

## COLONIALITY OF DECOLONIALITY: A REFLECTION FROM THE PEDAGOGICAL-EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE



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### ABSTRACT

This article addresses the conceptual trajectory that articulates coloniality, postcolonialism and decoloniality, emphasizing the change of mentality as a central element in the construction of new ways of being and acting, especially in relations with otherness. Based on a qualitative bibliographic review, the study shows how academic production - from different geographical and cultural contexts - has contributed significantly to the deepening of the critique of colonial logics and to the formulation of decolonial alternatives. Structuring aspects, such as power relations, gender inequalities, market logic, and white Western hegemony, are analyzed as mechanisms that sustain domination, racism, and the reproduction of social inequalities. In this path, postcolonialism emerges as a critical field that problematizes the colonial heritage and points out paths for equitable relations. However, it is decoloniality that proposes an epistemological and practical break with the patterns that sustain colonialism. By discussing concepts such as the coloniality of power, knowledge, being, and gender, the article proposes a critical decolonial pedagogy, based on the valorization of marginalized knowledge, the deconstruction of Eurocentric narratives, and the commitment to social justice. It is concluded that decoloniality, as an ethical, political and pedagogical proposal, offers powerful ways to rethink education in a more plural, emancipatory and committed way with historically oppressed subjects.

**Keywords:** Education. Coloniality. Decoloniality. Teacher training.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the organization of societies, some elements transcend time, place, culture, that is, they are part of life in common. What differentiates one society from another is the way in which these elements are present in the understanding of its people and its leaders, as well as in the way of systematizing one's own existence.

Although throughout history, the domination of peoples through force (wars) is a constant, as it has not yet been overcome by humanity (Harari, 2017), only in recent decades have there been reflections on domination that goes beyond persuasion, that is, incorporated in the mind and culture, and installed in a structural way. Coming from different geographical and cultural contexts, several authors have contributed to the deepening and broadening of colonial thought and, consequently, presented in a clear and consistent way, the possibilities of advancing decolonialism.

Recognized as the Modernity/Coloniality thought group, this article refers, among others, to authors who develop coloniality/decoloniality in some perspectives, such as: from the perspective of power (Quijano, 2007), where new social hierarchies are defined during colonization and remain articulated with economic and political power. From the perspective of knowledge (Mignolo, 2017 and others), which highlights that only Western knowledge is recognized, not considering other forms of knowledge, such as indigenous, African and even local ones.

From the perspective of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), coloniality reaches the depths of human existence, affecting the subjectivity, identity, and dignity of colonized subjects, by silencing their voices and restricting their possibilities of full existence. And from the perspective of gender (Spivak, 2010), which relates race, gender, class and coloniality, with severe criticism of hegemonic feminism.

It is in this context that education finds space to advance in reflection, in order to overcome the existing discrepancies between whites and blacks, Eastern and Western, men and women. It is noteworthy that this space is "built" in the academy, in the conversation circles and especially in the change of understanding of the social place of each individual in society. It is in this process, also academic, that curricula disconnected from the local reality are perceived, especially indigenous and Afro-descendant, with narratives based on the colonizer, prioritizing the colonizer's languages; teachers with Western training, with difficulties for critical reflections on colonialism and its consequences, generally presenting resistance to change.

In times of the use of technology in education, it is important to highlight the work of Mignolo (2011) "The darker side of Western modernity: global futures, decolonial options" in which he analyzes how modern global structures, including digital technologies, are instruments that perpetuate coloniality, as they highlight Western narratives as universal, marginalizing local epistemologies because they are not Western. It also criticizes the presentation of technology as neutral and universal, while in reality it serves to consolidate Eurocentric hegemony. It is in this context that this article proposes to present elements that underlie colonialism, some consequences of coloniality and some considerations in the face of the challenges of decoloniality in education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article is a theoretical research, of a qualitative and exploratory nature, based on a literature review. The central objective is to reflect on the foundations of decoloniality and its implications in educational practices, focusing on the critique of colonial models of knowledge, power and being. As secondary objectives, it seeks to: identify significant elements that contribute to the development of a decolonial pedagogy and highlight the main challenges and possibilities for the implementation of educational practices committed to the emancipation of historically marginalized subjects.

The methodology adopted consists of a critical review of national and international bibliographic productions that address the main concepts related to coloniality, decoloniality and interculturality, especially from the contributions of authors such as Quijano (2005), Mignolo (2017), Walsh (2009) and other Latin American thinkers.

A qualitative approach was chosen with a focus on bibliographic research, characterized by the in-depth analysis of materials such as scientific articles, books and chapters of specialized works. This methodological choice, according to Gil (2008), allows the researcher to understand in greater depth the phenomena involved in the theme, favoring a critical and contextualized reading of the object investigated.

Scientific articles, books and chapters of works published in the last twenty years were selected, prioritizing publications that discuss decoloniality in the field of education. The selection of texts took into account the relevance of the authors to the constitution of decolonial thought, as well as their contribution to the debates on plural epistemologies and anti-colonial pedagogical practices.

