the field of education.

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# TOWARDS AN AMERICAN CRITICAL AESTHETIC PEDAGOGY AFTER AUSCHWITZ

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# ABSTRACT

This paper aims to critically rethink the logic of education in order to highlight its totalitarian potential. It proposes an understanding of the internal nature of conflicts present in education governed by "reason"; the same reason that had its most finished symbol in Auschwitz and that continues to distort the humanist project. Reason feeds the State, bureaucracy, technological instrumentalization, and mechanical precision, in a word: the triumph of death over hope. Critical education is an act of resistance in the construction of a society where horror and meaninglessness cannot be repeated.

It is necessary to start from a social and sociological perspective of education and pedagogy[37], addressing the critical study of human relations with a particular sensitivity towards the question of the human. Beyond quantitatively analyzing the prevailing educational models of today, studying macrostructural standards and guidelines of pedagogy, we must consider or recover the idea of education as an ideology, as a human project, and consider it in turn as a personalization of power, typical of a logic of domination. This approach would allow us to conceptually address the problems of American critical pedagogy from a more canonical socio-anthropological and philosophical study.

The challenges of education in the 21st century was established by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their famous 1969 text Dialectics of Enlightenment, which calls us to "mock logic when it is against humanity." This statement invites us to critically

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37    In general, we will establish a difference in Education and Pedagogy. Understanding education as a phenomenon of schooling, that is, of a process that justifies itself in school failure, homogenizing and denying diversity, continuously focused on the contents (definitive answers) and not on the generation of emergent relationships, forcing the repetition of pre-established relationships, where it satisfies the reiteration of naïve questions whose answers we know and where we deepen cultural deprivation:  language, ethical and political commitment. However, pedagogy would be the real educational act, the space where we favor the creation of possible relationships, infinite bonding relationships, regardless of whether they are true or false, understanding that only a few actions will be carried out according to scientific and technological advances, which we consider as true and pertinent to our coexistence. So, learning takes place through mediation, with innocent questioning, which germinates in ignorance and in the processual character, simplifying complexity, creating search criteria, investigating indications, regularities, patterns, playfully changing the criteria to see what happens. In the pedagogical act, self-organization is facilitated, which generates increasing complexity, which is not explained by its components, favoring the development of cognitive functions and mental operations of everyone.

rethink the logic of education or pedagogical models and whether they take on the challenge of founding humanity. In turn, this brief maxim could serve as a programmatic principle for any American critical pedagogical project.

Thus, the initial task is to investigate the relationship between an explicit, public, and conscious educational facade and a latent, hidden, and private educational sphere. In other words, it involves relating the conscious to the pedagogical unconscious to understand whether this darker sphere of education harbors fascist and authoritarian impulses. Today more than ever it is vital to highlight the totalitarian potential of education, which, in the global, regional, and local contexts, is enabling the rise of emerging fascist political movements in their discourses and practices. Emphasis must be placed on the so-called sociological dimension of education, which affirms the propensity of citizens to authoritarian dynamics, as something typical of the historical and cultural foundation of modernity, established in exclusion, prioritizing oneself over another, a reason and European logic over any other expression or trace of thought.

Traditionally, or classically, education understands society as a homogeneous and compact whole, typical of the Western reductionist exercise in its origin. This perspective views societal problems as arising from the intrusion of an enemy, an Other who threatens, an outsider, an irrational or antisocial, or a primitive and barbaric state. The prevailing belief is that once the enemy is educated (or eliminated), society will return to a state of justice. Thus, modern society, which emerges with reason, which materializes during the French Revolution and triumphs in bourgeois capitalism, appears to us as a structurally contradictory whole. Our community relies on the rational nature of the human being, which, paradoxically, is also the source of exclusion and marginalization. In this context, education promotes a principle of differentiation that distances us from the animalistic, inhuman, and technical aspects. Thus, the common and intrinsic aspect of a "human us" is to differentiate, exclude, and marginalize. Reason plays a crucial role in this process, as pedagogy is considered the full exercise of rationality. Consequently, it establishes a relationship of authority over the natural environment, asserting the dominance of the intellectual over the sensitive. It thus initiates a logical process of selectivity.

The challenge for a American critical pedagogy is to recognize that there is no external enemy to be eliminated, nor an alien or marginal element that invades, contaminates, or prevents us from achieving the just society we desire. Instead, it is about understanding the internal nature of these conflicts, acknowledging that the humanistic project is founded on these contradictions, and reinterpreting them based on their

historical nature, while recovering the utopian myth of a community where humans live peacefully with each other and with nature, incorporating the Other[38].

Consequently, traditional pedagogical dynamics are characterized by identifying an enemy. From the moment authority is exercised, a structurally conflictive situation begins to be accepted. An enemy is created, personified, and imagined as the source of all conflicts. In the best-case scenario, the enemy is attributed an eccentric personality, experiencing a kind of fracture between the external and internal worlds. The enemy's inner nature is perceived as pure, projecting evil onto the external world. Thus, educational obsessions and pedagogical paranoia arise—a form of attempting to externalize the evil by projecting it onto others. Isolating an individual or a group and blaming them for the world's problems equates to concealing the genuinely conflictive elements of modern society by medicating, imprisoning, excluding, separating, and normalizing them.

The last century has radically compelled us to acknowledge that the concept of education operates within a modern paradigm, centering around the "goddess" of reason. This is typical of an Enlightenment project that, however, is fully realized or materialized in the figure of Auschwitz. Auschwitz, as a symbol, represents the splendor of reason, the consolidation of the European educational model, culture, and modern society. Yet it also introduces the notion of human history as a continuous catastrophe and depicts modern society as an oppressive totality, embodying the totalitarian and repressive nature of technique, technology, and science. In the eyes of technical reason, everything is revealed. We often recall Walter Benjamin's image of the angel of history observing progress as a heap of ruins and corpses with each step [39]. Today, we

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38    It also seems that Hegelian totalization, the system, is beginning to dismember. On this horizon, beyond classical humanism or existential despair, a new humanism begins to take shape: the humanism of the other man. A humanism that is more concerned with the hunger and misery of others than with safeguarding the property, freedom and dignity of subjectivity itself (Levinas, 1974).

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39    There is a painting by Klee entitled Angelus Novus. An angel is seen in him, apparently at the moment of moving away from something on which he is staring. His eyes are wide open, his mouth open and his wings outstretched. The angel of history must look like that. His face is turned to the past. In what appears to us as a chain of events, he sees a catastrophe, which throws ruin upon ruin at his feet, heaping them incessantly piling them up. The angel would like to stop, awaken the dead and put back together what has been destroyed. But a hurricane blows from paradise and swirls on his wings, and it is so strong that the angel can no longer fold them. This hurricane irresistibly drags him into the future, to which he turns his back, while the pile of ruins grows before him to the sky. This hurricane is what we call progress (Benjamin, 2008).

take for granted the inhuman nature of the Holocaust, but it must be noted that it was not a result of passionate hatred or emotional, natural, or animalistic forces, but rather a horror that emerged from reason, from modern technique, from the most human aspect we had established. Auschwitz represents the death of humanity by human hands[40].

Education after Auschwitz thus becomes the paradigm through which we must interpret the distortion of the humanist project. The extermination camp, with its stringent rules and its dehumanizing aspect, graphically represents the idea of an oppressive whole that crushes the individual, the human subjectivity. It is a concrete historical image that comes from a metaphor of totalitarian society. The prisoner who wanders soullessly through the extermination camp assumes the symbolic role of the human condition[41]. Auschwitz is an event that, in its inhuman complexity, remains ineffably human, too human.

Let us then agree that the Nazi extermination, the holocaust, is not just another historical event. What happened in Germany between the late 1930s and 1945 is completely singular. That is why all attempts to reduce the Holocaust to a historical drama, to just another episode in the histories of wars, represent a trivialization of the historical

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40   (…) The end of man is the return to the beginning of philosophy. Today one can only think of the emptiness of the disappeared man. For this emptiness does not deepen a lack; it does not prescribe a gap that must be filled. It is nothing more, nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is finally possible to think again (Foucault, 1968).

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41   Primo Levi refers to the emblematic figure of the "Muslim": All Muslims who go to the gas have the same story, or rather, they have no history (…), they have been overwhelmed before they have been able to adapt; have been defeated before they begin (…). Their life is brief, but their number is immeasurable; they are the Muselmanners, the sunken ones, the foundations of the countryside, they, the anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and work in silence, the divine flame extinguished in them, too empty to truly suffer (…) One hesitates to call them alive: one hesitates to call death their death, before which they are not afraid, because they are too tired to understand it. They are the ones who populate my memory with their faceless presence, and if I could enclose all the evil of our time in an image, I would choose this image, which is familiar to me: an emaciated man, with his head bowed and his shoulders bent, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought can be read (Levi, 2002)

tragedy of humanity. The challenge in education is to ensure that Auschwitz does not repeat itself. A pedagogy of horror is needed that does not trivialize human actions [42].

Auschwitz contains an element that must always be brought to the forefront: the cold planning, the image of a calculated, surgical, programmed extermination. It was reasoned and conceived in its fullest extent. What the Nazi Holocaust brought to modern education was the bureaucratic and indifferent nature of mass murder. This is what Hanna Arendt referred to as "the banality of evil" in her acclaimed 1964 book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*[43]. Imagine the modern educator as that cold, calculating individual, concerned with and dedicated to the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education, efficiently carrying out the orders of the authorities. The ultimate horror had emerged from technological instrumentalization, from the mechanical precision with which modern capitalist mass society was constructed. Let us briefly envision the educational space as akin to the extermination camp.

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42   The demand that Auschwitz not be repeated is the first of all those that must be put to education. It precedes any other so absolutely that I do not think I should or have to substantiate it. I cannot understand why so little attention has been devoted to it so far. In the face of the monstrosity of what happened, substantiating it would have something monstrous. That so little awareness has been taken of this demand, and of the questions and issues that go hand in hand with it, shows, however, that the monstrous has not penetrated people enough. This is still a symptom of the persistence of the possibility of repeating what happened if it depends on the state of consciousness and unconsciousness of people. Any possible debate on educational ideals is vain and indifferent in comparison to this: that Auschwitz should not be repeated (Adorno, 1998)

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43   (…) When I speak of the banality of evil, I do so only on a strictly objective level, and I limit myself to pointing out a phenomenon that, during the trial, became evident. Eichmann was neither an Iago nor a Macbeth, and nothing could be further from his intentions than "to turn out to be a villain", in the words of Richard III. Eichmann had no motives, except those shown by his extraordinary diligence to make his personal progress. And, in itself, such diligence was not criminal; Eichmann would have been absolutely incapable of assassinating his superior in order to inherit his position. To put it in plain words, we can say that Eichmann simply never knew what he was doing (…). No, Eichmann was not stupid. It was only pure and simple thoughtlessness, which we can in no way equate with stupidity, that predisposed him to become the greatest criminal of his time. And if this deserves to be classified as "banality", and may even seem comical, and even with the best of intentions it is not possible to attribute to Eichmann diabolical depth, it is also true that we cannot say that it is something normal or common (…). Indeed, one of the lessons of the Jerusalem trial was that such detachment from reality and thoughtlessness can do more harm than all the evil instincts inherent, perhaps, of human nature. But it was only a lesson, not an explanation of the phenomenon, nor a theory about it (Arendt,

The enormous task of American critical pedagogy is to recognize that, in the field, the traditional modern pedagogical space, the individual is stripped of their last and poorest remnant, their singularity. The fact that in the camps individuals no longer died as individuals but as human beings directly affect education, as it enabled the complete integration of the humanistic project into the logic of modern scientific instrumentalism. In education, in the camp, people are leveled, polished, until their perfect nullity. We must literally think of the educational space as the place where individuality and subjectivity are exterminated. Moreover, Auschwitz confirms the philosophical notion of pure identity as death.

Once this image is drawn, Auschwitz appears as a point of no return. The imperative task and challenge of American critical pedagogy is to ensure that Auschwitz does not repeat itself. The concerning and alarming fact is that we are referring to an ongoing phenomenon, one that occurred a century ago.

On the other hand, education after Auschwitz has demonstrated its ability to fully exploit all the possibilities offered by technological and bureaucratic progress, and thus also by the state apparatus of which European democracies were proud. The modern state, procedural bureaucracy, scientific technique, and development have advanced together, but what they have produced is not progress in freedom, but rather the development of death and meaninglessness. The only thing that can be done, now more than ever, is to resist. The very idea of education must be seen as an act of resistance, an action to ensure that Auschwitz is never repeated.

The horror of extermination has placed the concept of pedagogy itself in a dilemma, since it is in Enlightenment thought, with its proclamations of liberty, equality, and fraternity, that the concept of reason is forcibly imposed on all emotional, touching, or sensitive aspects. It is the reason of the defeated that violently establishes the Enlightenment logic, applying abstract and rigid categories to everyday activities, such as progress, development, and evolution. Thus, the bureaucracy of the regime enslaved human behavior and oppresses desires, emotions, and sensations. Therefore, education today cannot continue to act in this way if it does not want to remain within the dialectic of Enlightenment and continue to repeat (and tolerate) barbarism.

It is necessary to break the cycle of the eternal return of violence and for education to begin to behave compassionately with what it wants to form. We will have to redefine what it means to be human. Theodor W. Adorno presents us with the image of the constellation, where it is easy to observe the configurations of reality without imposing a

forced constriction upon them. It seems that pedagogy today, centered on the logic of the indexed paper market, represents the configuration of reality.

Therefore, a possible form of resistance for American critical pedagogies is the return to the aesthetic experience in the educational act. Traditionally, aesthetics is regarded as a discipline that deals exclusively with artistic and natural beauty. This places us in the immeasurable task of addressing the aesthetic experience in the educational act as an initial reflection on the nature of pedagogies, their critical meaning, and their position within American culture. Education would be understood primarily as a product capable of saying something about the culture that created it, rather than as an object to be studied from the point of view of its reception. American critical pedagogy is a form of knowledge that allows to read against the light the reality in which the very idea of education has been constructed. Therefore, if we acknowledge that the educational act arises from an aesthetic experience, it liberates the idea of education from doctrinal (authoritarian) constraints and acquires an autonomous character and a protest against the oppressive society. Its free and autonomous figuration of pedagogy would be capable of revealing its inhuman nature. The modern capitalist society, which represses the individual through production and consumption, and which, in the last century, generated the massification of the individual and the loss of subjectivity, has made the aesthetic experience merely a function of the cultural industry that has standardized, normalized, and structured all possible artistic enjoyment, reducing it to a formula of standardized evaluations based on established competencies.

American critical pedagogy must assert its own structural freedom and, in doing so, reveal the oppressive and contradictory nature of the hegemonic modern society. In the aesthetic experience, it is not possible to interpret educational content univocally and immediately; rather, it tasks us with presenting the situation of an alienated and massified world, but it does so in the light of its own formal freedom. Ultimately, this is the only promise of happiness left for pedagogy. Education in the 21st century must engage with the dynamics of an oppressive society while simultaneously demonstrating the possibility of escaping from it. It cannot act as if everything were fine; it must take the suffering of the world seriously and, consequently, indicate the possibility of escaping the pain it imposes. This would entail adopting a form of negative dialectics as a teaching methodology, which involves a procedure where, following an initial reciprocal negation, some form of reconciliation occurs. Thus, negation is followed by affirmation.

Classical education presupposes that reality has reached a state of reconciliation where the oppositions of dialectics have been definitively resolved. This is under a positive dialectic that fails to adequately consider the negativity of the real. Therefore, the great challenge for American critical pedagogy is to build itself from a negative dialectic, from a thought where understanding the world never presumes to be closed. It must challenge the oppressive totality in which the individual is crushed by the social system. What must be opposed is an education that places the negative character at its very center. The oppositions that reality encounters cannot be conceived as resolved. On the contrary, one must insist on their real opposition.

