

## PEDAGOGIES OF ANCIENT TIMES

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## 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 overcome (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 language(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 infinities more than to definitions. Infinities 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 satisfactorily 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? Learning 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 *brèche*, meaning a hole, a dent, a break in a wall, a city wall, or a battlefield. 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 existencialisms, 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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