The analysis of the materials was carried out through critical reading and theoretical articulation between the decolonial concepts of several authors, based on common categories, allowing the deepening of the proposed reflections and the development of a consistent argumentation on the need for ruptures with colonial paradigms, especially in educational practices.

## **RESULTS**

This article, of a theoretical nature, does not present empirical data, but offers results in the form of systematization of theoretical and epistemological reflections on coloniality and decoloniality, from a pedagogical and educational perspective. The construction of the results is centered on the critical analysis of authors such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Maldonado-Torres, Catherine Walsh, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda, who deal with the theme under different aspects such as power, knowledge, being, gender, subalternity, epistemologies, pedagogy and education.

The reading and articulation of these authors allowed the elaboration of a conceptual synthesis about coloniality as a pattern of power that goes beyond historical colonialism and is perpetuated through social, political, cultural and educational structures. In this sense, the article presents essential elements, with an argumentative structure that unveils the ways in which racism, patriarchy and Eurocentric epistemological hegemony manifest themselves in educational processes and, when unveiled, point to possible paths of rupture and overcoming.

## **DISCUSSION**

The discussion focuses on the analysis of the implications of coloniality in educational processes and on the proposition of a decolonial pedagogy as a transformative alternative. By problematizing the permanence of colonial logic in contemporary education, the article shows how education systems are still impregnated by Eurocentric epistemologies that marginalize local, indigenous and Afro-descendant knowledge.

## COLONIALITY, POSTCOLONIALISM AND CRITICISM OF ORIENTALISM

Coloniality, as the logic underlying colonialism, transcends the historical limits of territorial colonization to perpetuate itself as a power structure that shapes cultural, social, and economic relations. This dynamic operates through a system that hierarchizes races, cultures, and knowledge, legitimizing practices of exploitation and domination.

According to Maldonado-Torres (2007), coloniality refers to a pattern of power that, although originating in modern colonialism, surpasses the formal power relations between peoples and nations. It organizes work, knowledge, and social relations based on the logic of the capitalist market and racialization. Persisting beyond colonialism, coloniality shapes modern cultural, educational, and social structures, perpetuating contemporary hierarchies and inequalities.

This logic of power, described by Maldonado-Torres (2007), finds support in the analysis of Aimé Césaire (1978), when he argues that colonization is not a simple administrative practice, but a profoundly violent predatory process, especially in the relations of domination it establishes. He emphasizes that colonization seeks to dehumanize native peoples, transforming them into objects instead of subjects, in a process that he calls "objectification".

For Quijano (2007), coloniality is an essential component of the global pattern of capitalist power, based on the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification as a structuring basis. Originated and globalized from the colonization of the Americas, coloniality transcends formal colonialism, perpetuating itself in all dimensions of social, material and subjective life. It establishes itself as a central axis alongside modernity, sustaining a Eurocentric hegemony that shapes social and cultural relations to the present day.

The coloniality of power refers to the articulation between capitalism, colonialism and social classifications imposed during the formation of Latin America. This hierarchical system defines social identities (such as indigenous, black, and mestizo) and geocultural identities (America, Africa, the East, and Europe), linking these categories to the dynamics of exploitation and domination. Under a Eurocentric logic, this structure integrates colonial experiences with capitalist demands, consolidating a universe of intersubjective relations of domination that sustains the global pattern of power (Quijano, 2007).

In this way, the racial dimension is a crucial aspect of coloniality. Racism and racialization operate as central axes in the colonial structure, positioning the European as the "pure race" and the native peoples as "savages". Such stigma disqualifies and ignores

the knowledge and cultures of subaltern peoples, promoting their exclusion from the cultural and epistemological debate. In this context, the coloniality of power manifests itself not only as a form of economic and political control, but also as a cultural and symbolic imposition that perpetuates the marginalization of the colonized.

Given these reflections, it becomes evident that coloniality not only shaped power relations during the colonial period, but continues to profoundly impact contemporary social and cultural structures. A critical understanding of its foundations and consequences is indispensable to deconstruct the imposed hierarchies and pave the way for fairer and more inclusive forms of coexistence and knowledge production.

Postcolonialism emerges as a theoretical field that questions hegemonic colonial narratives, seeking to reveal and deconstruct the discourses that sustain cultural, political, and epistemological domination. In this context, Edward Said's work, especially in *Orientalism* (1990), becomes central in addressing how the West constructed a stereotyped and reductionist view of the East to legitimize its superiority and justify colonialism.

For Said (1990), *Orientalism* is not just an academic field, but a systematic discourse that shapes the way the West perceives and interacts with the East. He explains that this approach involves both an effort at scholarship and a collection of images and vocabularies that reinforce the idea of Western superiority. Thus, the representation of the East as exotic, mysterious, and inferior reinforces cultural and political hierarchies, while creating an "other" against which the West defines its own identity. According to the author himself, *Orientalism* encompasses different nuances, essential aspects of its composition, scope and historical, cultural and economic importance:

Orientalism is rather the distribution of geopolitical consciousness in aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is the elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (two unequal halves make up the world), but also of a whole series of 'interests' that, through means such as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, Orientalism not only creates, but also maintains (Said, 1990, p. 40).