This pedagogical thought renounces imposing reality and instead attempts to restore the authentically concrete nature of reality. The educational objective is to give life to a reconfiguration of the values of the Enlightenment, redirecting the phenomena of the world towards rationality. The first step, therefore, is to recognize that objects of knowledge, educational contents, do not resolve their essence once conceptually understood (competency acquisition). This concept of education means acknowledging the insufficiency of the scientific understanding of the world. The science of education, when viewed as a comprehensive explanation of the world, reveals its own limits. An economy based exclusively on mathematical laws, a sociology based only on quantitative research, a psychology that limits itself to empirical study of the brain correspond to repressive disciplines that avoid the difficulty of studying phenomena in their concreteness or blurring of universals.

Therein lies the challenge for American critical pedagogies: to continually critique contemporary cognitivist trends that aim to explain all human elements through empirical study. For example, consider the recent boom in neuroscience, which seeks to conceive emotions exclusively as the result of material interactions within the human brain. We are not denying the value of empirical findings of these disciplines; we are rejecting the practice of reducing all human and significant elements to a series of mathematizable relationships. American critical pedagogy works to develop an educational awareness that always recognizes something qualitative that escapes quantitative conceptual understanding, and it is precisely this quality that makes humanity, human. Negative dialectics thus seeks to reveal the opposing nature of reality to thought and to recognize the impossibility of comprehensively understanding the real in a totalitarian manner.

The subject of education, the absolute subject—let us consider the student—that education began to conceive more or less with Descartes and culminated in Kant, is none other than the distorted reflection of what happens in modern reality. The

20th century has shown us that the subject (the individual and concrete student) is reduced to the object of objective social dynamics. In the pedagogical act, there is an oppressive totality that reduces the student to a function of the economy, production, and consumption, and interposes an educational system that merely attempts to simulate improvement, progress, development, evolution, or the logical path and scientific development.

Aesthetics has a direct link with politics. Secondly, we conceive aesthetics as the set of sensitive forms mediating between reality and our perception of reality. Aesthetics deals with how we perceive reality through a series of forms that shape it, with forms that mediate our perception of reality. In this sense, pedagogy is always an aesthetic intervention because it mediates the ways we perceive reality[44].

In this sense, working with aesthetics in American critical pedagogy would enable us to understand the forms of intervention through which we build our relationship with the past. An aesthetic approach in education should engage with the forms of memory beyond artistic forms, addressing the forms of perceiving the past, and moving in the field of memory disputes. Thus, American critical pedagogy is conceptualized as a field in dispute, continuously disputing representations of the past. Education after Auschwitz is a field in conflict where different ways of thinking, perceiving, and representing the past are constantly emerging. Pedagogy never refers to a fixed space but rather to a space in perpetual conflict. Engaging with aesthetics allows us to configure a space of

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44    Politics comes when those who "don't have" time take the time necessary to set themselves up as inhabitants of a common space and to demonstrate that their mouths perfectly emit a language that speaks of common things, not just a cry that denotes suffering. This distribution and this redistribution of places and identities, this partition and this distribution of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of noise and language constitute what I call the division of the sensible. Politics consists in reconfiguring the division of the sensible, in introducing new subjects and objects, in making visible what was not, in listening as beings endowed with speech to those who were considered nothing more than noisy animals. This process of creating dissent constitutes an aesthetics of politics, which has nothing to do with the forms of staging of power and the mobilization of the masses designated by Walter Benjamin as "aestheticization of politics".

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The relationship between aesthetics and politics is then, more specifically, the relationship between this aesthetics of politics and the "politics of aesthetics", that is, the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art intervene in the division of the sensible and in its reconfiguration, in which they cut out spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the particular. (Rancière, 2005)

conflict with the current forms of education and pedagogy. It enables us to reflect on the past and its relationship to the present. Education is fundamental there.

In turn, American critical pedagogy offers a series of possibilities to focus on the symbols of modernity and provides the basis for critically intervening in our community spaces, such as the state, health, or education. Today, we are given an opportunity for critical dialogue with the past, to intervene and mark those symbols of instrumental reason in the landscape of what we consider normal. Thus, pedagogy allows us to create spaces for discussion, to initiate small acts and participatory dynamics where society can debate around these symbols of the past that shape our present.

Our focus will precisely be on the forms of pedagogy in the construction of educational policies as social frameworks that regulate and normalize our daily lives. We will examine the roles of various actors or social movements that produce pedagogy and that, in some way, dispute the terrain of education according to state policies. Therefore, American critical pedagogy is manifested today in popular actors, in collectives, associations, and/or assemblies, which are fundamental to the exercise of daily life and survival, especially when the State has abdicated the possibility of implementing a truly progressive and communal pedagogy. Upholding the mandate that Auschwitz should not repeat itself compels us to observe and learn from social movements, from those engaged in pedagogical struggles, who contest the educational space and fight for the representation of formal education. American critical pedagogy challenges us to consider the place of the public space, to question the sensitive forms that mediate our perception of reality and to examine the different ways in which education is politically disputed. Thus, pedagogy is understood as a modification of these sensitive forms. American critical pedagogies are all those interventions that modify or transform subjectivity and our relationship with the past. They also prompt us to consider a new concept of democracy, beyond the traditional emphasis in developing a new concept of justice through education. American critical pedagogy highlights the urgent need and the enormous challenge of creating a radical democracy, rather than the illusory democracy we currently experience. The central point is how pedagogy can contribute to the construction of this radical democracy.

This conception of education emerges from the advent of a new type of power today: bio-power, bio-politics—a form of power that does not focus on monitoring the legal existence of individuals but on managing the biological existence of populations. Pedagogy is the clear manifestation of the other dimension in the exercise of traditional power, it is the result of a set of political procedures aimed directly at the human species' body, at controlling biological life. This power is exercised by establishing control

modalities that regulate conditions affecting birth rates and mortality, health levels, and life expectancy. All modern education is anchored in biopolitics, which means that at some point, states tend to consider the regulation of biological life as a matter for State intervention. American critical pedagogy directly raises the problem of the Modern State to regulate bodies and control lives through discipline, and that in order to increase capital productivity, contagions, epidemics, and pandemics must be avoided.

However, biopolitics was taken to the extreme in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps. In this radical event, it meant an extreme point of modern life. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben explains how the Nazi concentration camps were spaces of intense biopolitical experimentation, areas where the most extreme forms of body control were tested, where the separation of the body from subjectivity was organized. In the concentration camp, a phenomenon occurred where prisoners, humans, were so nullified in their condition, so destroyed in their personal constitution, that they were reduced to mere body, pure biological matter—people who had been stripped of all subjectivity, all identity. The prisoners were malnourished bodies that continued to function biologically, but where there was no longer any trace of the self 45. Yet, this extreme point of biopolitics also speaks to a logic inherent in fascist and totalitarian systems of modernity, related to the expression of radical control over the body and how power attempts to intervene in bodies.

45   The bare life into which these men were transformed, however, is not, however, a natural extra-political fact, which the law must limit itself to verifying or recognizing; it is rather, in the sense we have seen, a threshold at which right is at all times transmuted into fact, and fact into law, and in which the two planes tend to become indiscernible. The specificity of the National Socialist concept of race – nor the particular vagueness and inconsistency that characterize it – is not understood if one forgets that the biopolitical body, which constitutes the new fundamental political subject, is neither a questio facti (e.g., the identification of a certain biological body) nor a questio i uris (the identification of a certain norm to be applied).  but the product of a sovereign political decision that operates based on an absolute indifference between fact and law…

The birth of the concentration camp in our time appears, therefore, in this perspective, as an event that marks in a decisive way the very political space of modernity. It occurs at the moment when the political system of the modern nation-state, which was based on the functional link between a certain location (the territory) and a certain order (the state), mediated by automatic rules of registration of life (birth or nation), enters a lasting crisis and the state decides to assume directly among its own functions the care of the biological life of the nation…

The concentration camp, which has now been solidly installed in it, is the new biopolitical nomos of the planet. (Agamben, 1998)

It is interesting to understand how biopolitics generates a factory of docile subjects for neoliberal power, docile for capital. These subjects are afraid, isolated from their community, and associate all political participation with violence, and therefore forbidden in education. That is why it is attractive to think about how power intervenes in bodies in concentration camps in the past and to project how today's education produces modifications in subjectivity and intervenes in our lives, how biopolitics are implemented in bodies, and to determine what these new concentration camps are—spaces where extreme violence is exercised.

The aesthetic experience and the negative dialectic in education thus represent this process of unveiling. Education after Auschwitz highlights how the dominion that thought believes it exercises over the object, or that science believes it exercises over nature, is merely a reflection of the dominion that social reality exercises over human beings. Humanity has always pursued dominion over nature, inevitably leading to the domination of man over man.

Finally, in the words of Rodolfo Kusch:

> In this sense, aesthetics subverts history, or rather, improves it as it traces the formal in the past and in relation to the present, as Nietzsche wanted. It is history as the aesthetics of the past and this as a drain of the fullness lived in the past as a myth, which becomes necessary in a present without purpose like ours. The racial distance that separates us from the Indian makes this problem doubly fruitful, precisely because it is the opposition between a geographical commitment and an acquired, although desirable, formality. It is to search in the past for the geographical experience of America under the assumption that it could mean a precedent for this irruption of the American in politics, social life, or culture. Moreover, an aesthetics of the American could mean a geographical integration of the American. (…)

An aesthetics of the American cannot be reduced to an analysis of the forms and the given because none of this has real consistency among us. Only the reestablishment of the obscure in our art to restore our aesthetic health has real significance. Otherwise, we will have a sick art (Kusch, 2000). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Otherwise, we would have a sick pedagogy.

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# THE SOUTH WITHOUT GREECE. DRAFTS FOR A MESTIZO SOCRATIC MAIEUTICS

*Mariana Chendo*

"But the people always have beliefs"
(Armando Poratti. *Ancient thought and its shadow*)

## ABSTRACT

Rodolfo Kusch adopts the form of the draft for his American philosophical anthropology. Following this drafted form, we will explore the possibility of a mestizo Socratic maieutics in the figure of the teacher from Lake Titicaca, as conceptualized by Kusch. This exploration can be summarized in a threefold movement: the binary separation of mythos and logos; the dialectic of the explainer and the incapable that Modernity inherited from Greece; and the imperative to think of América Profunda outside the influence of Greece and the Western project. In this tripartite movement, we will gather clues from two Kushian drafts: a teacher who is neither wise nor ignorant but placed; and an América Profunda resistant to the ideas of purity inherited from Greece.

## 1. DRAFTING

A draft is meant to be left behind, to be denied or to be refined; it is meant to be multiple and open. One might think that the opposite of a draft is a theory, in the sense that a draft is, by definition, imprecise, indefinable, a reduced figure, and full possibility. The essential condition of a draft is its provisional nature, more similar to the materiality of a notebook than to the rigor of a genre. In *La Crisálida* (2001), González hypothesizes two paths of thought, "which are like surplus values of reflective living: *metamorphosis* and *dialectics*" (p.18). Thinking through metamorphosis takes the form of myth, the cyclical times of nature, and the animal series in their ungraspable, mutable, protean forms. The figures of dialectics, on the other hand, are the result of a thought that collects "from its own action the dross of negativity that it itself has left behind along the way" (ibid.). Metamorphosis "is the thought of the larva" (ibid.: 19) made up of articulations, passages, and transfusions. The ideal of dialectics takes the form of the concept. Metamorphosis resembles the legends of *mythos*; dialectics resembles the reason of *logos*, its truth, and its idea.

It could be thought that the opposite of *drafting* is *theorizing*, in the sense of the imprecision characterizing a draft, its wanderings, its permanent back-and-forth, its constant return to what is written, drafting over the draft, marginal notes, headers, crossings out. It could be thought that the opposite of a *draft* is an *idea*: the idea is always

one, identical to itself and true; the draft, in contrast, is always ready to return to itself, to be put on, taken off, redone.

It could be thought that once completed, philosophy is without drafts. It could be thought that in its origins as dialogue or in its rigorous system—Platonic or Aristotelian—the love of wisdom is always more than a mere draft. Yet, philosophy is born from stories, anecdotes, and illustrious lives that were told, heard, and repeated; philosophy is entirely born from broken pieces, gestures, and fragments, all of it born from drafts (*cf.* Cassin, 2013: 17-40).

Rodolfo Kusch chooses the forms of the "draft" for his American philosophical anthropology (1978); the draft emerges "from the full silence of popular discourse", is based "on the absence of knowledge," and is located "on the margins of the problem of a definition" (9).

There are three major drafted notes in Kusch's works that we resume here: América Profunda assumes the larval thought of metamorphosis; América Profunda considers itself denied and non-dialectizable; América Profunda "thinks by making grow: it believes in vegetality" (Kusch, 1976: 33). In the attempt to conceive a Socratic maieutics without Greece, we agree with Kusch on these drafts.

## 2. WORD AND WORD

In the beginning, *mythos* and *logos*—storytelling and reason—both meant "word." Initially, both terms meant "word" (Poratti, 2000). At the outset, there was no distinction between the truth of reason and the tales of belief. At the beginning, the world was woven from mouth to ear, it was woven in the thread of storytelling. Beliefs were sung between the spoken word and the ear; these were beliefs from the muse to the poets, from the poets to the elderly, from the elderly to the younger, from the maids to the children. Beliefs were passed from mouth to ear at the outset.

In the beginning, there were no concepts, only wild and absurd stories about the origins of the world, the beginnings of humanity, the sun, and the stars; in the beginning, there were no demonstrations, only infamous narrations of incestuous, adulterous, and thieving gods; at the beginning of time, the soul was within the body, and there were cannibals, blood, and rebirths; in the beginning, there was no dialectic or idea,

only bodies and metamorphoses; the pre-truth beginning was made up of myths, beliefs, and stories (*cf.* Detienne: 1985).

Before the *logos* became *reason*, truth did not yet exist, and words could not be false. Thus, myth revealed the world, and the word of the mythical narration was a giver of meaning, an effective word, the creator of life barely repeated from mouth to ear. Myth is "a word that reveals the world and establishes the truth, and it is also *an effective*, powerful word [...] revelation and (re)creation of the world" (Poratti, 2000: 19). At the beginning of time, words could not be false, and therein lies all the magic of the story: "myth is not an answer to anything because there is no prior question" (*ibid.*); it is not the *explanation* forged by a man facing an incomprehensible world, but rather the very *installation* into the landscape of the world. The mythical word is both narration and action simultaneously; it is the tale itself, the characters, and the belief.

In the beginning, before learned reason, there is no ignorance because there is no falsehood, and therein lies the magic of the story: there is no explanation; *the world is as it is*, and man is installed in the world. Before *logos* with its *rational being*, the world appears without explanation, without demonstration, a world full of actions, of men, of gods.

At the beginning of time—when there was still no reason and no truth—belief is knowledge, man is installed in the landscape of the world, word is meaning, meaning is truth, and truth is belief, and belief is knowledge. In the times of legends, at the beginning, there is the "I believe," "the world is as it is," "this is how the world is"; before "I think" is "I believe"; before affirmation and negation, there are the favorable and the unfavorable at the beginning, before cogitation, there is always belief; before concepts, there are the living and the dead; the lake is before the theorem (cf. Kusch: 1975).

*Logos* (Greece-West) can only appear in a fissure of reality that establishes the unanswered question: what is the world? what is it? is it? what is *being*?, thereby establishing in the question itself the search for an answer and its verb: *being*, risking the loss of meaning in the search for a gain of principle—identity, non-contradiction, an excluded third party. Thus, Greece itself emerges from the rupture of myth, from the powerful Reason that distances itself from the world, from the theory that is uninstalled from the landscape: the word distanced from action, revelation turned *explanation*, manifestation bent upon itself, reflexive, demonstrative, represented.

Then, the oral word loses effectiveness and myth turns into incredibility, into a fable, into an old wives' tale. With the death of myth, ignorance is born, along with the need for truth, the question at a distance, reason and its explanatory turn, great science with its great evidence, and the small word with its enormous patience, knowledge separated from belief, and beliefs always below science.

