

CRITICAL TEACHER EDUCATION: ALTERNATIVES FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF SCHOOL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education in Brazil and in various contexts has become entrenched in descriptive and normative practices aimed at reproducing technicist orientations. Researchers such as Freire, Nóvoa, and Franco highlight the urgency of seeking new foundations for teacher education grounded in “thinking from” and “thinking with”, fostering investigative, dialogical, and shared practices. It is essential to decolonize the reproductive tradition of the prevailing ideology and create space for critical pedagogies that reshape pedagogical conditions

toward critical thinking, solidarities, and collective sharing. This paper explores how to pedagogically structure new practices in teacher education and advocates for pedagogical action research as a critical methodology for the Co-construction of formative processes. These practices emerge from teachers’ knowledge and needs, contributing to transformative teaching anchored in principles of participation, dialogue, and collective construction.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Education, Critical Pedagogy, Pedagogical Practice, Decolonial Praxis

FORMAÇÃO CRÍTICA DO PROFESSOR: ALTERNATIVAS À EMANCIPAÇÃO DA PRÁTICA PEDAGÓGICA ESCOLAR

RESUMO

A formação de professores no Brasil e em diversos contextos tem se cristalizado em práticas descritivas e normativas, voltadas à reprodução de orientações tecnicistas. Pesquisadores como Freire, Nóvoa e Franco destacam a urgência de buscar novos fundamentos para uma formação docente pautada no “pensar desde” e no “pensar com”, promovendo práticas investigativas, dialogais e partilhadas. É necessário decolonizar a tradição reprodutiva da ideologia vigente e abrir espaço para pedagogias críticas, que recriem condições

pedagógicas voltadas ao pensamento crítico, às solidariedades e às partilhas coletivas. Este artigo investiga como estruturar pedagogicamente novas práticas de formação docente e defende a pesquisa-ação pedagógica como metodologia crítica para a Co-construção de processos formativos. Tais práticas emergem dos saberes e necessidades dos docentes, contribuindo para uma docência transformadora, ancorada em princípios de participação, diálogo e construção coletiva.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação de professor, Pedagogia Crítica, Prática Pedagógica, Práxis Decolonial.

1 INTRODUCTION

I have conducted several action research projects in continuing education processes for teachers (Franco, 2010; 2015; 2020; 2024) with the aim of investigating the relationships that teachers establish with the practices they develop. These studies indicate that teachers have increasingly had a relationship of submission to practices, in the sense of surrendering to institutional demands and possibilities. Furthermore, they consider that the scientific knowledge they supposedly learned in their undergraduate courses is not enough to account for the unpredictability and complexity of the educational reality that they discover when they begin teaching. Teachers do not feel encouraged to build pedagogical practices on their own that transcend the recommendations received in handouts previously prepared by the institution in which they work.

The concept of teaching practice that future professionals often come into contact with during their initial training period denotes a culture centered on the concept of practice as training in doing, from the perspective of technical rationality. Imbued with this concept, when they begin their activities as teachers, many young people feel uncomfortable when faced with the first challenges they encounter in their teaching practice activities.

This disparity between a theoretical and fragmented initial training and the complexity of teaching practice that they gradually identify fills the teacher with insecurity and fear and, in the absence of a better answer, the beginning teacher uses recipes offered by teachers with more experience in the profession, or even adapts to the suggestions of a pre-made script of ready-made classes, provided by the institution or found on social networks.

2 PEDAGOGY AT SCHOOL, FOR SCHOOL OR WITH SCHOOL?

It is known that both Pedagogy and Didactics are irremediably entangled in their roots in modernity. These roots prefigured these areas of knowledge in a non-critical rationality, from the perspective of the Enlightenment of the modern era, strengthening the dominance of reason, of curricular organization; of sequencing; of linearity, with concerns focused on the empirical, the visible, the form, the product.

The school that emerges from there, to serve the project of society, envisioned by the rationality in place, specializes in domesticating the population so that it can adapt to the emerging society where the supposed order established by a few and progress defined by a few representatives of a white, Western and supposedly cultured elite must reign.

In order to adapt a subject-object to this school, the school machinery was created, which has since been made up of separate classrooms, a sequential curriculum as a list of subjects, structured as a block that is reified into disciplines, forming a grid that is impermeable to the world and is closed to any other possibilities; other knowledge; other subjects. The knowledge that

supposedly circulates through the disciplines, sometimes called school subjects, is already enveloped in previous linear organizations and supposedly logical sequences.