Especially with regard to the other projected by the European gaze, it is important to point out that this historical process begins, in fact, in the great navigations, configuring a "... The relationship between the West and the East is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony." (Said, 1990, p. 33) and, in many aspects, it is in the cultural, aesthetic and identity spheres, especially in the discourse, that



colonial action was most infringed on the composition of its hegemonic cultural project, also sustained by a whole intricate interrelation of economic-political factors and variables.

Authors such as Kush (1999), Chaui (2005) and Bosi (1992) work, to some extent, with the discursive force – and by continuity action – of coloniality, as Said (2008) also argues, when he warns about the care with the subjective, symbolic, identity and discursive nuance of such a process and project/intentionality:

Without examining Orientalism as a discourse, one cannot understand the extremely systematic discipline through which European culture was able to wield – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. (...) Continued investment created Orientalism as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted network to filter the Orient into Western consciousness (Said, 2008, p. 29-33).

This dynamic prevents the East from being seen as a space of plurality and agency, reducing it to a caricature that serves to sustain colonial logic. Thus, it is not possible to propose a low reflection on the theme, on the contrary, a whole path of interpretative reification, of inquiry and correlation of actors, vectors and historical and contextual variables need to be brokered, at the same time, when it comes to a postcolonial and/or decolonial visualization, in the second case as a starting point of the proposed negation (Araújo, 2020). In dialogue with what Maldonado-Torres theorizes about the coloniality of being, it is important to go further, towards a decolonial ontology, as Escobar (2015) states:

La ontología política es entonces el análisis de mundos y de los procesos por medio de los cuales se constituyen como tales; This applies, obviously, to the same mode. La ontología política reditúa al mundo moderno como un mundo entre muchos otros mundos. This is a fundamental political theoretical area that is being approached from critical academies and from other social movements. From these perspectives, in the soil there can be a single world (a universe), but that there can be no ground principle, the set of principles in which it can refer to all these worlds; As we know, these principles are usually those of the liberal and secular European tradition. If all the worlds of the planet live under the shadow of the expansion of liberalism as a capitalist and secular political and cultural system – with its principles of democracy, markets, individuals, order, and rationality, to be imposed by the force of other societies if necessary, as the United States tries to do with frequency – it cannot be explained in its entirety in terms of these principles. (Escobar, 2015, p. 97).

Said's (1990) orientalism finds an echo of dialogue at the ontological level mentioned above as a step forward, at the confluence of decolonial being, doing and thinking and, beyond such pillars, founded on indigenous and Afro-descendant worldviews

as well as on Western thought, by seeking to overcome the European epistemological imposition to generate new ways of understanding reality, in opposition to the individualism that characterizes much of Western ontology, through a "perseverance", as reported by Escobar (2015):

Perseverance, in the same way, involves resistance, opposition, defense, and affirmation, even with frequency can be described more radically as ontological. In this framework, what 'occupies' is the modern project of Un Mundo that seeks to convert the many existing worlds into a soil; lo que persevera es la aaffirmación de una multiplicidad de mundos. (Escobar, 2015, p. 97).

Spivak (2010, p. 61) argues that "the subject's itinerary was not traced in such a way as to offer an object of seduction to the representative intellectual". In other words, Western intellectuals often ignore the complexity of the subaltern subject, reducing it to a static category that can be easily represented or explained. This approach perpetuates the marginalization of the subalterns, while limiting the ability to develop a genuine critique of colonial structures.

In this way, both Said (1990) and Spivak (2010) contribute to the development of a critical postcolonialism that recognizes the limitations of Western discourse and seeks to promote a more inclusive and authentic representation of colonized cultures and experiences. By criticizing the practices of subordination and objectification, these authors offer tools to deconstruct the colonial legacy and propose new forms of cultural interaction based on mutual respect and the appreciation of diversity.

Postcolonialism, in this sense, is not only a field of criticism, but also a proposal for transformation. By revealing the power dynamics underlying cultural and epistemological representations, it challenges colonial logic and paves the way for a fairer and more equitable understanding of global relations. This approach becomes even more relevant in contemporary times, as colonial hierarchies continue to influence political, economic, and cultural structures on a global scale.

## DECOLONIALITY: GENDER, SUBALTERNITY AND DECOLONIALITY

Decoloniality emerges as a critical and alternative response to the structures and narratives imposed by modernity and coloniality. More than a simple reaction, it proposes an epistemological and practical rupture with the patterns of power that sustain colonial domination, seeking to reconstruct social, political, and cultural relations based on justice, equity, and the plurality of knowledge.