*Logos*—also a word—in a "false rescue operation, was not only subordinated and appropriated; worse, it subjected myth to a process of vampirization and drained its substance" (Poratti, 2000: 16). Thus, the idea of truth is born, a singular truth, truth as an idea; then, the things of the world begin to be false, and the world is no longer as it was, and affirmation becomes primary; first, there is the "I think," cogitation nullifies belief, and the concept always precedes the living and always precedes the dead.

In spite of all reason, the people hold beliefs; in spite of everything, the world is as it is, and "as a backdrop, there is a larger plane where the archetypal predominates and where the subject feels, although he no longer understands, the truth" (Kusch, 1975: 50).

## 3. THE INVENTION OF IGNORANCE

At the beginning of time, when falsehood did not yet exist, *mythos* and *logos* both meant "word." Initially, man is installed in the landscape and believes what he tells, and what he tells is what he believes, and what he believes is what he knows, and he knows what he tells; thus, myth and *logos* are indistinguishable, both being words and both true. But this changes; then, the question arises: What is the world? What is it? Is it? What is *being*? Then comes the distance between the world and being, then comes the "who" that declares what the world is—and also what the world is not. Then, the distanced truth is born, and man distances himself from the world to approach truth, and *mythos* becomes the opposite of *logos*, word against word: reason beyond narrative, idea beyond belief, concept beyond action, true idea and the great turn to the beyond of the idea. With *logos*, Greece and its detour were born.

After the beginning, when *logos* is no longer myth, there is falsehood, there is the world *here* and the truth *beyond*; it is then that we arrive "at the very heart of the problem of truth, at the explicit true-false opposition: children's tales, seen in the serious framework of their function in *paideia*" (*cf.* Plato, 1998: 377a5-6); it is then that myths are divided into true myths (*logos)* and false myths (*myths),* into truths and old wives'

tales. Then, the effective word begins to separate itself from the concept, like a false fable that runs incomprehensibly in a disintegrating rumor, action begins to separate itself from abstraction, and narration from idea; false belief remains below, while truth stands above, always beyond, and above that, knowledge. Then, Myths become nothing more than old fictions without any foundation, repulsive stories of the world of the dead, absurd or monstrous fables, irrational stories of primitive men, false beliefs of villagers. A whole vocabulary to tell the false scandalous, the myth "proliferates with ignorance, swells with passions, [...] crude fables of the Greeks" (Detienne, 1985: 15).

With *logos* established, reason was invented, and with reason, ignorance. Plato condemns Homeric culture as a *paideia* provoking emotions and feelings, triggering beliefs, "a cultural system [...] transmitted through the mouth and ear, musically executed and memorized with the help of rhythmic forms" (ibid.: 35). With the rupture of the myth, the word is separated from the letter, and myths are condemned as charming fictions, producing auditory vertigo, incoherent, false, inauthentic. Truth is like the letter: eternally carved, perennial, with the rhythm of its own silence; falsehood, in contrast, is like a breath of the voice, a fleeting song condemned to repetition, variation, and inevitable transformation of versions, noises, echoes, and hearing.

Plato condemns the falsehood of Homeric myths in his Republic as "children's tales" with all their *paideia* of beliefs; yet it is Plato himself who communicates his highest truths with a myth – for the highest truths are as indemonstrable as any belief is indemonstrable. Then, the Greek mark of the detour is made: on the one hand, false myths linked to the orality of the peoples; on the other, *Platonic myths* that convey the truth of the idea. And although in the end ideas are also sealed in the soul by the narrative force of some story, the distinction is made: on the one hand, truth and knowledge; on the other, old believers with their old stories.

In his *Republic*, Plato invents the cave. In his cave, he seals the knowledge of the wise man and the blind ignorance of the prisoner. Education in the *Republic* is a narrative of souls, souls that saw what prisoners must also come to see by virtue of the souls they do not yet know they have; it must be explained to the prisoners that the world is not what they see, so trapped in their puppet theater, it must be explained to them that the world is what Socrates sees;  it is necessary to harmonize "citizens by persuasion or *by force*" (Plato, 1998: 519e). On the one hand, the wise; on the other, the blind. Here is the foundational myth of pedagogy, the tale of a world divided into wise men above and prisoners below, enlightened men to the north and blind men to the south, souls and corporeal men, kings and cavemen, ignorant wise men and ignorant slaves. Here

is the invention of ignorance in its "double inaugural gesture" (Rancière, 2002: 8), the wise man throwing the veil of ignorance that he will later lift, the wise man sealing the prisoner's shackles before convincing him of the sun outside. The double inaugural gesture of the pedagogical myth is also a political act where Plato sustains the story based on Hesiodic myth of classes: gold, silver, bronze, preventing mixing, "and even if their own children are born with a mixture [...] estimating the value appropriate to their natures, they will throw them among artisans or farmers" (Plato, 1998: 415c). The myth that ends up closing the chains: artisans to crafts, so it is and so it will be, for the same were your parents before as you are now and as your children will be later. Finally, at the beginning there are castes, there lies all the difference between learned ignorance and poor blindness. Myth upon myth to seal in the soul the condemnation of being in the ignorance below, with shackles and chains.

## 4. EXPLAINING TO DOMINATE

When *logos* is separated from *mythos*, knowledge remains *beyond*, outside the cave. When the word of reason is opposed to the words of belief, the world is divided into two places: the *hereafter* of the shadows and the *beyond* of science. When *logos* is separated from *mythos*, binary logic prevails: in the metaphysical reason of absolute being or absolute non-being; in the epistemological reason of knowledge and belief; in the political reason of the *here below* in the cave and the *there above* outside; in the pedagogical reason that divides intelligence into "inferior" and "superior," the intelligence of the wise explainer and that of the "young child and the common man" (Rancière, 2002: 9).

When binary logic prevails, intelligence becomes the property of the "wisest, most educated, and most well-intentioned" (ibid.), intelligence is the property of the teacher, that benevolent master who shows a slave how the truth of a theorem should be articulated. The Meno illustrates that even the most unrefined individual can acquire understanding when guided by the explanation of a skilled, midwife-like teacher. Between the Socratic ignorant wise man and the poor slave stands the *explanation*—an extraordinary mechanism of domination inherited from the ruins of the Athenian empire.

In the Meno, Socrates states the thesis that "learning is recollection" (Plato, 2000b: 81e); immediately, his interlocutor Meno demands an *explanation* of the thesis (ibid.: 82a). Socrates must demonstrate to Meno—because within binary logic, truth is

demonstrated—that the soul always retains knowledge, but it only comes to light through the techniques of a good midwife-like teacher. From there, the dialogue becomes exemplary as it illustrates in a single stroke both the Socratic maieutics as a technique of deceit and explanation as an art of folding: putting to remove, casting the veil of ignorance only to lift it; the Socratic maieutics in its double inaugural gesture, Socrates throwing the veil of ignorance that he will later lift, checking the prisoner's shackles before showing him the wall with its shadow puppets, the Socratic maieutics in all its trickery and *explanation* in all its literalness as the art of pulling out to create folds. Meno asks for an *explanation* of the thesis, and the scene begins: "call one of these many attendants of yours, whichever you like, that I may prove it to you in his case" (ibid.: 82b). Meno asks for an explanation and Socrates demands a slave; he demands a slave to *properly explain*; he needs an incapable person to demonstrate the thesis; he needs the ignorant slave for the deployment of his learned ignorance.

Meno's slave is the crux of Socrates' demonstration; Meno's slave is the crux of Plato's explanation. But even more, slavery is always the crux of the explanation when truths are absolute, when walls are condemned to shadows and servants to shackles. Socrates asserts that knowledge is recollection, Meno asks for explanations of the thesis, and Socrates asks for a slave to demonstrate how the truth of a theorem nests, even in the souls of beasts. If the beast knows the Pythagorean theorem, then the truth is demonstrated: through the slave, the statement that "knowledge is recollection" shows itself from top to bottom and from bottom to top (that is all that *demonstrating* is). The important thing, however, is not that the beast knows the theorem, but that a slave is the proof of the demonstration game between master Meno and teacher Socrates. I do not know if there is a better example of the demonstration of higher truth through the body of the inferior; I do not know if there is a more explicit example than the moment Socrates demands a slave to stage the demonstration that knowledge is eternal.

*Explanation* as a tool of domination shows that absolute truths have owners, that the end point of explanation is the absoluteness of truth but its starting point is always inequality. The logic of explanation is the dialectic of the explainer and the incapable, the wise ignorant man and the poor slave, the masters and the beast; "this incapacity provides the structuring fiction of the explicative conception of the world" (Rancière, 2002: 8).

If explanation constitutes the very principle of subjugation, then the teacher's audacity cannot consist in illustrating reason but in opposing "the reason of equals to the society of contempt" (Corradini: 2008). This "society of equals" that Rancière speaks of is the opacity of the dialectic of the explainer and the incapable, as a just reverse of the Socratic maieutics of deceit invented by early Greek enlightenment and repeated in every program of West rational declaration. Modernity is heir to the Greek enlightenment; explanation is heir to the Socratic maieutics; the long history of demonstration carries with it the relentless demand for a servant.

## 5. THE GREECE EFFECT AND THE WESTERN PROJECT

The slave's body as a stage for demonstrating the idea: that is the Greece effect. The Greece effect refers to the legitimizing recurrence of the Western project, with Greece as the original and constitutive source of the system of rationality that prevails over the Western *Weltanschauung*. The Greece effect is the recourse to Greece as a universal validation device for the consciousness of the Modern West, the validation of a system of rationality turned into a historical projection of human civilization. Greece symbolizes the superior origin of Europe's superior destiny, serving as the anchor of authority that validates hegemonic projection: "world history projecting hegemonic Europe […] to the origin of Greek culture […] with claims of a world-historical explanation" (Dussel, 2007: 380).

The Greece effect is the official history of Modernity, philosophical modernity as tributary to the Europeanizing political project; it is Europe conceived in Hegel's mind, it is Anglo-Saxon America – heir to Europe – tasked with completing the realization of what has already been consummated and thought, hypothesizing a (North) America as "the country of the future" (Hegel, 1980: 177). The Greece effect is Modernity of the *universal*, the *totality*, the *spirit*, the *reason*, the *absolute*; all tributaries to the vampirizing *Logos* of beliefs. The Greece effect is colonialism and imperialism, but it is also metaphysics, that formidable legacy of the *theory of being*. It is the project of denying America and Africa, the project of America and Africa as *useful geographical bases* for the history of the philosophy of history, but it is also the metaphysical tradition as an essential part of the costs of that dialectic, it is the tradition of official exegetes repeating the dialectic of the explanatory master, enlightened by Greece and its Hegelian midwife.

The slave's body as a stage for demonstrating the idea: that is the Greece effect. Europe cannot think without Greece, América Profunda must. In her already classic work *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (2013), Susan Buck-Morss sets a precedent by showing us the body of the slave resisting in the demonstration of the idea. She shows us that the body of the Hegelian dialectic is not the body of the French Revolution but the body of black Haitians. She also shows us the hard work of cultured exegesis in the concealment of the body. Read from the reality of Haiti, Latin America steps out of the Greece effect and the Western project and finds freedom in what "the West never wanted to justify [...] the residue, the mass, the Indian, the proletarian" (Kusch, 1999: 123).

The slave's body as a stage for demonstrating the idea: that is the Greece effect. Europe cannot think without Greece, América Profunda must. To think without Greece means approaching the Socratic maieutics not from the perspective of the midwife's science but from the pained body of the birthing woman. If ideas are born, the distance between the Socratic maieutics and American maieutics is the distance between the reason of the midwife and the contractions of the birthing woman. "Have you not heard that I am the son of a midwife, brave and burly?", Socrates asks Theaetetus (Plato, 2000a: 148ff.) before beginning his well-known development of the "art of midwifery" as a method. Socrates himself can no longer give birth but has the techniques for good delivery: stimulating labor, easing it, reducing suffering, and facilitating abortion if necessary. The Theaetetus is a dialogue about what knowledge is, who possesses it, and the legitimacy of its transmission. The Theaetetus is Greek illustration and Socratic technique. If ideas are born, the distance between the Socratic maieutics and American maieutics is the distance between the process of assisting in birth and the act of giving birth and being birthed by the same force.

"Haiti is at the beginning of a free Latin America," says Diego Tatián at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba during the ceremony where the *France Annex* pavilion of the Faculty of Arts is renamed the *Republic of Haiti*. The ceremony on August 21, 2013 is an academic symbol against the learned ignorance of concealment. The Haitian Revolution is the "opaque" dimension of the French Revolution, the blacks outside of history forcing the French Revolution to be consistent with its principles of *universal* freedom, which had the color black as its limit (Grüner: 2010). Read from the reality of Haiti, Latin America steps out of the Greece effect and its Western project and finds freedom in the bodies with which the West has been demonstrating the truth of its dialectic.

# 6. CLEAR AND CONFUSED

Read from the reality of Haiti means stepping away from the modern project and its Greek Enlightenment origins; it means exercising the practice of thinking beyond *La casa del ser,* disrupting the origin, and acknowledging the opacity of the flame. If Socratic maieutics is the path to the being of good, truth, and beauty, then thinking from what the West denies is finding the common home in the cave, seeing oneself on the wall and in the shadow puppets. Haiti is the cursed and stinking version of the French Revolution, and that is precisely why it is the path to freedom for Latin America.

Maieutics is a clean birth, it is the soul, it is the number, it is the idea, it is a birth with no holes, it is the birth of the idea for the midwife; maieutics is the "clear knowledge": reason, the soul, the idea. Read from the reality of Haiti is reading the truth from the slave of Meno, reading the theorem from the body of the demand and not from the demonstration of the idea. Thus, "here, we confront reason" (Kusch, 2007: 572). Read from the reality of Haiti is colliding with reason, confronting the fact that "if clear knowledge says that two plus two equals four, confused knowledge will give another result" (id.). Read from the reality of Haiti is confronting the violence of Greece and the violence of its origin of being, identity, and idea. "Life disturbs the rigor of numbers" (id.). Haiti is the stinking and cursed version of the French Revolution, the dark that nestles in the light of the midwife. Philosophy read from the reality of Haiti is not a matter of demonstration but a problem of liberation. Reading Hegel from Haiti is seeing the darkness in Minerva's owl, wisdom encoded in the resistance of the night, not in the flight of the morning (*cf.* Kusch, 1975: 81).

Thinking from Haiti is practicing Latin American thought, a philosophy that begins on American soil, deep, a philosophy of being, a mestizo ontology. If official thought is born with the being "that is and that it is not possible not to be" (Parmenides: 2.3), then we must think outside the official canon, where our "roots are found in the deepest non-being, in short, in being" (Kusch, 1976: 155). If official philosophy is born from the imposition of "saying and thinking that by the mere act of *being, one is"* (Parmenides: 6.1), then we must step away from the official canon and from our own language: we must step away from the official being through the possibility of staying in our own language, moving beyond 'in being, one is' to 'in remaining, being endures. (Kusch: 1975). If official philosophy is born from the imperative of "judging by reason (logos)" (Parmenides: 7.5), we must move away from prevailing reason and move through our soil, our myths, our stories. If maieutics is the light of clear reason and certain truth,

we must read from Haiti, ground ourselves, and seek out Greece's cursed and stinking version, "affirm that we are beggars and start from there" (Kusch, 1975: 109), start from our own lack. Meno's slave exemplifies the maieutic method, the slave functional to the demonstration of the truth of the theorem.

Europe thinks through Socrates, but not Latin America. "And the student? […] in the name of Parmenides […] in the name of Pythagoras […]", every time the disciple is thought of in the name of being and in the name of number, every time the disciple is invoked in the name of demonstration, we continue to think in the European way, thinking through Socrates and his midwife lucidity with all knowledge "conceived as a pyramid,  where being is at the top and America is at the bottom" (Kusch, 2007: 567). For Socratic maieutics, knowledge is recollection—recollection that we can know if we are lucky enough to have a good master—Socratic maieutics and the pyramid of recollection: at the top is being and at the bottom is America.