Schools organized in this way had and still have society's permission to operate in this way because, as Julia Varela and Fernando Alvarez-Uria (1992) write, school was and is a proposal for a social institution supported by the bourgeoisie or post-bourgeoisie, which sees in this project an aura of civilization and thus the emerging school comes to be respected as an institution that controls and domesticates subjects, in order to adapt and prepare them to live in society, as structured by the power elite.

The verticalization of authority is an instrument of domination and control. This institution is expected to form docile and malleable subjects. There is no room for insurrections or transgressions; these are normally punished with different forms of expulsion and/or exclusion. This school that began there and that continues to this day in the subjectivities of many, uses repression and reproduction devices to maintain itself as a reproducer of capitalist ideology, mechanisms already well explained by Bourdieu and Passeron and many other critical-reproductivists.

Cambi (1999a) considers that the epistemological structure of pedagogy emerged in the 17th century, especially with Comenius, when he structured the idea of a universal education nourished by strong philosophical, political and religious ideals, and against the restrictions arising from the interests of groups and social classes. This pedagogical epistemology was based on the organization of a universalizing and humanistic, secular education system¹, a central instrument in the organization of the state, also subject to control and planning by the government, spreading its ideology linked to the discipline and social productivity of education-instruction. The Pedagogy of the time supported this project and didactics operationalized it.

The important tension in this initial epistemology was created by Rousseau when he introduced the child as the subject of the process and politics as the background of the educational process. Politics and Pedagogy are two sides of the same educational process according to Rousseau. Didactics has no place in his work, there was no structured practice based on his proposals.

Going a little further, in contemporary times, already in the 20th century, Pedagogy will establish itself with an essentially political-ideological epistemology. Whether in the movement to use this possibility, with sophisticated dominations; or by understanding the possibilities of education in carrying out social transformations/revolutions. In other words, as Cambi (1999a, p. 383, emphasis added): “the ideological function (of education) is not only **reproductive**, it is **critical-reproductive**”. This double ideological process put into reflection the complex, ambiguous, tensional, dialectical relations between education and society; school and established powers. Pedagogical theories focus on this possible duplicity, today analyzed in the form of processes of

¹Secularization will be completed in the 18th century

resistance and/or insurgency. The articulations between Pedagogy and Society have become the *epistemological mark* of Contemporary Pedagogy.

Paulo Freire makes this articulation explicit when he organizes the theory of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Perhaps his statements and reflections were able to reaffirm and reorganize the understanding of Pedagogy as necessarily critical and his theory counters with principles and practices that become didactic practices linked to the theoretical assumption of Critical Pedagogy.

The dual ideological function of education reverberates in different social functions for Pedagogy: it is either critical-reproductive or reproductive. In both possibilities, didactic consequences and formative practices are followed.

What I want to say: a critical pedagogical epistemology requires a critical, fundamental, multidimensional didactics; a non-critical epistemology requires a didactics focused on reproductive action; on memorization; on linear relationships between teaching and learning; non-dialogical relationships.

Nothing new in this direction: Freire had already understood the presence of these two perspectives of/in teaching practice: the banking and the problematizing. The question remains: does the teacher choose to have a banking practice over a problematizing practice, or is he chosen by the circumstances that oppress and threaten him?

3 A CRITICAL THEORY FOR A CRITICAL PRACTICE

The fundamental mark of a critical theory consists in its interest in the emancipatory conditions that exist, at a given moment, in a given society. Another requirement follows from this statement: critical diagnosis, which must identify the obstacles that impede the praxis of emancipation, as well as the conditions of possibilities for overcoming such obstacles.

In a dialectical movement, critical theory, while identifying the conditions for the practice of emancipation processes, also identifies the conditions for their impossibility and, in a subsequent movement, seeks to identify the possible mechanisms to overcome the obstacles to emancipation.

According to Nobre (2004), the *orientation towards emancipation* is the first fundamental principle for critical theory; and the second principle consists of *critical behavior* in relation to the knowledge produced, under capitalist social conditions and to the social reality itself that this behavior aims to capture.