Walter D. Mignolo (2017) defines decoloniality as a movement that questions the underlying logic of colonial modernity, which, while promoting ideas of progress, development, and salvation, justifies the violence and exploitation of colonized peoples. For Mignolo, coloniality is the dark side of modernity, a pattern of power that perpetuates global, epistemological, and cultural hierarchies, even after the official end of colonialism. In this way, decoloniality does not only seek to resist these structures, but to propose alternatives based on the diversity of knowledge and the valorization of subaltern epistemologies.

In this context, decoloniality stands out for its integrative approach, which combines theoretical critique with transformative practices. For Mignolo (2017), decoloniality should not be understood as a new form of universalism, but as an option that transcends Western structures of thought, including those based on modernity and postmodernity. He explains that

[D]here on out, the decolonial option is not only an option of knowledge, an academic option, a domain of "study", but a choice of life, of thinking and doing. That is, to live and coexist with those who think that the decolonial option is their own and with those who have found parallel and complementary options to the decolonial one (Mignolo, 2017, p. 31)

This vision broadens the reach of decoloniality, which is not limited to the theoretical or academic field, but becomes a practice of life, a way of thinking and acting that rejects colonial narratives and hierarchies. Instead of passively resisting, decoloniality proposes the construction of new forms of existence and coexistence that value cultural and epistemological plurality.

Catherine Walsh (2013) complements this approach by emphasizing that decoloniality should not be reduced to a juridical-political event or a mere academic critique. For her, it is a continuous process of reconfiguration of power relations, which challenges colonial structures and proposes a new ethical and political horizon. The author argues that decoloniality should promote pedagogical, social, and cultural practices that rescue the voices silenced by the processes of colonization and coloniality, opening space for a more active and equitable participation of marginalized peoples.

In this sense, decoloniality is also linked to concrete practices of resistance and transformation. Members of the Modernity/Coloniality Group, such as Ramón Grosfoguel and Aníbal Quijano, highlight the importance of academic and social initiatives that promote the decolonization of knowledge and social relations. For example, the meetings

held by the group, such as the conferences in Quito and Berkeley, resulted in fundamental works that consolidate the decolonial critique and expand its application in practical contexts, such as the indigenous and Afro-descendant movements in Latin America.

Moreover, decoloniality challenges not only colonial narratives, but also the way knowledge is produced and validated. The "borderline gnosiology" proposed by Mignolo (2017) is a powerful tool in this sense, as it seeks to shift hegemonic forms of knowledge to a subaltern perspective, promoting the reconfiguration of epistemological hierarchies. This approach is not limited to being a theoretical critique, but aims to create spaces where marginalized knowledge can coexist and interact on equal terms.

Therefore, decoloniality represents a robust and transformative response to the impositions of coloniality. By challenging power structures and the narratives that sustain them, it proposes an alternative that values diversity, justice, and equality, offering a path to building more inclusive and plural societies. More than a critique, decoloniality is a call to action, a proposal to reimagine and restructure the world from perspectives that have been historically silenced.

The debate on gender, subalternity, and decoloniality emerges as a crucial dimension in the critique of colonialism, highlighting how the dynamics of power and oppression have been shaped by the intersections between coloniality and patriarchy. Colonial patriarchy not only marginalized women in colonized contexts, but also subordinated them doubly – as women and as members of dominated peoples. This double oppression is central to understanding how colonialism operated not only through economic exploitation, but also through cultural and gender domination.

Gayatri Spivak (2010), in his seminal work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* analyzes how colonialism and patriarchy collaborated to silence subaltern women. Spivak argues that women from colonial contexts find themselves in a position of extreme marginalization, in which their voices are obliterated by both local patriarchal traditions and the structures of European colonialism. According to the author, the subaltern woman is inserted in a dynamic where gender is "doubly obliterated", that is, even when she participates in resistance movements or struggles for emancipation, her identity and agency remain invisible:

[i]n the context of the obliterated itinerary of the subaltern subject, the path of sexual difference is doubly obliterated. [...] If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern subject has no history and cannot speak, the female subaltern subject is even deeper in obscurity (Spivak, 2010, p. 66-67).

This invisibility reveals how the coloniality of power is not only a matter of economic or political control, but also manifests itself in the ideological construction of gender, perpetuating male domination. Spivak (2010) highlights that colonial patriarchy not only oppresses women, but also shapes their experiences from a Eurocentric perspective, emphasizing local patriarchal traditions and colonial ideologies, erasing their local histories and identities.

Catherine Walsh (2013) points to overcoming the invisibility of women and reinforces the need for pedagogical and epistemological practices that rescue these silenced voices and promote a break with patriarchal and colonial structures. For Walsh, decoloniality should be understood as a continuous process of transformation of power relations, which recognizes the intersectionality of gender, race, and class.

By incorporating the contributions of Spivak (2010) and Walsh (2013), it is perceived that gender, subalternity and decoloniality are deeply interconnected. Decoloniality cannot be fully understood without addressing the specificities of gender oppression in colonial contexts, and the struggle for the emancipation of subaltern women is essential to the design of a more just and equitable society. In this sense, recognizing the voice of subaltern women is a crucial step to dismantle the power structures that sustain coloniality and to build new forms of coexistence based on equity and respect for diversity.