If Europe cannot think without Socratic maieutics, deep America must. "We must think like that sphere mentioned by Parmenides, which resembled divinity […] but we are closer to a soccer ball" (id.). It is not the demonstration that matters; what is important is the previous life, "all that previous life, from the neighborhood, the one that one drags with oneself weighs so much that it is difficult to describe it as the light being" (ibid.: 567-8). Parmenides says that being is like a sphere, equidistant from its center; "Parmenides did not know what he was saying. Being is not spherical but scrawny and lean" (ibid.) Is the scrawny and lean illuminable? Can there be a maieutics that starts and ends with the slave, a scrawny and lean maieutics carrying "a dense life, dragged daily from childhood to death" (ibid.)? Can there be a neighborhood maieutics, a soccer ball maieutics, a maieutics of the popular?

Maieutics is the method of a spherical being like truth, equidistant from its center, "necessary," "identical to itself," "continuous," "complete everywhere," "homogeneous," "unbegotten and incorruptible," "total," "unique," "immobile within the limits of great chains," "without lack" (Parmenides: 8). The "lean being," on the other hand, resembles less a sphere and more "the globe we use in school or a soccer ball" (Kusch, 2007: 576); the "lean being" is "the dark suspicion that for life, it could not be so" (ibid.: 572). Clear knowledge is the knowledge of things that "are grasped," the knowledge of having, the knowledge that demands a slave for its demonstration. Confused knowledge, on the other hand, is the knowledge that "life disturbs the rigor of numbers" (ibid.). Clear knowledge is the maieutics of things that one has—like a slave or a theorem—while confused knowledge is always about "attaching darkness to light" (ibid.), the knowledge of being and lack.

# 7. THE MASTER OF LAKE TITICACA

"To see things wisely consists in attaching darkness to light" (ibid.), life to numbers, stories to reasons; knowledge consists in knowing, "in the name of Parmenides, that the student brings with him a dense life from his neighborhood," and it consists in knowing, "in the name of Pythagoras, that he cannot shake off life" (ibid.: 568). "Attaching darkness to light" means to make life collide with reason, where "if two plus two equals four in mathematics, the wise man adds the dark suspicion that in life this could not be so" (ibid.: 573). "Attaching darkness to light" is to bring the street into the classroom, because "we are lucid in the classroom but dark in the street, subversively dark" (ibid.: 574). "Attaching darkness to light" means to remember that old stories give substance to reason and ideas. "Attaching darkness to light" is a declaration of validity of life and beliefs in the processes of knowledge.

 In *Un maestro a orillas del lago Titicaca* (ibid.: 187-193), Kusch presents a version of the Socratic maieutics from the depths of America. "Someday that teacher will have to teach the Pythagorean theorem" (ibid.: 191); someday the master of Lake Titicaca—like Socrates in the Meno—will also have to teach the Pythagorean theorem. Kusch wonders why teach the Pythagorean theorem, "why teach anything else"; it is about "attaching darkness to light." Every lesson, every "thing else" taught is a new validation of life and beliefs. The theorem is taught "to round off what the students already know about the lake, what they need to live alongside it" (ibid.). All accumulative knowledge—even mathematical and its theorems—is taught to reinforce belief, the immensity of numbers to reinforce the immense lake. What few know is taught to strengthen what we all already know: "Everyone knows the lake. No one knows Pythagoras. The lake is immense and Pythagoras is small" (ibid.: 192); we must not forget this. Teaching is "attaching darkness to light," the sacredness of the lake to the truth of the theorem.

Why teach the theorem? The theorem is useless without the pampa outside: the lake for the Bolivian, the pampa for the Argentine, the street for the classroom, "symbols of what? Of the deepest part of our soul" (ibid.: 191).

"The truth of things is in our soul," says Socrates (Plato, 2000b: 86b); knowledge is recollection, through the soul, of the truth. "The legend lives in the souls," says Kusch (2007: 189), and to know is to reinforce legends, to strengthen our souls with the stories that spring from the ground: the lake, the pampa, the street. The Socratic maieutics is the fine work of separating truth from legends.

Philosophy is the heir of Plato, even on this side of America, we are heirs to the fine work of separation between an external truth and our old legends; "this is the problem of teaching" (ibid.: 192): we trust less in the lake than in the theorem, we bet on a truth without belief, we forget that one only learns in order to be able to inscribe one's life in the landscape. It is necessary to return to the beginning, because knowing is not a matter of demonstration but of installation on the ground.

The lake, the pampa, the sidewalk of our street, the neighbors' houses, the nearest underpass, the avenue two blocks away—"pieces of our intimacy, we live immersed in a landscape" (ibid.: 191). The master of Lake Titicaca teaches that knowledge is useless if it does not inscribe itself in the pieces of our lives; if Pythagoras does not become the lake, then the theorem is useless. The theorem is simpler than the lake, "it is much easier to build a rocket than to do what the master did: round off the lives of his students simply with what they needed to continue alongside the lake" (ibid.: 193). "The theorem is simpler than the lake"; in one sentence, Kusch gets out of Greece. The theorem is simpler than the lake because the theorem is explainable and the lake is not. Everything explainable is less than any piece of life, and based on this recognition, we should remember that the demonstration of the Meno is only possible through its servant. "Attaching darkness to light," returning to the lake because of the theorem is moving beyond explanation, an extraordinary mechanism of domination inherited from the ruins of the Athenian empire.

The accumulation of knowledge and the cult of technique is the psychosis of our century, "whose evident symptom is the rocket" (ibid.). But in the rocket, there is no room for everyone. On the shores of Lake Titicaca remain those who will always be excluded from the rocket, in the lake, in the pampa, in the street, the art of childbirth "is to find a law for that human mass that will not go on the interplanetary rockets and that must stay and continue, committed to its miserable being here" (Kusch, 1999: 123).

In his *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière (2002) indicates that any ignorant person can teach with whatever they have memorized: a prayer, a song, anything from memory, something, one always has a legend. This piece of life is the thread of knowledge. Teaching through pieces of life, "this Socratic maieutics without trickery" (Rancière, 2017: 84) resembles the story of the amautas who taught their students about their land and beliefs using strings, to which they added knots, the *quipus*: each knot represents a word or an idea, each knot corresponds to a thing. "On the one hand, there was a sign, on the other, a piece of life that corresponded to it" (Kusch, 2007: 192). Life validates knowledge, not the other way around.

# 8. COMMON WORD AND BIG WORD

We are heirs of Greece and still believe in the light of its Socratic maieutics. The midwife's work begins with a question, with her own question, expecting the interlocutor to answer the question of the midwife-like teacher. In the Socratic maieutics, the interlocutor's answer does not matter; what matters is the teacher, the Socratic maieutics as an exercise of always enlightening the teacher in any birth. The Socratic maieutics is the game of questions designed to show that anyone who decides to enter the game with the rules of their beliefs will fall into error, will need the explanation of the good teacher, and will ultimately exchange their beliefs for the teacher's truth. We inherited from Greece the shame of contradiction and redemption of explanation.

In his monumental work on the history of ancient philosophy, Guthrie, when explaining the Socratic maieutics, refers to the "controlled experiment with the slave Meno" (1994: 424), highlighting as a virtue of the teacher the fact of not providing all the answers to the interlocutor-servant, allowing the other to enter into contradiction slowly and consciously. We inherited from Greece the modesty of contradiction, the need for explanation, and the enlightenment of the teacher.

The Socratic maieutics is built upon an initial question of the type: "What is this?" The Socratic maieutics responds to a "white logic" that determines: "this is," points out causes, demands verifications, and ends in science (Kusch: 1978). In his philosophical drafts, Kusch calls this logic of causes as a "common word"; but there is also the "big word", which escapes determinations and cannot be defined, marking some piece of life: "the great word [...]contains the indefinite why of living itself" (8).

We are guilty of continuing to explain ourselves from Greece, "it is the guilt that hangs over our cultured discourse. It is the guilt of having concealed the knowledge that the great word says" (ibid.), even our silence is skeptical and guilty, the "silent muteness of our cultured knowledge that has lost contact with its content" (ibid.). Our Socratic maieutics is heir to cultured thinking and its logic of instruments, "its logic of [...] an affirmative and quantitative salvation [...] a salvation from this and that" (ibid.: 37f.). In addition, in Kusch's drafts, a birth is possible, but not starting from any question but from silence, from "the absence of knowledge [...] apart from the concern for a definition" (ibid.: 9). The Socratic maieutics on this side of America responds to a "black logic": the fall is not error but the negation of existence; it does not seek verification but salvation; salvation has nothing to do with the affirmation of "this is something," but is sustained

by symbols and stories. The Socratic maieutics in the depths of America reveals a symbolic horizon that guides. The Socratic maieutics on this side of America is a matter of existence. Kusch also attaches darkness to light; his black logic is also an exercise in enlightenment, a "meta-logic" that "also encompasses the truth of existence and […] reiterates the same in all speakers" (ibid.: 7f.).

Kusch's Socratic maieutics escapes from Greece because it is concerned with the lake rather than the theorem; it escapes from the Greece effect because it starts with the slave; the starting point of the Socratic maieutics on this side of America is to assume itself as denied and non-dialectizable. Kusch's Socratic maieutics starts from the silence of the informants to reach belief, from the installation in the landscape of the world, from the beginning where there is "I believe," "the world is as it is," where there are the favorable and the unfavorable, where belief is knowledge, where the lake justifies the theorem.

Kusch's black Socratic maieutics is the stinking and cursed version of Socratic maieutics, listening to the silence of those who *merely exist*, those who *are merely present*; it is the stinking and cursed version of Greek Socratic maieutics because it is not ashamed of contradiction nor concerned with verification, stinking and cursed because it knows that Pythagoras is lesser.

## 9. FURTHER THOUGHTS

When Kusch recounts his encounter with the teacher by the shores of Lake Titicaca, he begins the narrative with a city concern: his concern for evaluation, grading, numbers, knowledge, and a "test that implies evolution, progress, and also measures things—this is what is important" (2007: 188). Kusch begins the story by telling how he explained the teacher of the lake why knowledge validates life only if evaluation validates knowledge. Kusch says that he explained to the teacher of the lake the importance of measuring knowledge for people in Buenos Aires. He even insisted on sending "some test" to the teacher by the shores of Lake Titicaca. The teacher first listened and then smiled. Between the heavy "being" and the lean "essence," Kusch was talking about the test. When the gods are gone, "there is nothing left but the number" (ibid: 568)—life validated by knowledge, and knowledge by the test.

"However, this teacher had *something else*. After all, being a teacher does not mean only knowing science and culture" (ibid.: 188). Kusch repeats that the teacher had "something else," and repeats that the "lake is full of mysteries." The lake encompasses the teacher; the "something else" of the teacher is the lake, with its mysteries and legends, mixed waters and gods, and the legendary feline, the luminous stone, and the Indian water—all *are* embodied in the teacher.

Kusch's Socratic maieutics represents the stinking and cursed version of the Greek flame because being a teacher is not aligned with the question or the spoken word but with shared listening, with things that speak, with legends founded on shared hearing that the memory of generations has made homogeneous and present (Detienne: 1985). Kusch's drafts escape Greece because they activate a memory of legends, they activate the memories of the beginning when the remembered word was always true, they activate the wise memories prior to the invention of ignorance, they activate the old tales where the lake justifies the theorem.

Kusch's drafts free themselves from Greece because they come from the eye as the center of knowledge: evidence, point of view, perspective, discovery, verification, theory—these are all visual metaphors for knowledge. If the word "idea" derives from the verb *eido* (to see) and if "theory" contains *théa* (sight), Kusch deviates from the eyes to the ear. "While the subject of seeing is always given, [...] the subject of listening is always yet to come, spaced out, traversed, and summoned [...] sounded" (Nancy, 2007: 46).

"The day we teach our students a knowledge that is both clear and confused, we will have won heaven" (ibid.: 575). Attaching creation to metal to escape condemnation. Kusch's Socratic maieutics is the stinking and cursed version of Greek flame because to the inaugural gesture that condemns metal and caste, to the myth of classes, Kusch presents the myth of creation down here in America, where it is not a matter of "just fulfilling the small duty, but of always assuming a bit of the creation of the world" (ibid.: 568), assuming the creation of the world from "the depths of the neighborhood and the depths of America. And that is so difficult. But such is the law of the gods. For otherwise, we would be but a mere sphere, but without life" (ibid.: 569). Attaching darkness to light is the task.

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# SOCIOLOGY OF THE IMAGE: INTERCULTURALITY FROM THE GUARANÍ MBYÁ INDIGENOUS SCHOOL

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# ABSTRACT

This text is the result of a research carried out between 2018 and 2020, based on the experience of a non-indigenous educator at a Guaraní Mbyá school called Guajayvi, in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). Through narratives and reflections, the aim was to map the elements, movements, and processes that emerge from this educator's daily life, following clues for decolonizing theoretical-pedagogical practices in education. The experience highlighted the importance of adopting a unique way of learning shifting the non-Indigenous perspective from a text-centered view to the images and oral traditions that constitute the Mbyá Guarani school. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's sociology of image of is a reference in this process, which, together with constant dialogue with students from the indigenous community, emerges as a way of understanding and learning the language of research from the images and oral traditions charged with the ancient cosmology of the Guaraní. The reflections aim to convey the Mbyá Guaraní people's deep awareness of their own history and wisdom, indicating paths for building of a critical interculturality from the indigenous school.

# INTRODUCTION

This text is the result of a research conducted (2018-2020) based on the experience of a non-indigenous educator at a Mbyá Guaraní school called Guajayvi, located in the city of Charqueadas, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). Through narratives and reflections, the aim was to map out the movements that emerge from this educator's daily life, following clues for decolonizing pedagogical practices and dopting a unique way of learning, one that shifts the non-Indigenous perspective from written texts to the images and oral traditions that constitute the Mbyá Guarani school. Silvia Cusicanqui's sociology of image serves a reference in this process, because, together with constant dialogue with students from the Indigenous community, it provides a way of understanding and learning the language of research from the images and oral traditions charged with the ancient cosmology of the Guaraní. This reveals the Mbyá people's deep awareness of their own history and wisdom, showing us ways to build interculturality from the indigenous school.

The school, as a product of modernity, is the institution that most reproduces and produces colonizing processes. From knowledge to the disciplining of bodies, we observe a school that builds subjectivities. Writing then addresses the concern of how to

conceive a pedagogy capable of decolonizing the school and the subjects within it. To this end, this text will present interculturality as a possible path for the decolonization of the school, using a Mbyá Guaraní school as a focus of reflection.  However, we need to understand the conditions for intercultural dialogue, recognizing the need to overcome the notion that living under the same ground makes us an intercultural society; likewise, we must overcome interculturality that is often placed on a rhetorical and abstract level.

Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, a Cuban philosopher of interculturality, tells us that intercultural dialogue is the necessary path for recognizing the right to diversity to move beyond the rhetorical level at which it is still tied:

> The challenge of intercultural dialogue lies precisely in ensuring that the recognition of diversity and indigenous traditions does not simply become a matter of the past but that they have the possibility and right to self-determination in the future. This means political participation at all levels of today's world organization. Interculturalism poses not only the problem of recognizing diversity at a rhetorical level but also the right to make the world differently. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, p. 47). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

For Fornet-Betancourt, recognizing diversity needs to be turned into practice, where Indigenous peoples are part of the different institutions of decision-making and power within society. We need to work on changes that realize these peoples' right to self-determination in the present and future. However, one of our greatest obstacles has been the non-Indigenous society's inability to understand and accept diversity as respect for subjectivities and as a human richness capable of strengthening our identities and ways of experiencing the world.