Freire was the one who brought this critical sense to Pedagogy. When considering pedagogy for and with the oppressed, he already assumed and organized the possibility of emancipatory practices and thus advocated: "education reproduces the dominant ideology, it is true, but it does not do only that" since social contradictions can and should alter the reproductive role of education (Freire, 1989, p. 17). Therefore, his conception of education is, in fact, utopian and hopeful.

The strict link between education and society is the cornerstone of Freirean theory, which immediately triggers a critical and liberating stance towards society, making it possible to affirm that, from a critical point of view, it is as impossible to deny the political nature of the educational process as it is to deny the educational character of the political act.

Freire constructs a critical diagnosis of the obstacles that impede the emancipation of the popular classes, starting with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and the orientation towards emancipation resulting from his epistemology has produced powerful movements to review pedagogical practice from a critical perspective, which makes me affirm, and I have already done so in several circumstances and writings (Franco, 2015; 2018; 2020): either pedagogy is critical, or it ceases to be pedagogy, thus coming to be considered a mere technology of control and oppression.

4 PEDAGOGICAL NEOLIBERALISM

In addition to the structural nature of the perennial dynamics in our society, where pedagogical practices function as artifacts in the service of maintaining and reproducing oppressive logic, there are other mechanisms that are working to *crush* the autonomy of subjects and the processes of emancipation; giving the feeling of impossibility of overcoming this oppressive logic inherent in contemporary society. To update the critical diagnosis of the possibilities of pedagogy in the contemporary world, I highlight the *super-neotechnicism* corrupting school practices and teaching autonomy; leading to the weakening of the professional teaching *ethos*; *pedagogical neoliberalism* (Tello, 2013), which creates a space for denying pedagogy itself as an articulator of the structural conditions of teaching.

What is denied by *pedagogical neoliberalism*? It denies the possibility of an autonomous teaching practice, based on the needs and specificities of students; it denies the conception of diversity as inherent to human groups; it denies the evidence of teaching that is inclusive, welcoming, and articulated with the social space. It denies the plurality of knowledge of students and teachers.

The possibility of shifts to guarantee the right to participation for all is also denied, which would guarantee new perspectives for learning. As Rodriguez and Fortunato (2024, p. 7) highlight:

Therefore, the institutionalization of education in schools is an astute way of maintaining the status quo and perpetuating the privilege of some, through inheritance and power, but also achieved in the form of blessings, through their own merit to those who strive to fulfill the expectations of the institution.

Another situation that denies Pedagogy its critical character is the new strategies of domination via social networks; the discrediting of empirically established truths; the practice of lies and data falsification and the *anti-pedagogy of algorithms*; which prevents us from thinking differently, placing us once again in front of our old choices. It is a strategy of domination and

idiotization of the population, generating an excessive massification of the population that is losing the right to individual identity.

I have called them *antipedagogies* because they go beyond non-critical pedagogies, as they have an air of liberation, emancipation and autonomy and are generating anti-civilizational, inhumane and strikingly domesticating practices. They disguise themselves as liberating, but they produce mechanisms of submission to their practices.

Freire warned us that critical education, in order to establish itself and build people, requires critical thinking; a critical stance and critical praxis (excuse the pleonasm). Knowing and transforming reality are reciprocal demands. Without this reciprocity, there will be processes of domestication and not emancipation.

To highlight the importance of the tripod of critical thought, posture and praxis, it is essential that we remember Freire's warning: **being in the world is different from being WITH the world**. An important condition of critical consciousness is for the subject to be able to emerge from the world, dialogue with it, and try to understand it. To distance oneself from the world, to build with one's individuality, to think about the world and react to it. When we are merely immersed in the world, criticality disappears, as do the possibilities of liberation. Let us highlight Freire (2018, p. 108):

If they had not been able to break away from their adherence to the world, emerging from it as a consciousness that was constituted in the "admiration" of the world as its object, they would be merely determined beings and it would not be possible to think in terms of their liberation.

I realize that social networks, when misused; *the anti-pedagogy of algorithms*; the herd spirit that *influencers generate* and that massify and depersonalize, are all conditions that objectify the subject, produce uncritical adherence to the world and prevent the development of autonomy and critical thinking. I emphasize that in the absence of the process of individuation, which needs to occur in parallel with socialization practices, there will be no possibility of autonomy or criticality.

I believe that it is in the face of this *social pedagogical disaster* that the critical work of Pedagogy and Didactics emerges.