## EDUCATION FROM DECOLONIAL THOUGHT

By broadening the understanding of the decoloniality of being, knowledge and power, it is observed that the three concepts are intertwined in the constitution of the subjects and in their interactions with the environment. In this way, every social process, when thinking about the so-called subaltern spaces of the decolonial logic, is an important field to discuss, to think about and to propose the deconstruction of colonial oppression.

With education it would be no different, since this is a social process that crosses the subject, from his interaction with the world, with others, with the powers and with the constituted knowledge. Thus, it is essential to reflect on the understanding of a decolonial pedagogy in order to confront the colonial logic that is still present in the historical process in Latin America and in other subalternized spaces.

Decolonial pedagogy should be understood as an educational approach based on and rooted in questioning, with the main objective of dismantling colonial structures. Such a process aims to reach, in the specific case of pedagogy, the logic of power and knowledge, which still influence the way educational systems are organized, even in contemporary times.

To confront this logic, decolonial pedagogy emphasizes the valorization and integration of marginalized and subaltern epistemologies and knowledge, proposing an education that recognizes and respects the cultural and historical diversity of different peoples, recognizing multiculturalism as the main guiding thread of any educational proposal that intends to be based on the logic of deconstruction of colonial oppression.

The theoretical foundation of decolonial pedagogy is based on a radical critique of colonialism and its manifestations in education. Aníbal Quijano, Walter Dignolo and Catherine Walsh are some of the names that have contributed significantly to this process, emphasizing the need to recognize and value the epistemologies of the South and the traditional knowledges that have been historically subjugated.

These authors defend the deconstruction of colonial narratives, which insist on the devaluation of local knowledge, presented as "minor" and "exotic", hierarchizing as important in the process of knowledge construction, only that which comes from the norm imposed by the colonizer. For these authors, by decolonizing pedagogy and, consequently, the educational process, it becomes possible to promote an education that emancipates and empowers colonized subjects. Walsh (2009, p. 37-38) proposes a "pedagogical thinking and action based on humanization and decolonization; that is, in re-existing and re-living as processes of re-creation". Along the same lines, Mota Neto (2015) states that:

If decolonial thought denotes the epistemic practices of recognition and transgression of coloniality, which were produced in Latin America and other colonized regions as responses to the situation of domination, we can say that decolonial pedagogy refers to the theories-practices of human formation that enable subaltern groups to fight against the oppressive logic of modernity/coloniality, having as its horizon the formation of a free, loving, fair and solidary human being and society (Mota Neto, 2015, p. 312).

In confronting this colonial domination in educational and cultural processes, Walsh (2009) proposes two strands of decolonial pedagogies. The first, inspired by Fanon, aims at "thinking from" the ontological-existential-racialized condition of the colonized,

addressing the coloniality of power, knowledge and being. This pedagogy promotes self-awareness, action, individual and collective humanization, and liberation (Fanon, 1968).

Walsh (2009) describes the "immobility" of the colonized as a physical and psychological paralysis imposed by the colonial structure, which keeps the colonized in a state of passivity and dependence. To overcome this condition, it is necessary to break with the past of exploitation, ending the practices and narratives of domination, in order to build new identities based on self-determination and the emancipation of the colonized. Thus, education will focus on the total self-consciousness and emancipation of the subjects, with a view to consciously freeing them from colonial domination.

The second strand, "thinking with", involves the construction of pedagogies in relation to other sectors of the population, awakening awareness about the patterns of colonial power still present in contemporary times. This approach seeks to build alliances and dialogues that promote more inclusive and transformative education, raising awareness among all involved about the need to dismantle colonial structures and promote social justice.

Paulo Freire (2011a) complements this perspective by highlighting the pedagogy of the oppressed as a humanist and liberating pedagogy, organized in two distinct moments:

The first, in which the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and commit themselves in praxis, to its transformation; the second, in which, once the oppressive reality is transformed, this pedagogy ceases to be of the oppressed and becomes the pedagogy of men in a process of permanent liberation (Freire, 2011a, p. 57).

From Freire's point of view (2011a), it is vital that man can take possession not only of knowledge, but of the world itself (from a liberating knowledge). With this, it will be able to confront the culture of domination and reject it, understanding the liberation of minds as a constant process of the subject who understood himself as an active part of the world, and not just as an instrument for maintaining a *status quo* of oppression.

Thus, for both decolonial pedagogy and Paulo Freire's theory, there is a need for an educational approach that not only recognizes oppression, but actively acts to dismantle it. With this, it becomes possible to replace colonial myths and ideologies with a new critical and emancipatory consciousness.

To deepen the understanding of decolonial pedagogy, it is relevant to consider Oliveira and Candau's (2013) analysis of the concept of *coloniality of power*, proposed by Quijano (2005), as well as the contributions of Fals Borda (1970; 2015), Freire (2011a)

and Walsh (2009) to the understanding of the role of the subjugated in the deconstruction of this coloniality of power, with a view to proposing a pedagogy, a sociology and a philosophy that is truly libertarian and liberating.