> Taking an Indigenous or intercultural stance means, at the same time, engaging in a political battle to shift the world from a single civilizational rhythm. There must be worlds where people who want to embrace a tradition also have a real place, and not just in a museum. The intercultural political project is not a world with museums but a world of worlds, as identities need real worlds. Therefore, for what we are dealing with, the preparation of a teacher should be linked simultaneously with social movements linked to other possible worlds. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, pp. 69-70) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

We find convergence between Fornet-Betancourt's thinking and the views of two thinkers who illuminated this reflection: Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Ailton Krenak. Cusicanqui, a Bolivian sociologist of Aymara origin, in her book *"Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores"*, states that "the Indian commitment to modernity focuses on a notion of citizenship that seeks difference rather than homogeneity" [Translated quote from its original in Spanish] (Cusicanqui, 2010, p. 71). Ailton Krenak, one of the most notable Indigenous Brazilian thinkers, in his recent book, *"Ideas para posponer el fin del mundo"* (2019), states:

> We resist by expanding our subjectivity, not accepting the idea that we are all the same. There are still about 250 ethnic groups that want to be different from each other in Brazil, speaking more than 150 languages and dialects. (Krenak, 2019, p. 31) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

This firm conviction and exaltation in cultivating respect for differences and subjectivities seems to be a central point in our divergence as a non-indigenous society regarding the conception of identity and mode of existence of Indigenous peoples.

> How can we recognize a point of contact between these worlds, which have so many common origins, but have diverged to the point where today, at one extreme, people need to live from a river and, at the other, people use rivers as a resource? In connection with this idea of a resource attributed to a mountain, a river, a forest, where can we discover a contact between our visions that will lift us out of this state of non-recognition? (Krenak, 2019, p. 51). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

While we cultivate the notion of uniformity and homogenization with the idea of a "national society", Indigenous peoples seem focus closely on a different priority: cultivating the people, community relationships, and connections with non-human beings, including all elements and existences shared on this earth.

# 1. THE FIGHT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR A DIFFERENTIATED EDUCATION

Indigenous peoples in Brazil have long fought for an alternative school model, as the current one has historically represented a space of profound oppression and erasure of their culture. The so-called differentiated school education, a constitutional right of Indigenous peoples, was established by the Federal Constitution of Brazil in 1988, specifically in the following article:

> Article 210. Minimum contents for primary education will be established to ensure basic common education and respect for national and regional cultural and artistic values.
> § 2º Regular fundamental education will be taught in Portuguese, while ensuring Indigenous communities the use of their native languages and their own learning processes. (Federal Constitution, 1988) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

In Law No. 9.394/96, which establishes the guidelines and foundations of national education, we find:

> Article 78. The Federal Education System, with the collaboration of the federal agencies for the promotion of culture and assistance agencies to Indigenous peoples, will develop comprehensive education and research programs to provide bilingual and intercultural school education to Indigenous peoples, with the following objectives:
> I - Provide Indigenous peoples, their communities, and peoples with the recovery of their historical memories, the reaffirmation of their ethnic identities, the appreciation of their languages and sciences;
> II - Ensure Indigenous peoples, their communities, and tribes, access to information, technical and scientific knowledge of the national society and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies.
> Article 79. The Union will provide technical and financial support to education systems in the provision of intercultural education to Indigenous communities, developing comprehensive education and research programs.
> § 1º Programs will be planned with the audience of the Indigenous communities.

§ 2º The programs referred to in this article, including the National Education Plans, will have the following objectives:

I - Strengthen the socio-cultural practices and the native language of each Indigenous community;

II - Maintain programs for training specialized personnel for school education in Indigenous communities;

III - Develop curricula and specific programs, including cultural content relevant to the respective communities;

IV - Systematically prepare and publish specific and differentiated didactic materials. (LDB, 1996)

The specifications of the law highlight and justify the presence of many non-Indigenous teachers at the indigenous schools, as the failure to fully implement what is legally established often results in the filling of positions in Indigenous schools by non-Indigenous educators. Faced with this shortage and challenge, some non-Indigenous educators, driven by a belief in interculturality as a means to decolonize our education, have taken up this space, aiming to learn from and recognize Indigenous wisdom as part of our mixed heritage.[46]

## 2. SILVIA CUSICANQUI'S SOCIOLOGY OF IMAGE: CH'IXI VIEWS

In her work "Sociología de la imagen: Miradas Ch'ixi desde la historia andina" (2015), Cusicanqui discusses a ch'ixi epistemology, presenting other expressions of the Aymara language, such as the notion of "taypi" or contact zone:

Proposing the universality (potential) of such ideas can become a way of walking along the paths of a sort of border consciousness or frontier consciousness, an approach that I have baptized as the Ch'ixi epistemology of the middle-world, the taypi or contact zone that allows us to live at the same time inside and outside the capitalist machine, using and at

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[46]   The mestizaje to which we refer to the length of the text, supported many times in the Brazilian context giving support to the myth of racial democracy, treats our human, social and cultural constitution composts indigenous, black and colonizing peoples, whose history and involves the denial and invisibilization produced by colonized education.

the same time dismantling the instrumental reason that has arisen from its very core. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.207) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

That is why it is important to see the Indigenous school as a contact zone where we can rethink our pedagogical and theoretical practices. I consider "ch'ixi perspectives" as views that distance themselves from the impossibilities imposed by a culture that cultivates a supposed purity and essentialism and that place us in a process of recognition as mestizos, from which we can then seek intercultural and decolonial education. This involves a permanent process of defamiliarization, estrangement, and distancing from hegemonic thought encompassed in our language and our way of considering images and oral traditions in a subordinate way.

Cusicanqui makes a strong distinction between the perspective of the sociology of image and the perspective of visual anthropology:

> From the visual standpoint, the sociology of image would be very different from visual anthropology, insofar as in the latter an external gaze is applied to the "others" while in the former, the observer gazes at themselves in the social environment where they usually develop. In visual anthropology, we need to become familiar with the culture, language, and territory of other societies, different from the Eurocentric and urban society from which researchers usually come. In contrast, the sociology of image involves a defamiliarization, a distancing from the well-known, from the immediacy of routine and habit. Visual anthropology is based on participant observation, where the researcher participates in order to observe. The sociology of image, on the other hand, observes what it is already participating in; participation is not a tool for observation but its prerequisite, although it is necessary to problematize it within its unconscious colonialism/elitism. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 21) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

In this sense, we seek to think about and relate the meanings, symbols, and elements that we have been educated not to see, from a perspective we have been familiar with regarding the idea that images and oral traditions result from a so-called "cognitive shadow" on the part of oral tradition peoples, a hierarchical colonialist perspective of peoples and the knowledge they produce:

> From a kind of situated and iconoclastic micropolitics, oral history work also broke with the myth of Indigenous communities immersed in isolation and poverty and locked in a past of immobility and cognitive shadow. This discourse has been the foundation of a long chain of civilizing actions, sometimes very violent, that continue to this day under deceptive guises, such as the discourse of "development" or "eradication of poverty." (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 15) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Furthermore, it is important to note that the sociology of image, unlike visual anthropology, is not a practice of representation in which records are made to show an external audience but it is the analysis of all types of representation and what lies beneath them: "Images offer us social interpretations and narratives that, since pre-colonial times, have illuminated this social background and offer us perspectives of critical understanding of reality." (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.176).

In her work, Cusicanqui also analyzes a letter from Felipe Waman Puma de Ayala, *"Nueva crónica y buen gobierno."* This is a letter that Waman Puma, a Quechua chronicler of noble descent, wrote in 1615 to the king of Spain—at the time, Felipe III—but which was only discovered in 1909 at the Royal Library of Denmark. This manuscript features over 300 paradigmatic drawings, denouncing the cruel situation imposed by Spanish colonizers, including exploration, violence, and the diseases suffered by Andean populations. Cusicanqui considers the letter to be a visual theorization of the colonial system, highlighting the pillars of life—cosmology, labor relations, social relations, power relations—before, during, and after the Spanish invasion and the colonization period:

> What I propose here is rather to read his drawings as a theory of colonialism, which points to basic concepts of the social, vital, and cosmic order, and which says what words cannot express in a society of colonial silences. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.213) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

From a historical perspective, images can encompass meanings that words cannot: due to the impossibility of explicitly denouncing violence under the threat of punishment and, on the other hand, due to the imposition of an official language where prejudices originating from the colonizers' worldview are embedded.

Waman Puma's work reveals some central concepts, such as "Mundo al Revés", unfolding through the images the changes in social order in the relations between Indigenous

peoples and colonizers, as well as how Indigenous peoples, from their cosmological perspective, understood this tragic event:

> Mundo al Revés is a recurrent idea in Waman Puma's work and is part of what I consider his visual theorization of the colonial system. More than in the text, it is in the drawings where the chronicler displays his own ideas about pre-Hispanic Indigenous society, its values and concepts of time-space, and the meanings of that catastrophe that was the colonization and massive subjugation of the Andean population and territory to the Spanish crown. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 177) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The author also highlights the damage caused by historicist views and the notion of "historical truth" that ignores the conceptual and moral frameworks represented in metaphors. For example, historians who point out a mistaken assumption of Waman Puma regarding how Atahualpa was executed do not recognize the intentional use of the symbolism of the "Headless Indigenous Society" by depicting the Indigenous leader with his head cut off. Cusicanqui asks:

> Can it be argued that Waman Puma based his work on false versions, that he was a victim of misinformation or ignorance? Considering the importance of these figures, deserve more than a mere historical correction or clarification? The similarity of both figures naturally leads to a "flashback effect," which allows us to see in them an interpretation rather than a description of the events. The Indigenous society was decapitated. (Cusicanqui, 2015, pp. 183-184) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Cusicanqui emphasizes ethical judgment and historical interpretation as characteristics of Waman Puma's "gaze" into the past. In this sense, it is necessary to detach from a literal reading of what is represented in the images, aiming to observe the symbolic meaning portrayed in the images.

Inspired by Cusicanqui's sociology of image and seeking the foundations of an epistemology unique to Indigenous peoples, an experience begins[47], conducted between April and December 2019, based on clues for developing a decolonial pedagogical

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47    The experience described here was carried out by one of the authors of this text, Prof. Marcia Tomazzoni, professor of an Mbya Guarani school. All the stories are based on this experience that inspires the ugly reflections.

practice. This involved observing the images produced by the students as traces of ancestral memory. This required, especially, distancing from the hegemonic conception that regards writing, to the detriment of images and oral traditions, as an irreplaceable parameter in the teaching-learning process. As Fornet-Betancourt (2007) states:

> For my part, I consider that maintaining oral tradition is an expression of a whole worldview or, if preferred, of the will for cultural orality. Thus, the fundamental challenge is to know what world is being offered as a possible interlocutor to oral cultures. The prejudices that still exist are very strong. That is why we have to see if we are really trying to create a world where orality is also a way of organizing knowledge, preserving it and offering it to others. In other words, we should not fix writing or a technically elaborated program with concepts, etc., as the only form of communication. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, p.34). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The concern with offering a present and a future in which both cultures present in the Indigenous school can dialogue and walk together demands that we "look" at images and oral traditions with the commitment and knowledge they require. In building this path, we select some images and an oral history to experience the practice of sociology of image in two ways: one as a pedagogical resource in the school, from which we started to think about the general themes for our classes, and the other as a decolonizing theoretical practice, from which we have research. In this way, I present the sociology of image as a decolonial pedagogical practice.

## 3. DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGICAL PATHS AND CLUES: SOCIOLOGY OF IMAGE FROM THE MBYÁ GUARANÍ GUAJAYVI SCHOOL

We will describe some moments from the daily life of a M'byá Guaraní school and how it affects the practices of a non-Indigenous teacher. This scenario raises deep questions about how interculturality produces decolonizing processes within the school and among those who are part of it.

When we began to reflect on decolonization from the indigenous school, in a process of building interculturality, we realized that the subject to be decolonized was the non-Indigenous teacher herself and all the Western and colonial apparatus that

the school carries, such as the school system (attendance, assessments, etc.) and the materials we use for studying. In this sense, we considered clues for decolonization in the pedagogical practice of a vast universe of images and stories produced by the Mbyá Guaraní students.

We present here a small selection of images—from the total of images analyzed, which have been recurrent since the beginning of our time at the school and of which there is photographic documentation: they are drawings and paintings of daily life, elements of community life, and Mbyá Guarani cosmology.

These images generated a whirlwind of feelings and reflections, which over time transformed the perception of the school, the pedagogical process, and the language used in the Indigenous school. This teacher, who narrates the experience described here, was, for a few years, feeling that she was in a "different" school, not because differentiated education was respected and attended to in its particularities, but because she was surrounded by clues that led her to recognize a way of experiencing time and space, human relationships, and the school that had previously been largely distant from her, from the school and university spaces she had traversed.

**Figure 2 -** Nhande Reko ("Our Way of Being").
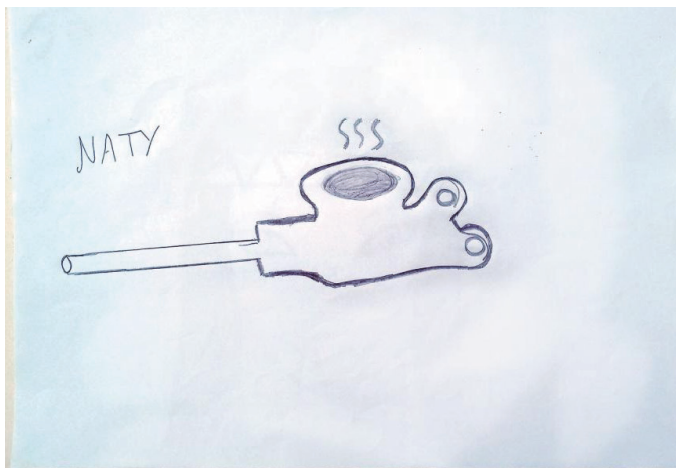


*Source: Author's archive, 2019.*

A man (ava) with akaregua (headgear) carrying a guy'rapa (bow and arrow), a woman (kunha) smoking his petyngua (sacred pipe) appear inhabiting and living the Nhande Reko. "Our Way of Being" refers to the M'byá Guaraní way of life (Mbyá Reko). The memory of customs, which are constantly updated through daily action is recurrent in the images produced spontaneously in class.

**Figure 3 –** Images during Indigenous Peoples Week.
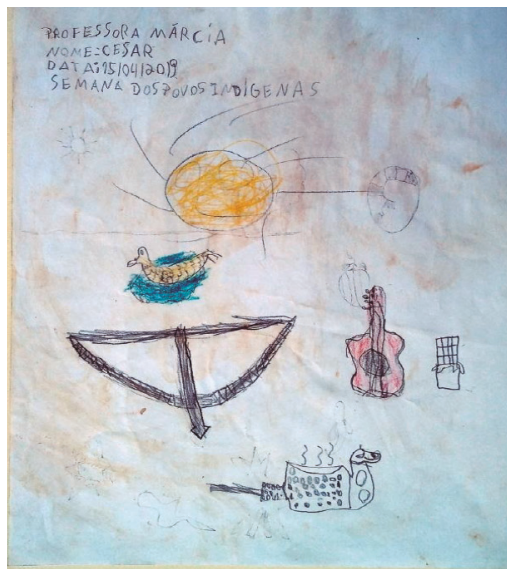


*Source: Author's archive, 2019.*

**Figure 4 –** Petyngua (sacred pipe)**.**



*Source: Author's archive, 2019.*

These drawings make us think of the deeply rooted awareness of what what constitutes a good place for the Nhande Reko from the Guarani perspective. According to the Traditional Knowledge Learning Booklet "Los Cuatro Cantos Sagrados":

> The Nhandereko is the traditional Guaraní way of life, involving all aspects such as the socio-political environment, territory, cosmology, and spirituality of being Guaraní. In the villages, the Guaraní live their traditional life through the teachings of the elders and the House of Reza, the Opy. This allows them to have a more spiritual and humanized education, thus maintaining contact and an emotional connection with traditions, customs, and nature. (Martins, D. T.; Moreira, H, 2018, p.22). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

This notion of what is vital for their health and for Nhande Reko is learned from an early age by children. As stated by chief Maurício da Silva Gonçalves (2015):[48]

> Our elders and our older women always told us that before the white people arrived, we had a complete Good Life: we had forests, rivers, fish, game, and native fruits. This for us is Nande Rekó, the Guaraní way of living. In the memory of our ancestors, the entire coastline from Espírito Santo to Rio Grande do Sul is Guaraní territory, including Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. In the past, we walked through our territory without fear and without limits. When the white man arrived, the great Guaraní struggle began. With the loss of land, the loss of our space. Today, looking at the Guaraní people, we see that most of the lands have been taken. And of those we still have, most have not been demarcated by the government, and therefore, we find that the Guaranís are living in a dramatic situation. (Gonçalves, 2015, n.d.) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

The contrast between the environment depicted in the images, where rivers often flow and lakes form, and the reality of the territory where the Guajayví community, many other Mbyá Guaraní communities, and other indigenous communities currently live, is striking. The living memory of a past in which they lived in harmony with nature and its beings, free and autonomous to practice and live their millenary wisdom that creates, produces food, and knows the cycles of the cosmos:

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48    Available in <https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Porantim381_Dez_Encarte-2015.pdf>. Access on 30 May 2020.