In the situation of denial of Pedagogy, in the face of pedagogical neoliberalism and the uncritical impact of social media, knowledge is being replaced by shallow information; lively and vibrant classes are replaced by transmission practices; the perspective of copy-paste-repeat is established; the enthusiasm for learning and epistemological curiosity disappear as objectives of teaching practice. The obedience of bodies and minds is enough; questions and problematizations are expelled. Ready-made and unique answers are emphasized in order to prepare for exams and entrance exams. The demand for goals to be achieved arises; outside of the subjects; rigid curricula and ready-made classes that must be passed on and reproduced appear; homogenization is reinforced in all spheres of school activity; everything is done in the name of productivity rankings; the meaning of pedagogical practices disappears, leaving only the visibility of profits.

Education has become a commodity: how can we reverse this? Where can we begin to restructure a new possibility to prevent this distortion of the human in pedagogical practices? Melo and Rurion (2011, p. 29) argue that the challenge of critical theory consists in being able to renew its diagnoses in order to make it possible to formulate new perspectives based on the current obstacles to emancipation or emancipatory potential, when they are present in a society. It is urgent that we embrace Pedagogy and didactics and renew their critical potential, in the form of resistance and insurgency. We educators need to stand against the violently inhumane course that has entangled educational policies that disregard the subjects of education; that strip away the dignity of teachers; that destroy emancipatory possibilities. We need to put an end to it, we need to say NO to every attempt to treat students, teachers and other educators as objects of reproduction.

5 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS A PRACTICE OF RESISTANCE: AGAINST ANTI-CIVILIZATIONAL IGNORANCE

Faced with these great challenges that the contemporary world has placed before us, Pedagogy needs to position itself as resistance and face the challenges of **deconstructing** practices, strategically constructed, to produce *anti-civilizational ignorance*.

I consider uncivilized ignorance: social/political practices that have produced contempt for others; insensitivity to diversity; indelicacy towards the world; towards others; lack of empathy towards minorities; unreflective practices; authoritarianism; racism; machismo; in short, the exercise of exclusionary, oppressive, prejudiced, violent practices... (Franco, 2023).

The world around us calls for an intercultural, democratic, plural, dialogic, inclusive society, which requires an effort of tolerance, communication, and openness to dialogue and participation among historically invisible groups, seen as minorities, but in reality they are majorities of many groups of the population that have not had a participatory voice in society. We remember black people, women, indigenous people, and those who choose another sexuality, far from the heteronormativity that has predominated in recent centuries in Brazil.

Pedagogy, as a science of educational phenomena in society, as a social practice, inevitably woven by power and ideology, needs more than ever to assume its critical and insurgent epistemology, against the production of this ignorance and in favor of new practices of social and cognitive justice.

However, since Pedagogy is a non-prescriptive science, which is not confined to an epistemological perspective or a predetermined epistemological script, it leads us to review the epistemologies that constitute it. This science requires that educators become aware of their practices in the certainty that they transform educational reality, which requires a continuous process of *being*, of correcting ourselves, adjusting options and reaffirming a utopian perspective. From reality to utopia is always a path of critical adjustments and ethical resummptions.

Since it is organized around educational processes, utopia is a component of the dynamics of this Science. There is an intentionality that marks each pedagogical action; and an intentionality carries the mark of a *coming-to-be*, of a future, of a utopia. As Dias de Carvalho (1994) says, Pedagogy as a science is complex because it has to face not only enigmas, but also utopias.

Thus, I reaffirm that Pedagogy has a complex, interpretative epistemology; restless, even rebellious. And that it does not fit into the canons of traditional science; it requires other foundations, a new way of creating and constructing scientificity.

Pedagogy without political contours, without assuming an ideological stance, without being eminently intercultural, inclusive and democratic, will not be Pedagogy. It will be merely an instrument of control and transmission of an ideology that reproduces the established order (by the elite).

Furthermore, the social responsibility and commitment of Pedagogy as a science will always be in the direction of social justice and cognitive justice, excluding *a priori* the objectivist stance of the scientist and the objectivity of the educational phenomenon. This Science, thus complex, cannot, in its exercise, merely reproduce the established social order, the prevailing ideology or use the methodology of positivist science in research in Education and in the elaboration of the theoretical, epistemological, methodological and political assumptions of Pedagogy.

