

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 Grosso, 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 PEDAGOGY¹¹

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, professors, 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.

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 or 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 areas¹², 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

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. Nevertheless, 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 states’ 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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