Indigenous otherness can be seen as a new universality, which opposes the chaos and colonial destruction of the world and life. From ancient times to the present, it is the weavers and poet-astronomers of communities and peoples who reveal this alternative and subversive web of knowledge and practices capable of restoring the world and returning it to its own course. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 185) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

**Figure 5 –** The good place to live the Nhande Reko.



*Source: Author's archive, 2019.*

Far from monoculture, their drawings always show diversity among trees, plants, and animals that constitute the memory of a native forest. Guaraní women and men carry this legacy from an early age: autonomy to walk, know, create, walk, harvest, and eat the foods found in the forest. During our walks through the village, the search for food such as fruits and flowers always surprised and delighted me, not because I was unaware that this community—and many others—face food scarcity due to being allocated by the State to lands often extremely damaged by monoculture, but because I perceived great autonomy and knowledge of plants in the children. The more we interact, the more these characteristics of their way of living and educating stand out, as evidenced by how they behave in our classes: curious, creative, and passionate about fruits and animals.

Nhande Reko is part of the collective memory and consciousness of the Guaraní M'byá people as the ideal way of life, in an ideal space and time, a time prior to the colonial invasion. This does not mean that this people are unaware of the fact that this reality changed for some time and that they do not know how to face such changes. Their knowledge and modes of transmission teach them how to adapt, coexist, and resist the changes imposed by colonial invasion and colonialist apparatus.

Another strongly present and constant element is the image of Nhandexy ("our mother"), a sacred female entity for the Guarani. For someone who was— and still is—starting to learn about Guarani culture, the name of Nhanderu ("our father"), the central male sacred entity for the Guarani, was frequently heard. However, I had never heard of Nhandexy until she started appearing in our classes through the drawings:

**Figure 6 –** Nhandexy ("Our mother").



*Source: Author's archive, 2019*.

A woman holds the Earth: "Nhandexy has the power to send children to women on Earth," explains Adriana, a student from the school. The allegorical nature of the drawing becomes evident as it represents the Earth in a size that fits in her lap, indicating care and protection for the Earth. As Benites states (2018):

> Nhanderu created the Guaraní woman (Nhandesy) and had to create
> another man to live with her on Earth and populate the world; however,

> that did not happen. Not resisting the charms of the woman he created, Nhanderu transformed into a man to live with the woman on Earth, even knowing he could not stay. As my grandmother used to say, Nhanderu is a spirit-like being similar to the air, without a body or fixed place, which is why we cannot see or touch him, only feel him. The woman, on the other hand, is of the earth, with a concrete body. (Benites, 2018, p. 76) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

At a meeting of Indigenous leaders in Viamão (RS) in 2017[49], Kaká Verá explains that Nhandexy represents, to the Guaraní, the idea of the Earth as our mother:

> The first principle, which is present as a value and has traversed millennia, is precisely the idea of the Earth as a mother. In the Guaraní language, it is called Nhandecy: our mother. Some scholars even identify this principle as a beautiful metaphor, a beautiful symbol. This principle of the earth as mother is fundamental for there to be an exchange, an interaction, an understanding with this ancestral culture. Because really, the Earth is a great mother, a living entity, an intelligence, a consciousness; it is not simply a metaphor or an expression. And this is the first principle. (Kaká Werá, 2017, n/p) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

In line with Kaká Verá's statement, Benites (2018) adds:

> Nhandesy's body is concrete, it is the ground we walk on. Nhandesy's body is what gives life and food. Nhanderu appears from above, as spirit, nhe'e, everything that is from above represents the male body: ywytu (wind), pytu (breath), air, aerial things; all these represent the male body. Nhandesy and Nhanderu complement each other; Nhandesy will always need the air, breath, wind, rain, and air would not make sense without the earth, without the ground. (Benites, 2018, p.90) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

It is important to emphasize that, as a language of oral tradition, the spelling of words can differ across different communities, even within the same state. The Guaraní, known for their wandering nature, often have individuals from different states and even different countries with Guarani villages in their communities and villages. There are

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49    The full text of the Kaká Werá conference is available at: <https://bodisatva.com.br/terra-e-de-nhanderu/>. Access on 25 May. 2020.

also differences in spelling among Guaraní Mbyá, Nhandewa, and Kaiowá dialects. This is important to explain the different spellings of Nhandexy, with "x", as used by this Indigenous community and the surrounding villages (Mbyá Guaraní); "Nhandetchy" as found in the Indigenous Knowledge Action materials I use as a reference in this text; "Nhandesy" as spelled by Sandra Benites, a Guaraní Nhandeva teacher working with Mbyá Guaraní school education; and "Nhandecy", as referred to by the writer Kaká Werá, of Tapuia origin, who lived in a Guaraní village in São Paulo in the 1980s and deeply researched Tupi-Guaraní ancestral wisdom.

The images are accompanied by their names in Mbyá Guaraní' with possible translations, based on conversations with the Cacique Acosta, older students, and also consulting the glossary in the book "*Educação Ameríndia: a dança e a escola Guarani*" (2015) by Ana Luísa Teixeira Menezes and Maria Aparecida Bergamaschi. We present the names in Mbyá Guaraní in a dialogue between languages and as a reflection of our daily construction of interculturality, where we are mixing forms of expression from our learnings.

We also note that the images presented here were produced since our first classes in April 2019. At the beginning, still unsure of where to start given the scenario reflecting the State's profound neglect of the school and the community, the non-Indigenous teacher received these drawings in her hands as children and adolescents handed them over or called to show. Made with colored pencils or school paint, I began to notice the recurring presence of certain images produced by different students.

## 4. CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The struggle for land and the right to live their way of life (Nhande Reko) and the figure of Nhandexy are some of the central ideas portrayed through narratives depicted in the images produced by Guaraní children and youth. We think of what Cusicanqui says about Waman Puma's visual theorization: the images and oral stories demonstrate a deep awareness of the contrast between the way of life before and after the European invasion and the social disorder caused by colonization. Mbyá Guaraní—like other indigenous peoples—have their own way of theorizing these events, producing and transmitting their knowledge to their youth and children, maintaining and updating the collective memory of their peoples.

What about us, the non-Indigenous people? How do we construct our memory of the colonial invasion and to what extent does the way it was constituted lead us to an uncritical repetition of history through education? How aware are we of the events we inherit? Decolonization requires a critical view and interpretation of the historical context with respect to our social and ethical constitution. How can we decolonize our pedagogical practices based on these images?

The images reveal that the M'byá Guaraní—like other indigenous peoples— continue to nurture the spiritual support on which they stand, ground that was invaded in the 15th century and later recounted in history books as the "discovery" of a place already inhabited by Indigenous peoples. In fact, the colonial invasion interrupts the stories of Indigenous peoples, but they, with their millenary wisdom, continue to cultivate the soil that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

From the drawn and painted landscapes, the Guaraní words spoken daily, and the perception of the invasion and colonization of the territory of Abya Yala, there is a vast and powerful set of knowledge that shows us a path toward decolonization of our knowledge and theoretical-pedagogical practices. To do this, it will be necessary to envision a future that accommodates, beyond writing, the images and oral traditions that sustain millenary cultures and knowledge.

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# THE CONQUEST OF DIFFERENCES

# THE *"ANTAGONISM OF RACES"* IN THE LIBERAL CIVILIZATIONAL PROJECT IN LATIN AMERICA

*Román Santiago Artunduaga-Narváez*

# ABSTRACT

In this essay we argue that based on the late-medieval and Enlightenment answers to the question of the origin and causes of cultural differences, the liberal civilizational project, starting from the category of the concept of Nation, institutionalized four ideological traditions, or what Foucault (2002) calls: "discursive constellations", namely: (i) The freedom of the will,  (ii) environmental determinism, (iii) trade as a sign of civilization and (iv) the inexperience of freedom. These traditions, as an explanation of the supposed Central European superiority and justification of imperialist practice, resulted in a discursive object: the "antagonism of races"; from whose dissolution (the harmony of races), the Creole elite thinks, capitalism will be introduced in the new republics; however, and through the mediation of the "class struggle", "resistance" was given rise as a common identity of the Latin American peoples and as a counter-discourse to the elite and its idea of education and progress.

# INTRODUCTION

In the field of ideas, education and progress are inseparable concepts. This interrelation finds in indigenous education a natural place for criticism. And by critique we understand what Adorno (2008) points out: thinking about the future as a utopia or alternative form of life in the trance of birth, and not acting "at the service of an already existing reality" (p 248). We do not seek to interpret the indigenous, since that corresponds to its legitimate recipients, not even to make an interpretation of its history and its struggles. What is proposed here, saving distances, is to create a picture of understanding, obviously limited, of the meaning of ethnoeducation, of its appearance, for modern thought: its contribution to the design of the Latin American future.

It turns out that indigenous education includes, in our opinion, an alternative proposal to modern capitalist development; it is a legitimate vindication of ancestral traditions and knowledge, despised by modernity. It proposes another way of thinking about reality and inhabiting culture. Enlightenment thought, the object of interest of our inquiry, generated a particular way of thinking about things. It forced the subject to abstract himself in the representations offered to him by the data of the senses, and as multiple, his psychic consistency was fragmented and, with it, the perceived reality. For this reason, the modern cannot see continuity in nature, except by dividing it into stages of development which, despite their pretensions, do not fail to present obstacles to

understanding. His drama, the one that imprisons him, the one that limits his creative potential, is that he finds himself anchored in the fragmentation of the real and, nevertheless, strives in vain for the contemplation of the totality; For this, he resorts in vain to the making of successions, orders, apparent continuities, laws, links, interrelations that have no other land than the realm of opposites. The truth of the premises that provide the truth of the conclusion. How else can we understand that modern reason has "rationally" justified its colonizing voracity, its disrespect for what is foreign, its desire to accumulate, if not as a consequence of its own ideological referents, of its fragmented way of returning to the question of the being of the being. It was Hegel's merit to establish—as a sententious closure to an epoch—the "Unfortunate Consciousness," in which when the subject believes he has reached the "stillness of unity," consciousness is expelled before the monolithic existence of another-consciousness, irreducible, refractory to its science, its technique, or its history, but which stands as its pure negativity, as an awareness of its essential contradiction.

At the time of the crisis, the "Creole intelligentsia", formed in the schemes and coordinates of the Enlightenment, sought to improve the conditions of material backwardness of Spanish America through a resignification of its immediate past. A resignification that implied a negative view of the original inhabitants, which constituted an obstacle to ordinary thought, fearful of the unforeseen, taught to use the technique as a substitute for authentic thinking, a direct cause of the fear of being indigenist (Kusch, 2000). Conceptually establishing the ideological resources that explain difference and whose implications we feel today, openly confronted by the multiculturalism reality, is the task of philosophical thinking in Latin American perspective. Education and progress must find in this unmasking the hidden face of its radical lack of a proposal where we all fit.

In the pages of this essay we want to argue that based on the late-medieval and enlightenment answers to the question of the origin and causes of cultural differences, the liberal civilizational project, starting from the category of Nation, institutionalized four ideological traditions, or what Foucault (2002) calls: "discursive constellations," namely: (i) The freedom of the will, (ii) environmental determinism, (iii) trade as a sign of civilization and (iv) the inexperience of freedom. These traditions, as an explanation of the supposed Central European superiority and justification of imperialist practice, resulted in a discursive object[50] : the "antagonism of races"; from whose dissolution, the Creole elite thinks, capitalism will be introduced into the new republics; however,

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50    See Foucault. (2004) La arqueología del saber pp. 65 -81

and through the mediation of the "class struggle", "resistance" was given rise as a common identity of the Latin American peoples and as a counter-discourse to the elite and its idea of education and progress.

# THE QUESTION OF DIFFERENCE AND IDENTITY

In classical antiquity, Greek nationality emerged from the representations of other cultures made by its historians. The very notion of history (*historein*), Halbfass (2013) observes, presupposes openness to the foreign, the world beyond, strange and hostile, where to find the meaning of one's "Greek being".[51] The trade of the Greek colonies of Asia Minor and the Alexandrian conquests gave rise to the cultural exchange that would allow, centuries later, the Stoics to speak of a universal citizenship, cosmopolitanism. We find Hecataeus describing the wonders of the Egyptian world, its temples hidden behind thick walls that housed 345 statues of priests. Images of other lands and people that amazed the imagination, from Herodotus with the terrible and warlike Scythians to the "fabulous races" of the medieval encyclopedites of the 12th century.

The Mediterranean world represented a whole "human universe" (Braudel, 1989) divided by the multiple incommunications of races and creeds, but which found in the discovery of America the justification for its encounters and disagreements. More than forty-two million square kilometers populated from pole to pole, one sixth of the known continents, which, as A. Humboldt pointed out, could not be known even in a llifetime lasting century(Ortiz, 1992, p. 85). It meant the awareness of the need to assume differences; but it was up to Spain — perhaps the most intolerant nation of its time —  to open the controversy about the nature and meaning of diversity and the unity of peoples around Human Rights.

The awareness of difference required a long-term historical process. With the discovery of America, —product of the rise of mercantilism that since the end of the 15th century, was planetary—, a new category was created, in the minds of the intelligentsia: "The

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51   Werner Jaeger in Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture (1957) states "History means, for example, the exploration of strange, singular and mysterious worlds. This is how Herodotus conceives it, with a keen perception of the morphology of human life, in all its forms, we also approach the most remote peoples today and try to penetrate their own spirit." (p. 5)

world". However, and as Góngora (2003) states, the discovery was not an immediate phenomenon. Little by little, Europeans assumed that this was a non-Asian, unknown and strange continental body. Gradually, their categories of compression were modified as news of the new lands and peoples arrived52. Although "the world" existed as a planetary unit, there was also the question of the origin of peoples and the explanation of their differences. The most inflexible beliefs had to compromise in the face of the forcefulness of the evidence.

Who were those beings that Columbus brought to present to the monarchs? Why did they not practice any known religion? Why had the ancient historians not spoken of the existence of that world and those people? The Bible and the tradition of the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) – which explained the genesis of lineages in the 16th century – could not explain the centuries of distance between the old and the new continent. What mystery did providence reveal to humanity at the end of the 15th century? Faced with the amazement aroused by the novelty, the cleric chronicler Francisco López de Gómara came to say in admiration in 1554: "The greatest thing after the creation of the world, taking out the incarnation and death of the one who created it, is the discovery of the Indies; and that's how they call them New World."

The religiosity and Greco-Roman mythology present in the Spanish chronicles will explain, in the European mind, the characteristics of the inhabitants of the West Indies. This was the beginning of modern ethnography and anthropology. However, and in order to "assimilate" the difference, the affirmation of one's own (Western-Christian) culture was resorted to, since diversity, by itself, questioned the claim of universality of the Christian religion (so longed for in the West after the fall of the Roman Empire) and admitted a moral relativity opposed to the Imperium Christianum accentuated in the era of Charles V. This feeling of overvaluing one's own and despising what is not one's is at the root of the nationality that will develop later.