The political and critical dimension of Critical Pedagogy requires scientists to constantly become aware of the forms of oppression established by *the status quo*, analyze them, seek to understand their conditioning factors and develop proposals to seek new social balances. From this we can infer the status of Pedagogy as a critical social science.

I have proposed, like Giroux (2022), to identify the mechanisms that generate anti-education in the form of anti-civilizational ignorance and, in this line, I highlight in this article pedagogy as a pedagogy of resistance to practices that dehumanize rather than humanize.

I have considered the concept of manufacturing *anti-civilizational ignorance*, as I have already written above, as being those practices that generate contempt for others; insensitivity to diversity; indelicacy towards the world; towards others; lack of empathy towards minorities; practices without reflection; merely banking teachings based on memorization; authoritarianism; racism; machismo; in short, the exercise of exclusionary, oppressive, prejudiced, violent practices...

Cambi (2009a, p. 10), in a reflection on the contemporary role of Pedagogy, highlights: "Pedagogy is not for the system, it is of man and for man; for his formation and emancipation. Pedagogy cannot be crushed by technical knowledge, reducing the anthropological principle that should guide it".

In our days, with the exacerbated possibility of continuous dehumanization in our social and historical relations, Pedagogy can play the role of providing man with the critical search for himself. Cambi (2009a) speaks of an *existential planning of oneself*: giving human beings the opportunity to question themselves, to think, imagine, create ideals, values, worldviews of themselves and their world; and not just follow a ready-made model in a ready-made world

considered “unique” and not worth fighting against. I believe that this *stopping to think* about oneself, discovering ways to take care of oneself, to demand oneself from the world, to transform the world is an important role of Pedagogy today.

Pedagogy shows us that we are not reflections, nor mere responses to the stimuli we are presented with: we are beings of thought, creation, problematization, decision-making, and action. As Freire warns us: we are conditioned, but not determined! However, it is imperative to seek the interval between the stimuli that are produced and that affect us, in a continuous flow and at high speed by digital media, to make sense of this whirlwind that hits us: to stop and think critically about the contingencies that the world is presenting. **Critical Pedagogy has the role of demanding a pause in the technification of life and existence.** Pedagogy calls for the search for meaning!

We are not accustomed to the necessary protagonism of Pedagogy! But we are in a moment of social urgency and only liberating education will lead us to other directions in education and society.

Historically, the more critical Pedagogy became, the more it deepened its awareness of criticality, identifying and denouncing the mechanisms that perpetuate inequalities, the less social space it was given.

When Pedagogy was structured around a positivist, behaviorist, functionalist science, it was well accepted by society. The peak of this process began with Herbart (1937), who assumed that the whole must be divided into parts in order to be assimilated, fragmenting educational activity into phases and stages, which almost never accompanied the cognitive, sensory, and emotional processes of students.

At the height of technicality, in the 1970s of the last century, we had the great influence of behaviorists, expressed especially by Skinner (1972) and the control of behavior with the famous “teaching machines”. Behavior was shaped and trained and all of this was accepted and welcomed by society. From these positivist, experimentalist guidelines, an elitist, exclusionary, competitive school emerged. But these practices were welcomed by society.

Even today, these practices are reproduced, whether through distance learning, without any interlocution or dialogue, or through the alienating practice of “passing on” information and content previously chosen by others; they are reproduced in assessments outside the subject, external to the school, in the sole direction of an entrance exam, which more than anything aims to be the selector of future elites.

This historical trend includes the current role of *antipedagogy* expressed by pedagogical neoliberalism and the leading role of *algorithmic pedagogy* in directing our practices.

There are thousands of educational practices in a society. Which of these become pedagogical practices? This should be the systematic reflection of Pedagogy on the educational phenomenon, on educational practices, so that it can be a guiding body for educational work. It does not refer only to school practices, but to a huge set of other practices. The field of education

is quite vast, since education occurs in many places and in different ways: in the family, at work, on the street, in the factory, in the media. Just look at the importance of the cultural industry.

I use the adjective *critical* when speaking of Pedagogy to highlight its political character. Thus, more than dialectic, it is critical, in the Freirean sense: aimed at the emancipation of the oppressed; aimed at raising awareness of the social place of each subject; aimed at uncovering the ideologies present in practices; recognizing multiple knowledges; rejecting a single conception of knowledge; decolonizing knowledge and practices from a perspective of collective construction of humanity. More than dialectic, it is critical, since Pedagogy can only act in contradiction, with contradiction and for contradiction.

