


**DECOLONIAL – INSURGENT KNOWLEDGES OF THE "GLOBAL SOUTH" AND  
THE DECOLONIAL TURN AS A HORIZON FOR THE CRITICAL  
TRANSFORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION**

**SABERES DECOLONIAIS – INSURGENTES DO "SUL GLOBAL" E A VIRADA  
DECOLONIAL COMO HORIZONTE PARA A TRANSFORMAÇÃO CRÍTICA DA  
EDUCAÇÃO CONTEMPORÂNEA**

**DECOLONIAL – CONOCIMIENTOS INSURGENTES DEL SUR GLOBAL Y EL  
GIRO DECOLONIAL COMO HORIZONTE PARA LA TRANSFORMACIÓN  
CRÍTICA DE LA EDUCACIÓN CONTEMPORÁNEA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In a world profoundly marked by epistemic hierarchies inherited from the coloniality of power, education has historically been one of the main instruments for maintaining inequalities. That is, more than just transmitting content, the educational system, in many parts of the globe, has reproduced Eurocentric worldviews, silencing knowledge, practices and experiences from the peoples of the global South. In other words, the modern Western school, with its standardized curricula and its universalist logic, often operates as an

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apparatus for the erasure of epistemologies that are born of the body, territory, orality, and resistance. Thus, it is essential to observe that insurgent knowledge, forged in popular struggles, ancestral spiritualities, social movements and peripheral territories, emerge as powerful forces for the reexistence and reconfiguration of educational practice. Thus, this article has as its object of investigation the processes of epistemic insurgency carried out by subjects from the global South who, by challenging the monopoly of Western knowledge, build educational practices based on critical interculturality and epistemic disobedience. In order to analyze how these practices are articulated with the decolonial turn in education, we seek to understand to what extent they offer real horizons for the critical transformation of the contemporary school. In this context, the research is guided by the following starting question: how can the insurgent knowledges of the global South, articulated with the decolonial turn, contribute to the reconstruction of a critical, plural education committed to overcoming the colonial hierarchies of knowledge? For this, we used as theoretical repertoire the works of Antunes (2009; 2021), Althusser (1970), Bessa Freire (2011), Dussel (2000; 2009), Escobar (2014; 2018), Fanon (2008; 2022), Frigotto (2001; 2010), Freire (1968; 1971), hooks (2013; 2015), Laval (2019), Laval and Dardot (2016), Mignolo (2006; 2010; 2012), Quijano (1992; 2000; 2002; 2020), Santos (2013; 2017), Simpson (2017), Smith (2007), Smith, Tuck and Yang (2019), Walsh (2013; 2019), among others. The research is qualitative (Minayo, 2007), descriptive and bibliographic (Gil, 2008) and with a comprehensive analytical bias (Weber, 1949). The findings indicate that insurgent knowledge has promoted ruptures with the monoculture of knowledge, repositioning the school as a territory of epistemic crossroads. Critical interculturality emerges as a tool for transformation, resignifying curricula, pedagogical practices and teacher training itself. Valuing the body, spirituality, orality and territory is essential for the reconstruction of fairer educational bonds. The decolonial turn, articulated with the reexistence of oppressed peoples, offers the basis for an ecology of knowledge that affirms epistemic pluralism. It can be seen, therefore, that decolonial education is not a complement to the current model, but an alternative project of the world.