By giving voice to alternative epistemologies, it is recognized how important it is that knowledge from marginalized contexts be discussed, studied, and disseminated. Walsh (2009) points out that, although cultural diversity has become a widely discussed and incorporated theme in public policies, educational and constitutional reforms in Latin America since the 1990s, this process has not always been something positive and, in fact, a movement to confront colonial logic. In general, these changes served only to consolidate colonial structures, under the mask of progress and modernity. For her, therefore, a critical analysis of the contemporary conjuncture is necessary, from the lens of the "colony

In this sense, Walsh (2009) criticizes neoliberal multiculturalism and functional interculturality, arguing that, instead of promoting true inclusion and appreciation of cultural diversity, these concepts are often used as tools of social control. For Walsh, there is a clear distinction between critical interculturality and functional interculturality; and it is this distinction that will unveil to what extent cultural and social processes, such as education, will or will not be committed to a decolonial logic.

Functional *interculturality* proposes a more superficial approach, which recognizes cultural diversity but does not address the roots of structural inequalities. It is understood that there is diversity, but there is a deliberate silencing of the structure that promotes inequalities; This is the typical case, in Brazilian culture, of the myth of the "cordial Brazilian", for example. This logic of interculturality maintains an appearance of inclusion and progress, but does not promote revolutionary and profound changes in power relations (Walsh, 2009). It offers the appearance of inclusion and respect for diversity, without actually challenging or transforming the foundations of colonial power.

A critical interculturality *perspective, on the other hand*, proposes a transformative approach, which challenges existing power structures and seeks true inclusion and equity. It is based on the needs and perspectives of historically marginalized populations, bringing to the center of the debate their knowledge, always marginalized, their bodies, their local histories (Walsh, 2009).

Understanding the distinction between the two approaches: functional interculturality that aligns with the interests of social institutions and serves to perpetuate



the *status quo* and critical interculturality that emerges as a force of resistance and transformation makes it possible to break the logic of oppression and subjugation of the colonial perspective. For an eminently decolonial pedagogy, critical interculturality is one of the bases. In this same perspective, Paulo Freire opposes *pedagogy based on humanist principles* to *pedagogy based on humanitarian principles*:

[t]he pedagogy of the oppressed, which seeks the restoration of intersubjectivity, presents itself as a pedagogy of Man. Only the Church, which is animated by authentic, humanistic and not "humanitarian" generosity, can achieve this goal. On the contrary, the pedagogy that, starting from the selfish interests of the oppressors selfishness camouflaged by false generosity, makes the oppressed objects of its humanitarianism, maintains and embodies oppression itself. It is an instrument of dehumanization (Freire, 2011a, p. 56).

Just as *Walsh's (2009) critical interculturality challenges and seeks to transform oppressive power structures*, *Freire's (2011a) humanist pedagogy* seeks a true liberation and humanization of the oppressed. It is observed that, in both approaches, there is criticism of practices that try to mask the perpetuation of inequality and oppression on grounds of apparent generosity or inclusion.

By the critical (Walsh) and humanist (Freire) approaches, it is not enough (or honest) that there is only an appearance of liberation, without a critical analysis with the identification of the causes of oppression and the consequent dismantling of the structures of social injustice. Through these two approaches, there is a need for a deep and authentic transformation, based on valuing the experiences and knowledge of historically marginalized and subjugated individuals and cultures. For Fals Borda (2015), scientific commitment-action leads not only to the accumulation of knowledge, but, above all, to its enrichment, renewal and revitalization, including for the popular classes, in the valorization of the knowledge of subjugated subjects, which now become an active and fundamental part of the production of this knowledge. This is the responsibility of scientists to the world and history:

There is a result of decision, labor and creativity in the present historical stage. It is a study that leads to combining scientific rigor with participation in the historical process, to achieve an autonomous intellectual posture, even though it can carry persecutions and momentary incomprehensions. To try to result in these commitments, it is not only a more respectable, firm and good social science, with a clearer definition of the Latin American crisis, but also an effective exchange policy that leads to a society superior to the existing one (Fals Borba, 2015, p. 252).

From the understanding of the decoloniality of power and how this logic of power can be dismantled in cultural and social structures (such as education), it is possible – and necessary – to propose a pedagogy fully supported by the decolonial logic. According to Oliveira and Candau (2013), Walsh develops, based on this theoretical construction, the notion of *decolonial pedagogy* as

A praxis that is based on a purposeful educational insurgency – therefore, not only denunciative – in which the term insurrectionary means the creation and construction of new social, political, cultural and thought conditions. In other words, the construction of a pedagogical notion and vision that received more than a teaching and transmission of knowledge processes, and that conciben pedagogy as a cultural policy (Oliveira; Candau, 2013, p. 291).