Above all, it is urgent to consider Pedagogy as necessarily critical. In other words, being critical is not only a specificity of its epistemology, it is a *social urgency*. If Pedagogy does not oppose the abuses that have occurred against humanity itself, it will lose its main specificity, which is to think about itself and the world, because thinking about itself and the world is always in the direction of the possible utopia in this daily life, in this present. Pedagogy as a critical science can offer those who are ragged in life the possibility and the necessity of their emancipation. Thus, it is clothed with criticality to subvert the relationships in which human beings become enslaved, oppressed, abandoned. In this way, it is clothed with a pedagogy of resistance!

I bring up again this very current thought from Cambi (2009b, p. 8) “[...] pedagogy is not for the system, pedagogy is of man and for man, for his formation and for his emancipation”. I think this is very important, Pedagogy is not for the system, Pedagogy is for man. Pedagogy cannot be determined by technical knowledge, because this reduces the anthropological principle that should guide it, which is this becoming.

But I cannot help but continue to ask: in our day and age, can Pedagogy play the role of enabling man to search for himself, in this moment of so much perplexity in which we live?

6 THREE CONTEMPORARY EPISTEMOLOGIES

I have usually highlighted the presence of two mutually exclusive epistemologies: **critical and non-critical**.

However, researching the presence of social media; the internet; and practices that obstruct thought via *the pedagogy of algorithms*; I end up including a third and tragic epistemology: the **antipedagogical, or antipedagogy**. This overcomes non-criticality by acting with its intentionality disguised, hidden, aimed at cognitive domination.

Why do I consider the social practice of algorithmic pedagogy as an antipedagogy that corrupts other epistemologies?

Let us remember how Freire emphasized that knowledge is achieved through a dialogic process and that the object of knowledge cannot be external to the subject; it is through mediation that knowledge is achieved. The practice of algorithms excludes the possibility of the subject

seeking and finding spaces for dialogue, since algorithms induce a choice previously made by others, with other intentions. This situation destroys the possibility of perceiving the dimensions that reality offers and, more than that, takes away all possibility of autonomy and creativity. Furthermore, let us remember that only “we think” helps to construct the thought of each subject. That is why we are unable to transmit knowledge and what is done is less than information; it is a direction in the opposite direction to the possibility of thought.

Just as a banking class is symbolic violence, when I force the other (through control and evaluation mechanisms) to swallow chewed-up information

7 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, AS PEDAGOGY OF RESISTANCE AND DECOLONIAL PRAXIS

The question with which I ended the previous section opens another window for considerations about the relationship between the epistemological commitment of Critical Pedagogy and the men and women of the present historical time. This is because, if pedagogically oriented educational processes do not provide men and women with the conditions to problematize and denaturalize oppression, violence, and structural injustices; and help these men and women to design alternatives for social life in which plural, democratic, and inclusive life is prioritized, it loses its importance and its social and historical necessity.

This premise forces me to highlight the need to develop critical awareness – and awareness as educational scientists – about the theoretical-epistemological foundations that underpin our daily practices. I always emphasize that we must maintain permanent critical vigilance over what sustains our ethical, aesthetic, and political choices in this field of struggle, which is the field of education. Pedagogy will always be the enlightened option of principles and values that sustain its complex epistemology.

With this, I bring to the scene another adjective that has also permeated the reflection on the epistemology of pedagogy: the decolonial approach, and how this theoretical perspective, which refers to the theoretical-methodological conceptions developed in what we call the Global South (in contrast to the Global North, which until then produced hegemonic scientific thought), is inseparable from the assumptions of Critical Pedagogy formulated by Freire in the 60s/70s of the 20th century.

When we use the adjective decolonial for Critical Pedagogy, we want to highlight its inherent perspective of **uncover oppression through the process of awareness; understand the circumstances that produce oppression; give voice to the underprivileged, make visible those made invisible by the oppressive system.**

I believe this to be the greatest rupture necessary for the epistemological perspective of Pedagogy: no longer an instrument to naturalize the established ideological order, but a collective social practice to uncover oppression, the logic of domination and privilege. And more than that: this task of uncovering needs to be done by the subject himself in the process of formation and

political literacy. Hence the fundamental importance of formation always encompassing, simultaneously, emancipation and awareness!