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52   Herbey Frey (2002) writes: "The novelty of America exerted pressures on European thought, while, on the one hand, it demanded new orientations and, on the other, it gave rise to attempts to understand the new by means of tradition. Thus, the thought that tried to approach the novelty of this uncontained "other" world was not free from ties to the philosophical tradition from which it could not free itself without suddenly running out of theoretical instruments and methods." (p. 102)

# NATION AND CIVILIZATION IN THE ENLIGHTENED ERA

In the 18th century, the scientific and cultural movement called "The Enlightenment" took place[53] , which Emanuel Kant, in 1784, defined as "the emergence of man from a minority of which he himself is guilty".54 A movement that emphasized the use of Reason to respond to the social and reforming demands of the time. In the understanding of difference, neither did the enlightenment —initiators of contemporary social science (*i.e.* Montesquieu, D'Holbach; Turgot; Condorcet; Hume, A. Smith, John Miller, Lord Kames, and Adam Ferguson)  — were able to shake off the prejudices about the customs of the peoples known until then. However, there is no doubt that it contributed to the establishment of the anatomical, physiological, psychological, natural capacities and basic needs of humanity (Nutini, 2001, p. 25).

As for the nature and cause of the differences between peoples, enlightenment rationality could not afford gaps, empty spaces, dark areas, unknown terrain, since this would ultimately mean validating the biblical version (and the ancient regime). On the contrary, the differences, according to them, must have originated from previous and lower stages of humanity, an event that would support the very enlightened idea of "human perfectibility", preached by renowned thinkers such as the Marquis de Condorcet (1743 – 1794).

The rational explanation of cultural difference was condensed in the concept of "nation" as the ultimate stage of the civilizing process. All known peoples, Condorcet affirms, belong to the same family, associated with European nations by the same level of civilization (Evans-Pritchard, 1987, p. 75). It was necessary to overcome, through rational history, those fanciful narratives that did not "explain" the steps of the human race from its remote past to contemporaneity (18th century). An explanation of the differences that linked bourgeois aspirations with a common project that would over-

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53   The chronological and ideological coherence of the German (Aufklärung) and English (Enlightenment) enlightenments has been discussed. See: Laudin. (2016) Was ist Aufklärung?: « unité et diversité des Lumières », « wahre Aufklärung » ou « radical Enlightenment »? Esquisse d›un bilan de quelques recherches récentes. International Journal of Philosophy No. 4, November 2016, pp. 223-238

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54   Immanuel Kant: The answer to the question that is the enlightenment. P.9 Cit.  Joachim Storing, H. (2016) Universal History of Science. Madrid: Tecnos.

come European fanaticism and religious intolerance, the dead weight, in those circumstances, of the coveted progress.

To understand the path of evolution, the objective differences between man and animal would be the baseline. A people will be all the more civilized55 the more distant it is from animal need and adopts the rational will concretized in a language, a morality and a social order. What was the main difference that separates us as a human race from the animal? The use of freedom. The self-determination of the will established three main differences by which humanity had to overcome: savagery, barbarism, and civilization. The savage is a human being constrained by necessity; he is not free but a slave to his appetites. The barbarian corresponds to a higher level, but his desires are disordered and wrong; the civilized man, on the other hand, is the one who, making use of freedom, chooses what is just and convenient. For Christian religiosity and from the myth of Noah's Ark, Africa would correspond to the kingdom of the savages, Asia would belong to the barbarians, and Europe to civilization. With the discovery of the fourth continent, the New World, it will then be necessary to determine to which kingdom it would belong in that tripartite geographical and moral arrangement of the known world.

## THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

Late medieval religious discourse had established a common origin and explanation of the difference. But, subtracting from the scientific spirit of the time, that explanation was more an article of faith than an object of empirical verification. However, the reference to free will (*liberum arbitrium*) united, in the end, the enlightened and religious views.

Christian religiosity came from a process of mutual discrediting with the *barbari (*Jews and Muslims*)* to whom it denied even their humanity. Heresy implied a deviant "will" and with it a lack of freedom that took the heretic back to his animal condition. According to the scholastic philosophical-theological doctrines: the law does not apply

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55    Originated from zivilita, an expression with which the Renaissance differentiated themselves from the medievals.

to forced necessity and there is no moral responsibility; for there is no freedom56; and the animal, being subject to natural necessity, lost it.

Likewise, for enlightenment thought, the self-determination of the will also marks the division between the animal and the rational being. In the same way that evangelization and baptism are required to restore humanity to the heretic, enlightened education is needed to restore the reason of the barbarian and bring him to the enjoyment of civilization. In that thinking, the barbarian had a better chance of being redeemed by education (evangelization) than the savage, who had to be reduced to slavery. Primitive man, more identified with the wild beast than with civilized man, would lack freedom in the sense of "full and effective will," 57but which, for the purposes of his research, meant an early stage of development.

On the other hand, the understanding of human civilizational progress had to establish, in the manner of Newton, the general laws of the necessary continuity of the stages of development. As an event of the past, foreign to direct observation  — much less to experimentation — that law had to be found in the "realm of finalities", that is: in the "theoretical or conjectural history" that from an inductive reasoning would explain the origin and development of differences. Philosophy of history that reached its apogee with historicism with important implications at the time of the American revolutions (Artunduaga, R., & Cardona D., 2012).

 To this must be added the spirit of fraternity of the French Revolution of 1789 that rejected all odious divisions. That is why the Scottish Enlightenment, with Adam Ferguson at the head, denied the existence of "natural men" because life in society is the nature of man. That is, to say that the primitive did not have a society is to deny his humanity, which is inappropriate. A palace is the same as a hut. The two realities are part of the same social nature of man. However, it is worth remembering in passing that much earlier, in the middle of the 16th century, and making use of the Aristotelian scheme, Bartolomé de Las Casas observed that the indigenous people were peoples equal to the Romans or Greeks. There existed in their societies the same order and harmony as in those celebrated nations of antiquity.58 In this order of ideas, Enlighten-

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56    Cf.  William of Auvergne (1190 – 1249) De anima II, 15

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57     See Voltaire (1996) in Elements of Newton's Philosophy," (p. 21).

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58    The friar Jerónimo Román would refer in this subject to Las Casas in his Republicas del Mundo of 1575 (Góngora, p.52)

ment French thought opposed the practice of slavery that made those who practiced it more savages than those who suffered from it. Will this fact help to explain the discord between Spain and France in the 19th century?

The question of civilizational level is based on the economic and religious rivalry between European nations,  —mainly between the English, French and Spanish—, which fed the conception of racial superiority. Ethnocentrism will materialize in the pseudo-scientific idea of the incidence of climatic factors and racial mixture in the apparent decadence of the customs of peoples. An attack directed mainly against the Spanish empire, although it should be remembered that "while the European nations had expelled the natives from their lands, noted the Count of Campomanes, Spain had transformed them into useful subjects (...) The English, for example, tended to exclude the native population from their society, the Spaniards, on the other hand, to include it" (Weber, D. p. 20).

## ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM

To the issue of freedom as a determining factor in civilization is added that of the influence of the environment. In 1768 Cornelius de Pauw's book entitled Philosophical Investigations on the Americans was published in Berlin, a work that represented a general disqualification of the original inhabitants of the New World. De Pauw, based on Georges Louis Leclerc, Count of Buffon, argued that climate exerted a strong influence on character, taking this idea from reading Montesquieu, Sir John Chardin, and Dubos (Branding, 2015 p. 463). To argue that the inhabitants of America were incapable by nature of governing themselves —because their lands had not been worked into "fetid marshes"—, De Pauw collected the stories of travelers to confirm, by force, the ideas about the evolution of civilization. In the beginning, De Pauw thought, individuals brutalized by the climate were able to appeal to the "germ of perfectibility", abandoned nomadism and fishing, making the "leap" to agriculture. Becoming sedentary, it was inevitable that they would form a "political constitution", which would suppose the establishment of law in general and property in particular.

The physician Hippocrates and the Greek historian Hesiod had written about environmental determinism. The first will write the book: Air, Water and Places where he establishes the influence of the living environment on the individual. For the historian, on the other hand, the environment will be a key to understanding the decisions of indi-

viduals and the nature of their customs (Gracia, 2005). Determinism will become a scientific doctrine from the works of the Newtonian mathematician Perre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827); According to him, in order to understand the nature of a phenomenon, it is necessary to consider all the conditions of its appearance. There are no capricious generations in the kingdom of nature, each and every one comes into being through the succession of its causes. To understand the law governing that necessity, or its sufficient reason, is to know the principle of the evolution of matter.

Just as the animal condition established the level of civilization, the idea of commerce served as a sign of civilization for environmental determinists.

## TRADE AND CIVILIZATION

In Pauw's line, the historian W. Robertson, rector of the University of Edinburgh, wrote an emblematic work: History of America (1777) which was part of his project to write a "history of the Human spirit" (Brading, 2015, p. 468).  Developing the ideas of Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and John Millar, he argued that trade was a clear sign of civilization; for it was not possible without the right to private property. Modes of subsistence also determined the development of primitive societies. Being follows the operation of the spirit. Production would become more complex as demographics increased. The human spirit, by the requirement of social complexity, would pass from the savage stage to the barbarian stage and, from there, finally to civilization.

Regarding the indigenous people of the New World, Robertson saw them as a living vestige of the beginnings of humanity. Although they enjoyed a common humanity with the Europeans, the Indias had not developed their productive forces, due, among other things, to the influence on the character of the harsh environmental conditions. Irreparably separated from the progress of European nations, the West Indians could only be placed on a lower rung of culture. It is worth remembering, however, opposing opinions that enhanced Rousson's visions of the "noble savage": possessor of a natural, pure philosophy, uncontaminated by the vices of so-called civilized nations. Their detachment from money, together with their inclination to peace, represented what had been lost to Europeans after a long, tiring and ostentatious history, what they could never be again.

England, as well as Spain, Portugal and France had developed a trade because they were, "fortunately" in that geographical enclave through which manufactures flowed from east to west. Advantage also for Muslims. This made them think that feverish trade was an unmistakable sign of civilization. Thus consequence was confused with cause, since the division of labor, which would be at the basis of political organization, proclaimed by the main English economists, does not respond so much to a rationalization of production, as to a need of demand, which could only be satisfied with a "free" source of resources: America. In other words, the division of labor is directly proportional to the complexity of the interactions of its members, and this interaction is conditioned, in turn, by demographics closely linked to the carrying capacity of their territories.

Thus, it is easy to identify a division of labor in dense societies such as that of the Aztecs or the Incas (which Robertson considered to be in the last stages between barbarism and civilization), but difficult to appreciate in small societies. With the new impetus that the exploitation of America gave to world trade, the demand for manufactures and natural resources reconfigured Europe socially and economically; but on the basis of that reconfiguration Europe gave a negative judgment on America, confusing, as was said, the consequence with the cause.

Although Robertson was widely accepted and read in Spain, the same did not happen with the work of the Frenchman Guillermo Thomas Raynal, who, although a disciple of Buffon like Robertson and a follower of environmental determinism, pointed out that the domination of Spain, indolent, fanatical and despotic, according to him, was a cause of the backwardness of those original cultures: an extension of North Africa (!). Only by virtue of the free trade policies of Charles III, Raynal believes, will it be possible to reverse that ominous history that gravitates in the future of America.

In synthesis, at the end of the 18th century, for Enlightenment scientific thought, Native Americans were conceived as specimens that demonstrated the existence of fundamental principles or laws of development that governed human society (Weber, D. p. 50). They involved the transition from the initial stages of civilization, the "state of nature", to the artificial European societies. In this way, the evolutionary idea was given rise, devoid even of Darwinian work.

To conclude, enlightened research was committed to the idea of the unity of the human family that had to go through initial stages from hunting and gathering, to agriculture

and trade. Stages that would explain cultural differences in terms of progress and backwardness and mediated by the idea of cultural decadence.

Today we know that those original peoples were not backward embryos of later societies but constituted fully developed societies. However, well into the Age of Enlightenment, the Spaniards of the Bourbon era — and although already enlightened — were still committed to the evangelization of their "Indian subjects", building Gothic churches, persecuting witches and understanding differences only from a particular exploitative, theocentric and apologetic perspective. The idea of the level of civilization that came from enlightened science was more an explanation and justification of the policies of liberalism, of the time of its formulation, than a solid idea about the origin and difference of peoples. It became over time a political argument to confront the European cultures that resulted in the two world wars of which no time is sufficient to regret.

## CLASS ANTAGONISM: IDENTITY AS RESISTANCE

Entering the 19th century, proletarian and anarchist movements were suspicious of the bourgeois state and its project of integrating difference into the capitalist system of production. Nationality and the very idea of the nation presupposed, on the one hand, the celebratory attitude of the petty bourgeoisie, and on the other: the ideological strategy of the elites to perpetuate the situation of exploitation of the proletariat.

For Marx, class antagonism is at the origin of civilization and without which progress cannot be understood (Marx, 2004, p. 135). The "regime of class antagonism" is a historical phenomenon, i.e., the result of a dialectical process of development (thesis, antithesis, synthesis). In primitive societies, with reduced means of production and restricted exchange, they would exemplify a fair proportion between supply and demand. In other words, society consumed its own production without creating excesses or deficits of capital or labor. But that "just proportion" was subjected to the "vicissitudes of prosperity, depression, crisis, stagnation, new prosperity, and so on" (idem, p.145). And in order to respond to the cyclical dynamics of the capitalist economy, bourgeois theorists created an "ideological system" composed of "categories of political economy" that naturalized that inefficient cycle in order to "dislocate the members of the social system" by converting "the different members of society into so many separate societies that succeed each other" (idem, p.207). This dislocation of societies constituted the

main weapon of the bourgeoisie, since it hindered "class consciousness" and, with it, the possibility of unity in struggle.

Based on these ideas and with regard to Latin American identity, Marxist thought will influence a large part of the Latin American intelligentsia, particularly historians, sociologists and philosophers. The original societies, now disappeared, would have had balanced systems of production and consumption related to their own cultural creations and identities.

From the framework of antagonisms, we will speak, then, of modes of production of peripheral formation versus the capitalist agrarian-latifundist mode of production (Dussel, 1977) or of forms of indigenous production versus forms of Spanish production, (Fals Borda, 1982, p.13-23). In short, the expansion of industrial capitalism in the mid-17th century would be responsible for the destruction of that primordial harmony of social reproduction. And so, the denunciation of capitalism's predatory attitude towards native cultures would give rise to the anti-system movements and indigenous demands of the 20th century. Proletarian identity or the consciousness of belonging to the proletarian class would in itself cancel out the idea of the nation.

As a result, renowned Latin American thinkers will be inclined to recognize as the only possible identity the condition of exploitation, dependence, resistance and Latin American liberation. In the primitive forms of production and consumption, that internal morality survives that define both the singular character of a community and the existence of an alternative social bloc to the nation-capitalism dynamism (Smith, D. p. 145). In the same way, all science (Westernizing knowledge) would be linked to its own cultural form (De Certeau, 1999, p. 142), which materializes in economic, legal and political discourses.

In effect, the enlightenment thought of the Republican era established an epistemological paradigm that breaks with the organic vision of the world in which "nature, man and knowledge were part of an interrelated whole." (Castro-Gómez, 2011, p. 130). Thus, nature and cultures were subordinated to the epistemic dimension of colonialism (idem, p. 132). Ultimately, what is at stake is the coexistence of a capitalist, global, majoritarian and hegemonic culture, with cultures that, although of greater historical and ethical significance, are on the verge of extinction. Cultures, in short, condemned to never be realized (García-Nossa, 1981, p. 111).