In dialogue with the author's reflections, it is highlighted that Walsh seeks to establish a link between decolonial theory and pedagogical practice, aiming to contribute to a deeper understanding of this interconnection. It discusses two complementary and transformative pedagogical approaches, inspired by the thoughts of Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon. The author points out that the pedagogies of both "bring paths to critically read the world and intervene in the reinvention of society, as Freire apuntó, but pedagogues that at the time enliven the absolute disorder of decolonization contributing a new humanity (Walsh, 2013, p. 31).

Walsh (2013) shows that, although they start from different points – pedagogical for Freire; Colonial for Fanon – both thinkers converge on the importance of humanization and liberation. Freire provides a practical pedagogical basis for awareness and action, while Fanon offers a political and existential vision of decolonization as radical transformation. Fanon describes and narrates the situation of colonization, promoting and revealing the anti- and decolonial struggle. Together, they provide essential theoretical and practical foundations for understanding and implementing processes of decolonization, liberation, and humanization.

Fals Borba (2015) complements Walsh's vision and shows the importance of Freire's work: a proposal for modern dialogicity. This proposal began in Brazil, with Paulo Freire, and brought the idea of giving voice to those who were silenced, encouraging the pluralistic expression of diverse, sometimes discordant voices. This principle has become a study and action orientation for influential sociologists from countries such as Canada, with Budd Hall, and the Netherlands, with Jan de Vries, among many others, also influencing a global movement for the renewal of adult education.

In Freire's early writings, such as "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," the emphasis is on critical awareness and the liberation of the oppressed through education. Freire considers humanization central to both education and liberation. His pedagogy aims to restore the humanity of the oppressed through critical awareness. Freire's pedagogy aims, therefore, to unveil the oppressive reality and enable the oppressed to transform it through praxis – the union of reflection with action. In this way, "[t]he authentic liberation, which is humanization in process, is not something that is deposited in men. It is not one more, hollow, mythologizing word. It is praxis, which implies the action and reflection of men on the world to transform it" (Freire, 2011a, p. 93).

Although Freire, in his pedagogy – and throughout his career as a writer – gave real emphasis to critical awareness, humanization and the liberating practice of the oppressed, it was only in the years before his death (and in the works of this period, therefore) that he dealt directly with the racial question.

Freire's analysis of colonialist ideology reveals how education was used as a tool of oppression and dehumanization. By disregarding and marginalizing local cultures, colonialist education sought to perpetuate the domination and inferiorization of the colonized. For Freire, the colonialist ideology sought to instill in children and young people the profile that those ideologies made of them. "That of inferior, incapable beings, whose only salvation would be to become 'white' or 'black with a white soul'" (Freire, 1978, p. 15). For this reason, the colonial school necessarily disregarded everything that was relevant to the nationals, pejoratively labeling them as "natives".

Paulo Freire (2011b), in "Pedagogy of autonomy", emphasizes that the human presence in the world is active and transformative, emphasizing the importance of critical awareness and political action in the search for a more just society. Even in the face of challenges and situations of dehumanization, it is essential to maintain hope and continuously work to transform reality. The author inspires the detachment from historical determinism and encourages the search for possibilities that promote a dignified and decent life, emphasizing that the future is problematic and not inexorable.

In this search for transformation, Fals Borba (2015) emphasizes that, in order for Latin Americans to understand their identity and destiny, they must continue to build, with all available resources, a strategy and actions capable of establishing a more just and promising society. To this end, the author adds that the current questioning (beyond the socioeconomic change, or about its stages of growth and self-sustainability, since these

efforts resulted in an ambiguous and directionless development) resides in the sphere of social and moral values: "how to define the quality of the change we want and in what direction we want it to advance" (Fals Borba, 2015, p. 418).

Freire (2011b) understands that the construction of a just and egalitarian society is achieved in educational practice, which in addition to being essentially ethical and humane, is a manifestation of this possibility of social transformation. Ethics becomes, then, a fundamental construct for the construction of human relations based on justice, respect and solidarity. According to the author, the prejudiced practice of race, class and gender offends the essence of the human being and profoundly denies democracy.

In this sense, an eminently decolonial pedagogy is based, in addition to the questioning and dismantling of the structures of colonial domination and oppression, the construction of values based on ethics, something totally in opposition to colonial power, since it is based on relations that disrespect ethics, social justice and human dignity in their most cherished manifestations. For the author, "any discrimination is immoral and fighting against it is a duty no matter how much one recognizes the strength of the conditioning to be faced" (Freire, 2011b, p. 59), whether they are whiteness/blackness, men/women, bosses/employees

Freire complements and enriches the field of decolonial pedagogy, proposed by Fanon, offering an approach that integrates the critique of coloniality (theorized by Fanon) with the perspective of educational emancipation as a presupposition for the constitution of a truly human and ethical subject.

Fanon (1968) interprets decolonization as a disruptive and radical process, necessary to transform the world order established by colonialism. He emphasizes that change requires a transformation not only politically, but also of social and economic structures. For Fanon (1968, p.26) "[t]he decolonization, which proposes to change the order of the world, is, it is seen, a program of absolute disorder". In this sense, decolonization has a transformative power that not only liberates, but also redefines the identity of the colonized, creating "new men".