I consider Paulo Freire to be the pioneer of decolonial thought. Freire read Frantz Fanon and was impressed by his reading of *The Wretched of the Earth*; he also worked with Fals Borda, especially on the issue of popular participation in the constitution of a “participatory science”. I consider that the roots of decolonial thought lie in Freire, Fanon and Fals Borda, a root that later came to be expanded with the contributions of other Latin American and Global South authors, in the 1970s onwards.

When Freire seeks to horizontalize pedagogical practice, he is reaffirming a decolonial assumption for Pedagogy and a didactic possibility. When Freire detects the sophisticated mechanisms of a banking education (castrating the epistemic curiosity and authorship of the student) and proposes a problematizing, dialogic education, he opens up an immensity of new decolonizing formative possibilities.

When Freire insists on warning the world that we all have knowledge; that there is no greater or lesser knowledge; when he encourages us to learn about the knowledge of others; to listen to the knowledge of students and to begin our practice based on this listening, he is insisting on a decolonial process in Pedagogy and proposing ruptures in Didactics. I emphasize that, before Freire, no pedagogical theory had so radically presented this dialectic of the oppressor and the oppressed, which has led to the perpetuation and naturalization of the processes of domination and exploitation of humans by humans.

This initial Freirean perspective has been solidified by research by several authors, which I see well summarized in the studies of João Colares Motta Neto (2016, p. 17) when he states that: “decolonization is the radical questioning and the search for overcoming the most distinct forms of oppression perpetrated against the subaltern classes and groups by the set of agents, relationships and mechanisms of control, discrimination and denial”. This concept expresses, in principle, the very nature of Critical Pedagogy!

Or, I like Walsh's (2013) perspective when he writes that decoloniality is the effort to transgress, displace and influence the ontological, epistemic and cosmogonic-spiritual negation that was and is the strategy, end and result of the power of coloniality.

In the face of the continuous epistemic and critical denial of pedagogy, I insist on a decolonial pedagogy. In my doctoral thesis (Franco, 2001), I clarify the process of epistemic colonization of Pedagogy by other sciences, which makes it abdicate its inherent critical nature. Currently, I consider bell hooks's (2019) book *Pedagogy as a Practice of Freedom: Teaching to Transgress to be very significant*; that is, a very important imagery for decolonial pedagogy.

That said, I bring the decolonial perspective closer to Critical Pedagogy, as I have been researching over the last thirty years. And here I want to explain five levels of decolonization necessary in this approach:

a) **Epistemological decolonization:** a Critical Decolonial Pedagogy needs to seek its own roots, its own praxis, in its epistemological identity. Therefore, I speak of a Pedagogy *that must be* epistemologically decolonial, decolonized from the principles of the method of Modern Science. This decoloniality that I defend expresses the current principles that scholars have been making of the concept of *Coloniality*. For example, Walter Mignolo (2007), referring to Fanon, emphasizes that *coloniality* is constitutive of *Modernity*, since the rhetoric of Modernity presupposes the oppressive and colonial logic, disguised as a salvationist project of progress of the peoples. Therefore, decoloniality passes through the decoloniality of Power.

I have come to understand that, in order to establish itself as a science, Pedagogy needs to free itself from the logic of modern science, which established it as a possible science. I would like to emphasize, however, that I consider the fundamentality of modern science in the construction of knowledge and practices that structure contemporary society. However, after decades of research, I have been able to confirm that, in order to be considered a science, Pedagogy needs to seek other investigative foundations, in order to find new methods and new assumptions that can produce knowledge related to the nature of its object. This is already happening, and investigative processes are becoming increasingly participatory and critical today. Researching with others; interpreting research data with others. I have worked with pedagogical action research (Franco, 2005; 2012; 2020) as a way of arriving at a different pedagogy, which requires a method compatible with its epistemology.