**Keywords:** Decolonial Education. Insurgent Epistemologies. Critical Interculturality. Reexistence.

## RESUMO

Em um mundo profundamente marcado por hierarquias epistêmicas herdadas da colonialidade do poder, a educação tem sido historicamente um dos principais instrumentos de manutenção das desigualdades. Ou seja, mais do que apenas transmitir conteúdos, o sistema educacional, em muitas partes do globo, tem reproduzido visões de mundo eurocêntricas, silenciando saberes, práticas e experiências dos povos do Sul global. Em outras palavras, a escola moderna ocidental, com seus currículos padronizados e sua lógica universalista, opera frequentemente como um aparato de apagamento de epistemologias que nascem do corpo, do território, da oralidade e da resistência. Assim, é fundamental observar que saberes insurgentes, forjados em lutas populares, espiritualidades ancestrais, movimentos sociais e territórios periféricos, emergem como forças potentes de reexistência e reconfiguração da prática educativa. Assim, este artigo tem como objeto de investigação os processos de insurgência epistêmica protagonizados por sujeitos do Sul global que, ao desafiarem o monopólio do conhecimento ocidental, constroem práticas educacionais pautadas na interculturalidade crítica e na desobediência epistêmica. A fim de analisar como essas práticas se articulam com a virada decolonial na educação, buscamos compreender em que medida elas oferecem horizontes reais para a

transformação crítica da escola contemporânea. Nesse contexto, a pesquisa se orienta pela seguinte questão de partida: como os saberes insurgentes do Sul global, articulados com a virada decolonial, podem contribuir para a reconstrução de uma educação crítica, plural e comprometida com a superação das hierarquias coloniais de saberes? Para isso, utilizamos como repertório teórico as obras de Antunes (2009; 2021), Althusser (1970), Bessa Freire (2011), Dussel (2000; 2009), Escobar (2014; 2018), Fanon (2008; 2022), Frigotto (2001; 2010), Freire (1968; 1971), hooks (2013; 2015), Laval (2019), Laval e Dardot (2016), Mignolo (2006; 2010; 2012), Quijano (1992; 2000; 2002; 2020), Santos (2013; 2017), Simpson (2017), Smith (2007), Smith, Tuck e Yang (2019), Walsh (2013; 2019), entre outros. A pesquisa é qualitativa (Minayo, 2007), descritiva e bibliográfica (Gil, 2008) e com viés analítico compreensivo (Weber, 1949). Os achados indicam que o conhecimento insurgente tem promovido rupturas com a monocultura do conhecimento, reposicionando a escola como território de encruzilhadas epistêmicas. A interculturalidade crítica emerge como ferramenta de transformação, ressignificando currículos, práticas pedagógicas e a própria formação de professores. Valorizar o corpo, a espiritualidade, a oralidade e o território é essencial para a reconstrução de vínculos educativos mais justos. A virada decolonial, articulada à reexistência dos povos oprimidos, oferece as bases para uma ecologia de saberes que afirma o pluralismo epistêmico. Percebe-se, portanto, que a educação decolonial não é um complemento ao modelo vigente, mas um projeto alternativo de mundo.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Decolonial. Epistemologias Insurgentes. Interculturalidade Crítica. Reexistência.

## RESUMEN

En un mundo profundamente marcado por las jerarquías epistémicas heredadas de la colonialidad del poder, la educación ha sido históricamente uno de los principales instrumentos para mantener las desigualdades. Es decir, más que simplemente transmitir contenidos, el sistema educativo, en muchas partes del mundo, ha reproducido cosmovisiones eurocéntricas, silenciando los conocimientos, las prácticas y las experiencias de los pueblos del Sur global. En otras palabras, la escuela occidental moderna, con sus currículos estandarizados y su lógica universalista, a menudo opera como un mecanismo para la supresión de las epistemologías que nacen del cuerpo, el territorio, la oralidad y la resistencia. Por lo tanto, es esencial observar que los saberes insurgentes, forjados en las luchas populares, las espiritualidades ancestrales, los movimientos sociales y los territorios periféricos, emergen como poderosas fuerzas para la reexistencia y la reconfiguración de la práctica educativa. Así, este artículo investiga los procesos de insurgencia epistémica protagonizados por sujetos del Sur global que, al desafiar el monopolio del conocimiento occidental, construyen prácticas educativas basadas en la interculturalidad crítica y la desobediencia epistémica. Para analizar cómo estas prácticas se articulan con el giro decolonial en la educación, buscamos comprender en qué medida ofrecen horizontes reales para la transformación crítica de la escuela contemporánea. En este contexto, la investigación se guía por la siguiente pregunta inicial: ¿cómo pueden los saberes insurgentes del Sur global, articulados con el giro decolonial, contribuir a la reconstrucción de una educación crítica y plural, comprometida con la superación de las jerarquías coloniales del conocimiento? Para ello, utilizamos como repertorio teórico los trabajos de Antunes (2009; 2021), Althusser (1970), Bessa Freire (2011), Dussel (2000; 2009), Escobar (2014; 2018), Fanon (2008; 2022), Frigotto (2001; 2010), Freire (1968; 1971), Hooks (2013; 2015), Laval (2019), Laval y Dardot (2016),