Fals Borba (2015), in turn, states that the fundamental factors of transformation are not, in essence, of a material nature; they attain the realm of the moral and the spiritual. In order to achieve political self-determination and intellectual self-realization, which allow us to articulate as a whole before the world, it is necessary to form a new Latin American man and points out the risks of a path often adopted by Latin American peoples: intellectual

mimicry. He argues that by imitating or validating the ideas and concepts of other cultures without questioning them, one misses the opportunity to build an authentic identity and to promote true intellectual autonomy:

Nada más fácil para nosotros que seguir la vía del mimicry intelectual. But nothing is also more dangerous for our identity and survival as a pueblo. We believe that we have won the universal respect by repeating the scientific confirmation of what is said to the maestros of other latitudes; in reality we do not win the tolerant and paternal sonrisa of those who make the imposition of the rules of scientific play, in its own way (Fals Borba, 1970, p. 18).

The struggle for liberation, according to Fanon, not only regains sovereignty, but also remakes the cultural meaning of the colonized people: "[t]he liberation struggle does not restore to the national culture its value and its ancient contours" (Fanon, 1968, p. 205). True decolonization, therefore, eliminates the colonizer and the colonized, promoting a restructuring of the identity and culture of the colonized peoples.

Fanon argues that colonial oppression is based on racial alienation, in which blacks are led to see whiteness as an ideal of humanity. He observes that "blacks want to be white" due to the colonial imposition that transforms whiteness into the standard of value (Fanon, 2008, p. 27). This desire is a form of internalization of racial inferiority, in which blacks seek to adapt to the cultural and behavioral patterns of whites.

This dynamic is intertwined with the analysis of Paulo Freire, who observes that, when education does not have a liberating character, the oppressed tend to aspire to the position of oppressor (Freire, 2011a). Fanon, therefore, emphasizes the importance of a decolonization process that humanizes both sides, promoting a society that values diversity and builds an ethic of true equality and freedom.

Paulo Freire, Frantz Fanon, and Orlando Fals Borda are central figures in the construction of a decolonial pedagogy, each bringing an approach that, together, strengthens an education committed to emancipation and social justice.

Freire, with his "pedagogy of the oppressed", highlights the importance of an education that promotes the critical awareness of the subjects, allowing them to recognize and transform the structures of oppression. For the author, educational practice should be a process of dialogicity and active participation, humanizing those involved and enabling them to Freire sees education as a means of liberation, in which the oppressed cease to be mere passive recipients of knowledge and become protagonists of their own history, breaking with the logic of oppression.

On the other hand, Fanon and Fals Borda expand this perspective by addressing, respectively, decolonization as an existential and political process, and the methodology of participatory action research (IAP) as a basis for emancipatory knowledge. Fanon argues that decolonization is not only a political struggle, but also a rehumanization, where the colonized break with the imposed inferiority and reconstruct their identity.

Fals Borda, in turn, proposes a research practice that integrates academic knowledge with popular knowledge, allowing marginalized communities to actively participate in the production of knowledge. With his "sociology of liberation", he values local knowledge, proposing a break with intellectual colonialism and strengthening the autonomy of communities.

Together, these thinkers offer a decolonial pedagogy that unites theory and practice, empowering the oppressed to enhance a more just and plural society, based on their knowledge and their own reality, deconstructing the process of mimicking the culture of the oppressor.

## CONCLUSION

The discussions presented in this article highlight the centrality of coloniality as a pattern of power that permeates several dimensions of social, political, cultural, and epistemological life. From the imposition of structures of domination during colonization to the lasting impacts on modernity, coloniality has been shown to be a dynamic and complex process that affects both the colonized and the colonizers, eroding the moral and cultural foundations of the societies involved.

On the other hand, the movements of criticism and resistance to this colonial logic point to the urgent need to decolonize inherited knowledge, power relations, and systems of oppression. Postcolonialism and decoloniality emerge as forceful responses, offering alternative paths that challenge hegemonic narratives and promote the inclusion of subaltern voices, especially those of women and other marginalized groups. By incorporating the analyses of authors such as Aimé Césaire, Catherine Walsh, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Maldonado-Torres, Quijano and Walter Dignolo, this work showed how the critique of coloniality and the promotion of decoloniality are fundamental for the construction of a more just, plural and emancipated society. The recognition of the coloniality of gender, race, and geographic and cultural location, added to the valorization of alternative and subaltern epistemologies, reinforces the need to revisit and deconstruct



the colonial structures that still persist, also in education. These are challenges to overcome: Eurocentric hegemony in curricula, recognizing and valuing local and indigenous knowledge, recognizing language as an instrument of domination, and deconstructing decolonial historical narratives, especially in teacher training and the use of technologies

The struggle for decolonization is not just academic or theoretical; It is a practice that requires the transformation of social, cultural and political relations, rescuing the human potential for coexistence, justice and solidarity. Thus, decoloniality presents itself not only as a theoretical option, but as an ethical and practical alternative to reimagine and reconstruct the world in a more equitable and inclusive way.

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