b) **Decoloniality of/in practices:** I pursue a Pedagogy Other that gives way to another meaning of school practices: more experiential and less executive; more dialogic and less reproductive; or using Paulo Freire's classic concept: less banking and more problematizing. The school colonized by the practices of companies, by the practices of other institutions, perhaps even by religion, has been structured with practices that are completely meaningless for children, adolescents, and adults as well in the educational processes. It will be necessary for Pedagogy, restructured in its epistemology, to recompose itself in the sense of decolonizing practices. Decolonized practices presuppose the presence of dialogue; of listening; of collective practice; of the perception that all pedagogy must be differentiated, attending to the specificities of each one; cultivating the practice of including everyone in the culture of diversity and interculturality;

c) **Decoloniality of knowledge:** I pursue a different pedagogy that makes an ecology of knowledge feasible; that promotes cognitive justice, the visibility of other types of knowledge. We cannot have this division between good knowledge and bad knowledge, between valuable knowledge and not. Therefore, we need to implement cognitive justice, the visibility of other types of knowledge, the practice of seeking out the knowledge of

others. It is never too much to say: everyone has knowledge, there is no hierarchy of knowledge, there are different types of knowledge. This consideration, for example, raises tensions with the whole issue of a “national curriculum bank”, which disregards knowledge specific to the working classes; the real conditions that make disciplines possible from a multicultural perspective; the non-restrictions on academic freedom, among others. As knowledge is decolonized, it becomes plural and is expressed in networks, in collectives, in communities. These practices of including everyone’s knowledge throw the issue of competition out of whack; rankings and disciplinary specificities.

d) Decoloniality of power dynamics: I advocate a pedagogy that is carried out in horizontal relationships; with dialogue and listening. The school cannot be an assembly line; it must be an existential collective and a place for sharing life, a time-space for a pedagogy of transgression; a pedagogy of critical thinking; a laboratory for coexistence in diversity. As long as there is a verticalized climate of hierarchy and command (legitimized by a claim to scientific objectivity), these practices of listening, these practices of rebellion will not emerge. Instead, fear and oppression will emerge.

e) Decoloniality of the single pedagogical thought: This decolonial perspective will be a work for the assumption and permanence of emancipatory, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-heteronormative, anti-sexist pedagogies; for feminist pedagogies and all the needs that arise in these pedagogies. It is also necessary that Pedagogy itself be clothed in this multiple role of emancipatory pedagogies, and that it enables educators and social agents involved in the educational task to develop alternative thoughts beyond the hegemonic capitalist, patriarchal, colonialist, anthropocentric rationality.

The decoloniality of the unique pedagogical thought urges the elaboration of a worldview that repositions the human in another topology, non-hierarchical, in relation to the entire life-system of planet Earth, in this historical time globally compromised in its conditions of providing habitability for current humans and non-humans and for those of future generations.

I want to make it clear that when I speak of Decolonial Critical Pedagogy, I am thinking that another Pedagogy is possible. A Pedagogy that is always insurgent to Western logic, resulting from the commitments arising from the project of Modernity and that is carried out as counter-hegemonic in the perspective of the inclusion of subjects, in the processes of education, in the struggles for the emancipation of oppressed peoples and in the transgression of pedagogical practices that naturalize forms of oppression and power. A pedagogy that becomes the protagonist of its own investigations, that commands this aspect, and also based on what I base myself on in this Decolonial Pedagogy, on the foundations of Freire's Critical Pedagogy, and also incorporating

reflections arising from Epistemologies of the South and from new research that is being carried out. Currently, I still envision a pedagogy that wages a true battle with anti-pedagogies.

I believe that Decolonial Pedagogy would be a more generic term given to critical/emancipatory pedagogies, originating from Freire's epistemological criticality, expressed especially in Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Now, we pedagogues have the duty to expand decolonial studies, highlighting the diverse and necessary emancipatory pedagogies, focused on urgent and emerging specificities of our historical time, as mentioned: anti-racist pedagogies; anti-sexist; indigenous, feminist and focused on the diversity of perspectives that demand critical, emancipatory and decolonial positions from society.

The decoloniality of the unique pedagogical thought urges the elaboration of a worldview that repositions the human in another topology, non-hierarchical, in relation to the entire life-system of planet Earth, in this historical time globally compromised in its conditions of providing habitability for current humans and non-humans and for those of future generations.

Teacher training needs to be based on political-ideological commitment and transformed into critical experiences, in continuous dialogue with the reality that prevents education from reorganizing itself around a revolutionary practice.

We know that hope is wounded; that resistance is a practice that only occurs in a critical collective, even so we must maintain hope and the practice of resistance, because the opposite of hope is fear and the opposite of resistance is submission. The training of critical teachers is perhaps the first way to break the circularity of oppression/submission.

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