Mignolo (2006; 2010; 2012), Quijano (1992; 2000; 2002; 2020), Santos (2013; 2017), Simpson (2017), Smith (2007), Smith, Tuck y Yang (2019), Walsh (2013; 2019), entre otros. La investigación es cualitativa (Minayo, 2007), descriptiva y bibliográfica (Gil, 2008) y con un enfoque analítico comprensivo (Weber, 1949). Los hallazgos indican que el conocimiento insurgente ha promovido rupturas con la monocultura del conocimiento, reposicionando la escuela como un territorio de encrucijadas epistémicas. La interculturalidad crítica emerge como una herramienta de transformación, resignificando los currículos, las prácticas pedagógicas y la propia formación docente. Valorar el cuerpo, la espiritualidad, la oralidad y el territorio es esencial para la reconstrucción de vínculos educativos más justos. El giro decolonial, articulado con la reexistencia de los pueblos oprimidos, sienta las bases para una ecología de saberes que afirma el pluralismo epistémico. Se observa, por lo tanto, que la educación decolonial no es un complemento del modelo actual, sino un proyecto alternativo de mundo.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Decolonial. Epistemologías Insurgentes. Interculturalidad crítica. Reexistencia.

## **BETWEEN COLONIALITY AND INSURGENCY: EDUCATION AS A TERRITORY OF EPISTEMIC DISPUTE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH – INTRODUCING**

In a complementary way, in the effort to transform contemporary education, it is crucial to resume the historical origins of coloniality and its penetration into school devices. The Western school structure was consolidated not as a neutral space for the transmission of knowledge, but as an ideological machine committed to the production of cultural homogeneity and the imposition of a European civilizational standard. Thus, the school became, in the colonial period, an instrument for the erasure of the languages, beliefs and cosmologies of the native and African peoples, serving the project of formation of the submissive and docile colonial subject. This logic still permeates the forms of evaluation, the syllabus and the curricular architecture. As Quijano describes, "[...] the coloniality of power consisted in the imposition of a world social classification, which remained beyond colonialism as the dominant mode of control" (1992, p. 14). In the same vein, Mignolo states that "[...] the modern system of knowledge is embedded in the rhetoric of modernity, which conceals its colonial logic" (2010, p. 19), revealing that the foundations of the modern school are inseparable from the gears of colonialism.

The rhetoric of modernity, which includes ideas such as progress, development, and civilization, is inseparably linked to the logic of coloniality. Modernity cannot be understood without coloniality, because one supports the other. Modern education was conceived as a tool to consolidate Eurocentric knowledge, erasing or disqualifying epistemologies that do not align with the Western standard. In this sense, the modern civilizing project is not only economic and political, but epistemic, and the school is its main device of inculcation and reproduction (Mignolo, 2008, p. 10).

It is essential to observe carefully that, although direct colonial practices have been formally overcome, the structures of knowledge and power that sustained them persist under new guises in the educational field. The naturalization of European canons, the absence of subordinate voices in textbooks, and the valorization of scientific knowledge to the detriment of popular and ancestral epistemologies reveal how much colonialism still echoes in schools. It is a renewed coloniality, disguised as "modernization" and "quality improvement". As Linda Tuhiwai Smith states: "[...] Western research has been a tool of colonization, used to exploit, marginalize, and dehumanize" (2007, p. 2). Boaventura de Sousa Santos reinforces this understanding by stating that "[...] modernity has produced an abyss between valid knowledge and silenced knowledge, establishing an abyssal line that defines who can know" (2013, p. 47). As a result, the school becomes an accomplice in epistemic exclusion and the reproduction of inequality.