# THE ANTAGONISM OF RACES: THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

At the end of the 19th century and after the last revolution of independence from Spanish power in America, that of the island of Cuba (1895-1898), an attitude of revisionist introspection emerged in the Spanish intelligentsia as an attempt to understand and justify its imperialist past. From the beginning, the genuine purposes of Columbus in instituting the Repartimientos, and their subsequent decline due to the greed of the conquistadors, were questioned. An account was made of the Christian civilizational ideal that initially animated the enterprise of discovery. By considering, erroneously, that all the native cultures of America were either hunters or gatherers, the hypothesis of Malthus was rehabilitated in the peninsula who in his Principle of population of 1798 affirmed that the geometric growth of the indigenous population was opposed to and detrimental to the arithmetical growth of food resources, which did, in his opinion, the conquest of the New World is necessary and urgent.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Creole elite, now in power, had the opposite effect: of extroversion, of looking outwards. The indocility of the indigenous, mestizos and slaves, the outbreak of rebellions and civil wars everywhere, together with the emergence of multiple constitutions, among other things, made them think that four hundred years of colonialism made the indigenous an indomitable being, refractory to civilization, which is why an urgent moral reconstruction was necessary.

The instability of the new republican configurations gave the impression to the world of the inability of the Latin race for self-government, as referred to by the Colombian thinker José María Samper (1831-1888) (Zea, 1993 p.13). In his opinion: the development of independence from Spanish power cannot be compared with that of the thirteen colonies of [North] America, since they, linked by a feeling of equality, had achieved social consolidation through the exercise of freedom of religion, freedom of exploitation and autonomy (idem, p. 14).

Antagonism that does not exist in Brazil because:

> "[N]o having secular traditions (...) they were able to amalgamate more easily and readily with European civilization, since they had nothing to forget or unlearn, nor was their way of being profoundly opposed by colonization, an advantage that was lacking in Hispano-Colombia [Latin America], since nothing is more difficult than to implant in a relatively

civilized people an openly opposed civilization." [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

According to the above, the absence of racial antagonism in Brazil would explain the rapid assimilation of "civilization". We cannot judge Samper because he could not witness the racial affirmative movements of the 20th century; The high level of Brazilian miscegenation, allowed by the Crown, gave the impression of racial harmony, to which must be added the late abolition of slavery (May 13, 1888). We refer to the myth of "Raizal Democracy", an ideology that immobilized Brazilian society, preventing its identity recognition from the idea of a cultural superiority to that of the United States of North America (Hernández, 2017, p. 16). However, it is certain and proven that the indigenous population of Brazil was decimated, and the black was "categorized as someone incapable of full citizenship" (Santos, 1995 p.117)

The antagonism between the "white race" and the "men of color" [non-whites], as opposed to its counterpart: "raizal democracy" would explain the uneven development of the processes of cultural affirmation of Latin American nations. Perhaps guided by the ideas of European diffusionism, Samper thought that "Civilization" tends to balance differences (Zea, 1993, p. 19). Contact with other peoples will force the inevitable overcoming of the colonial era. The mistake of liberalism in the republican period was evident here: it meant freeing themselves from colonialism by assuming precisely that culture that reduced them to colonies.

From another point of view, there was a fear that the new republics would be a booty for the more developed states that had already shown their colonizing spirit over those nations that had not been able to stabilize. The unity of all differences was therefore a strategy to ward off those threats, and racial differences represented cracks in the common national project, so they had to be either denied with the ideology of racial democracy or dissolved quickly and violently as the ideology of race antagonism proposed.

In 1883, in Argentina, the work of the liberal D. F. Sarmiento appeared: *Conflicto y Armonía de las razas de América,* where he wrote:

> All the efforts of the legislator to inspire them (the Indians) with the desire to improve their native faculties have been aborted. Neither the good treatment they have received if they were admitted into society, nor the important privileges with which they have been favored, have been sufficient to take away from them the fondness for wildlife which, however,

they know only by tradition. There are very few civilized Indians who do not sigh for the solitude of the woods and who do not take advantage of the first opportunity to return to it. [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

This negative vision will guide the idea of the impossibility of the indigenous to comply with the law. For this reason, the *Indians* would be subject to subjection to the legal empire imposed by the white man; only in this way, he thinks, will the "harmony of the races" be possible that will guarantee the "practice of government". To overcome the lags of not having overcome the passage from savagery to barbarism; Sarmiento thinks, the Indian should have been reduced to the "necessary" servitude, but redeemed by the use of the horse, introduced by Spain, which would restore him a moral superiority (Sarmiento, 1883 p. 153).

In the line of Sarmiento, Carlos Octavio Bunge, proposes as a solution to the indigenous question the Europeanization of the Indians through labor. Based on the hypothesis of the Asian migration of the indigenous people of South America, in Our America (1918) Bunge argues the need to overcome the common features in the "psychology of the Indian" (Bunge, 1918 p. 123): laziness, sadness, revenge, oriental fatalism and arrogance inherited from the despotic past of the indigenous people in Asia, before their migration to America. The evils of Spanish America, he affirms, have their origin in the combination of the indolent character of the Spaniards with the negligence of the natives. Added to this is the mistreatment or abandonment received by the Spaniards (idem, p. 130). All this generated a relentless struggle to assimilate to the European one or disappear.

From psychophysics, Bunge seeks to demonstrate the correlation of different physical traits with psychological ones, and to deduce a physical creole type to which corresponds a psychological type of its own. With this he sought to establish the scientific basis of what he would call mestizo morality: "In a word, every physical mestizo, whatever his parents and siblings, is a moral mestizo" (idem p. 140).

Bunge relies on the genetic laws of G. Mendel and on the idea of the existence of four "historical races"[59]: the white, the yellow, the black and the Hispanic-American race. The latter was divided, due to miscegenation, into Hispanic-blacks and Hispanic-Indians and zambos. Any of these divisions caused a "psychological inharmony", a

59    Linnaeus in 1770 in the Treatise on the Human Races divided them into: European whites, African blacks, Asiatic yellows and American reds. Hering, M. (2007). "Race": historical variables. Journal of Social Studies, 16-27

"spiritual form of anthropological hybridism" that played against the Indian because it implied the internal struggle against his white content, (white tendency that would allow him to adapt to the environment); but they could well fall into heroism or misery, the latter being more likely (p. 142).

If miscegenation continues, he affirms, it would result in "the dissolution of the species by degeneration" (idem, p. 143). For Bunge, the crosses between the "historical races" were successful because they occurred naturally and according to a beneficial climate action; on the other hand, the crossing of the Spanish-American races was "artificial and against nature" and, she would affirm —for a history of machismo—: "nature —which because she is a woman is vengeful— we would say that she took revenge" (p. 144).

The pseudo-scientific bases were laid to justify the antagonism of races in Latin America and with it the theft of their lands and their people.

On the side of romanticism — a reaction to the positivism of Enlightenment genesis — the issue was no different. In its claim to be a bridge between the European legacy and its own, romanticism in Latin America put the individual before the collective. After years of Spanish domination, the national personality, embodied in the individual, suffered from such inexperience of freedom that cultural emancipation was required (Pena, 2011, 198). In this sense, democracy would only be possible through the correspondence between cultural development and individual freedom as a principle. Hence, the Romantics in America (except Rafael Núñez) leaned towards liberal thought and the need to break with the Spanish through a "reconstruction" of mentalities. To reaffirm itself as a novelty in the concert of peoples, the individual had to unite itself with that national being, and this ideology hid other worldviews: "other" ways of inhabiting culture.

This affirmed the "antagonism of races" because of Spanish domination. A tradition of thought was thus constructed in the same way that the British, invoking India's feudal past, explained the alleged inability of the Indians to self-govern (Cohn, 1996, p.166).

# FROM THE DIVERSITY OF RACES TO THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURES

The 20th century awakens with rumors of political and economic violence. Education was the indisputable property of the Church to the detriment of native cultures (Soto et al. 2019). The dispossession of indigenous lands was understood as a condition for the economic modernization of the country. In effect, the insertion of industrial capitalism required the individual appropriation of the land and of a peasant proletariat to sustain it. As the Castilians did, in their day, the indigenous people were forced to replace subsistence agriculture with a salary and thus turn them into one more cog in the capitalist market system.

In Colombia, in 1907, General Rafael Uribe Uribe synthesized the liberal civilizational project: "reduction of the savages" to turn them into key pieces for the exploitation of territories that would inevitably attract foreign investment. It did not take long for that conception of development to attack the possession of the indigenous people that dated back to colonial times; they were victims once again (!) of the conquest and of that "nationality" that was strange and foreign to them. Two visions of life confronted each other: one obsessed with profit, and the other based on harmony with "Mother Earth" and collective property, diametrically opposed to the new republic where that colonial inheritance of the rank that granted the possession of the land subsisted, a "Nobility by birth", which without deceiving us, was based on the systematic theft of the land.

Since the catastrophe caused by the two world wars, Europe has been trying to unify itself in the recognition of differences. On December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emerged, which brought together the precepts of the enlightenment: "the great human family", "the high aspirations of man" and the right to "rebellion against tyranny". Western nationality becomes a right. Article 26, as a reaction to the dominance of religion, states that education must strive for understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all ethnic or religious groups. Parents will choose what kind of education to give their children.

Inevitably, the disastrous events of National Socialism led to a reconsideration of the scientific basis of the conception of race that "degenerated" into racial superiority. The work of Franz Boas in 1915 (1959) called into question the ideas of racial types. Modern genetics leans towards a flexibility of the Darwinian type that would overcome the idea

of fixed races (Gómez, 1993). On the political side, in Latin America it is assumed that it is not the races that fight each other, but the imperialisms (English, French, American, Russian) that are the enemies of all cultures.

As a response to the old politics of comfort, Francisco Miró Quesada finds in that antagonism an opportunity for indigenisms to affirm themselves in their being and forge the national reality in the face of the nuclei of world power (Zea, 1993, p 35). If there is a unity, it must be that of affirming the denied and exalting the despised. The antagonism of races would mean, in this sense, the existence and recognition of multiple nations within the same nation, subjugated by a superior military and economic power, but not a moral one. Diversity of cultural projects made invisible since the conquest, colony and republic. Other authors, more conciliatory, will reaffirm that precisely the phenomenon of mestizaje in Hispanic America shows the openness of the indigenous people to difference, while the white man —who gave his body but not his soul (Sánchez, 1991 p.64)— would be more predisposed to war and domination.

The enlightened idea of a human species that would unify differences in common faculties falls before the evidence of its devastating power, generating the crisis of the concept of race. In this sense, and without anthropological evidence, differences or identities, in their understanding, would have to be addressed from social psychology. Identity, from these approaches, is a kind of identity awareness 60 arising from the relationship with geography and culture. In other words, there would be two aspects, one subjective and the other subjective, that intervene in the distinction between "race community" and that of ethnic community. In the first factor, the subjective, the ethnic community is, above all, an "ethnic awareness" of its own specificity, which markedly differentiates it from other human groups. In relation to the objective factor, it relates to cultural "material" links: creations, traditions, institutions, language, history, geography and customs (De Obieta, 1989, 43). The idea of nation is now applied to small groups that call themselves as such. Thus, it was not possible to escape from the concept of nation, but to multiply its existence in nations contained in a geopolitical space.

In the 1960s and as a response to the crisis of liberalism, the cultural revolution (1968) took place, which claimed the recognition of the different forms of life at the individual and collective level. It will bring together the radical anti-system leftists around the figure of the victims of modern capitalist development (Aguirre, 2017). From the 1970s to the 1990s, a series of indigenous social movements took place in Latin America.

60    Cf. Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, p. 20

Mapuche Movement (Chile), Zapatista Movement (Mexico), Landless Movement (Brazil), the CRIC in Colombia, among others. The struggle is oriented towards the recognition of the new identities and cultures in resistance, with a wide reception and support in the Latin American intelligentsia, mainly of Marxist inspiration. Cultures in Latin America will be understood from the original relationship with their territories, which since the time of the conquest had been subject to expropriation. Autonomy meant the historical and real restitution of the land, which meant the assumption of cultural difference through ethno-education or what Zibechi (2017) would call "self-education in movement."

Indigenous education required a break with the epistemological paradigm inherited from the enlightenment, so since the 1990s, several collective movements opened the doors for the recognition of ethnic knowledge. Recognition that also arose from an exhaustion of the modern scientific discourse that was projected as neutral, a-historical and independent of contexts (Artunduaga, 2017). We are referring to knowledge that is critical of power and that constitutes a genuine alternative for intercultural understanding of the future. Ethnic education involves the recovery of the organic vision of the world as an integral part of the recovery of the land and its nationality. Its language, traditions and knowledge are rescued through the education of its members, which will guarantee its survival.

Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (C 169) — ratified in Colombia by law on 21 March 1991 — sought "to save eroded cultures (...) recalling the particular contribution of indigenous and tribal peoples to cultural diversity, to the social and ecological harmony of humanity and to international cooperation and understanding" (foreword). The Convention obliges governments to take "such special measures as may be necessary to safeguard the persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and the environment of the peoples concerned." Identity would be contemplated as a right inherent to the intimate personal awareness, beyond the national project of the enlightened Creole elite.

# FINAL WORDS

The self-affirmation of one's own culture was Europe's conceptual strategy to understand what was different in the face of the novelty of the discovery-invasion of America. Cultural self-affirmation that was the result of a past of struggles against barbarians and heretics. Enlightened reason will not abandon this principle by dressing up the difference in scientificity and establishing the idea of the evolution of civilization in which the nation represented its last stage. Progress and nationality will be the axiom of understanding differences and that will have an impact on future educational proposals. The natural and the animal condition were conceived as opposed to progress through the ethical resource of the self-determination of the will. All this concealed the foundational ethnocentrism and its idea of education as a colonizer's vehicle. To this are added the ideas about the incidence of climate and racial mixture as elements of disqualification of the indigenous in an educational and civilizational project. All this came to be condensed, ultimately, in "private property" and commerce as principles of political society, thus giving the ideological basis of intelligence for the social, economic and cultural plundering of the American indigenous peoples.

Latin American political independence did not imply mental independence, but rather translated into the empire of the mercantile system in economics, and a federal republican government in politics. Faced with the failure of the new republics, the Enlightenment and Romanticism raised the idea of a unity in difference that brought with it the doctrines related to the "level of civilization", now converted into ideological traditions operating in the educational and social proposal of liberalism.

The ideology of class antagonism and race antagonism, as the hidden face of the nation, emphasized the inveterate consciousness of oppression and that had historical manifestations such as Túpac Amaru and Manuel Quintín Lame, among many others. Unlike the route that Europe would follow with the idea of racial superiority, where, according to them, the creative spark of superior races would be diminished by the "mixing of bloods"; In the Latin American case, on the other hand, the existence of the division of races and their inclusion in the international proletarian struggle, as a reaction to the dispossession of land and culture, gave rise to the project of indigenous education that cannot be understood as an opposition to enlightenment thought, but as a result of its exhaustion.

The idea of the nation as the ultimate degree of civilization has its origin in the configuration of Western science, becoming a subsystem of politics. In these pages we have sought to understand science as a product of history and politics and not as an independent and disinterested entity, which, we believe, ultimately supports the proposals of a critical pedagogy that puts those ancestral forms of knowledge in dialogue with other forms of equally historical knowledge. From that dialogue, the realization of authentic Latin American plurinational democracy will be possible (Artunduaga, 2017). However, as long as our cultural, economic and political system does not revolve around the solidarity of man with man, harmony between cultures will not see the light, even if it continues to wait, longing, in the realm of the possible.

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Books published/organized or edited

CARVALHO, A. B.; SANTOS, G. S.; BROCANELLI, C. R. (Orgs.). Latin American thought and education: for a situated ethics. 1. ed. Marília: Oficina Universitária/Cultura Acadêmica/ Editora Unesp, 2020.

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Published/organized or edited books

COLOMBANI, Fabiola. Psicologia da Educação. 1st ed., 2019.

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