Thus, in the current educational panorama, the colonial logic is manifested in the centrality of Eurocentric reason<sup>17</sup>, which presents itself as universal and superior, delegitimizing forms of knowledge that do not fit into this model. The school experience is still marked by patterns of racial, linguistic and cultural normality that reinforce white and Western hegemony. Afro-indigenous cultures are approached as folklore or as an exception, rarely as a legitimate source of knowledge. Catherine Walsh points out that "[...] the coloniality of knowledge is one of the deepest expressions of the domination that endures in education" (2019, p. 75), denouncing that the school operates as a maintainer of colonial hierarchies<sup>18</sup>. Arturo Escobar, when addressing the mechanisms of knowledge reproduction, points out: "[...] the epistemic structures of colonial modernity continue to operate in the ways of thinking and designing the world" (2018, p. 25), which requires deep ruptures in pedagogical projects.

Thus, when we think about rupture, it is inevitable to recognize that the "coloniality of knowledge" is intertwined with the "coloniality of power", forming a mesh that structures both school relations and the content taught. The school has acted, since its origin, as one of the main ideological apparatuses of the State, normalizing conducts and defining what should be known, said and remembered. Cultural hegemony<sup>19</sup> is reproduced through what

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<sup>17</sup> The colonial logic is manifested, in a structural way, in the centrality of Eurocentric reason, which has historically imposed itself as a universal criterion for the validation of knowledge. This rationality, based on the split between body and mind, nature and culture, orality and writing, operated as an instrument of exclusion and silencing of knowledge that is not aligned with modern Western epistemology. In the educational field, this logic has shaped curricula, methods, and assessments based on a monocultural paradigm, fragmenting knowledge and delegitimizing ancestral, community, and territorial practices. In contrast, decolonial education proposes a break with this epistemic hegemony, by affirming the validity of other forms of knowledge, such as those arising from orality, spirituality, bodily experience and the relationship with the territory. It is a pedagogical project that aims not only to include the other, but to reconstruct the very foundation of what is meant by legitimate knowledge, making room for an ecology of knowledge that challenges the coloniality of power and knowledge. See: MIGNOLO, Walter D. *The idea of Latin America*. São Paulo: UNESP, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The school, as historically instituted within the framework of Western modernity, operates as one of the main maintainers of colonial hierarchies by reproducing, in a veiled or explicit way, the logic of European epistemic superiority. Through homogeneous curricula, the centrality of written language, the exaltation of Western science and the invisibilization of Afro-indigenous knowledge, the school legitimizes a single way of knowing and being in the world. This educational model, by standardizing behaviors, languages and cultural references, transforms difference into a deficit and continuously reaffirms the coloniality of knowledge. Instead of breaking with the structures of domination, the school often functions as an apparatus of domestication, adapting the subalternized subjects to the dominant rationality. It is in this sense that the decolonial critique points to the need for a radical break with this logic, proposing a school that not only recognizes diversity, but is built from it. See: QUIJANO, Aníbal. *Coloniality of power, Eurocentrism and Latin America*. In: LANDER, Edgardo (Org.). *The coloniality of knowledge: Eurocentrism and social sciences*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2005. p. 117-142.

<sup>19</sup> Cultural hegemony, as a mechanism for the symbolic imposition of a dominant worldview, acts as a silent force for the naturalization of epistemic and social inequalities. According to Gramsci, hegemony is not sustained only by coercion, but above all by the active consent of the subaltern classes, shaped by institutions such as the school, the media and the churches. In the educational field, this hegemony is manifested by the centralization of Eurocentric narratives, the universalization of Western values, and the marginalization of

is taught, the way it is taught, and the bodies authorized to teach. Althusser reveals: "[...] the ideological apparatuses of the State function through ideology, and the school occupies a central position in this process" (1970, p. 116). Fanon, in turn, argues that "[...] colonization is, above all, a cultural operation, an imposition of an existential model that dehumanizes the other" (2008, p. 129), with the school being the privileged space of this operation.

[...] The modern school, since its institutionalization, was conceived to form docile and disciplined subjectivities, able to serve the dominant order. The knowledge taught in it has never been neutral: it is part of a historical project of cultural homogenization, based on the denial of the epistemologies of colonized peoples. The school curriculum is, therefore, a social and political construction that operates according to the logic of exclusion, transforming diversity into a deficit and difference into backwardness. Epistemicide begins when it is taught that there is only one valid way of knowing, and that all others need to be corrected, overcome or forgotten (Santos, 2014, p. 73).

In view of this, considering the multiple impacts of colonality on school education, the emergence of the decolonial turn represents a fundamental paradigmatic inflection. It is a theoretical-political movement that displaces the centers of enunciation and makes historically invisible knowledge visible, proposing a reorientation of thought from the margin. The decolonial turn seeks to dismantle the belief in the neutrality of modern knowledge and make room for forms of knowledge based on experience, orality, ancestry, and the relationship with the land. Quijano maintains that "[...] globalization is the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of America and colonial/modern Eurocentric capitalism" (2000, p. 201). Mignolo adds that "[...] the decolonial turn is an option to disobey the Western canon and reexist from other places of enunciation" (2012, p. 12), opening gaps for new possibilities of existence and knowledge.

In order to deeply understand the scope of these transformations, it is necessary to value the contributions of thinkers from the global South<sup>20</sup>, who broke with the logic of

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popular, indigenous, and Afro-descendant knowledge. In response to this scenario, decolonial education proposes a counter-hegemonic pedagogy, which aims to destabilize normative discourses and establish an educational project based on epistemic plurality, listening to silenced subjects, and valuing ancestral worldviews. By breaking with the monocultural logic, decolonial education inaugurates a space for insurgency and reconstruction of knowledge from the margins. See: GRAMSCI, Antonio. *Prison notebooks: volume 2 – Notebooks 1 and 2*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Thinkers from the global South have played a key role in critiquing the colonial structures that still shape knowledge, culture, and politics in the contemporary world. By claiming other ways of thinking, feeling, and knowing, these intellectuals break with the epistemic monopoly of the global North and propose plural horizons of existence. Authors such as Aníbal Quijano, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Catherine Walsh, Walter Dignolo, Enrique Dussel, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Arturo Escobar, among others, denounce the colonality of power, knowledge and being, while at the same time constructing theoretical and political proposals based on interculturality, cognitive justice and the ecology of knowledge. Their contributions not only rescue the dignity of subalternized knowledge, but also expand the milestones of global critical theory, by



epistemic submission and pointed out insurgent alternatives. These authors propose not only a critique, but also the construction of a new ethical-epistemic horizon, based on diversity, reciprocity and plurality of knowledge. As Smith, Tuck and Yang state, "[...] decolonization requires the dismantling of the dominant epistemology that excludes indigenous and racialized peoples" (2019, p. 10). And Walsh adds that "[...] it is not a matter of including the other in the same system, but of destabilizing the logic that inferiorizes him" (2013, p. 41), pointing to a structural change in the educational field.

For example, in everyday pedagogical practices, the critique of Eurocentrism is concretized in the adoption of approaches that break with the monoculture of knowledge and promote intercultural dialogue, respect for original cosmologies and the recognition of territories of knowledge. Criticism is not a gesture of denial, but a proposition of possible worlds. Boaventura de Sousa Santos states that "[...] hegemonic thinking was constituted through the monoculture of knowledge and the abyssal line that separates valid knowledge from neglected knowledge" (2017, p. 40). Escobar points out that "[...] Eurocentrism is not just a point of view, but a way of ordering the world" (2014, p. 88), which requires a profound review of the pedagogical matrices that sustain the school curriculum.

[...] The decolonization of thought requires more than the critique of Eurocentrism; it requires the active recovery of the lifeworlds of subalternized peoples. This includes the ways in which these peoples relate to the territory, to the collectivity and to spirituality. Knowledge is not separated from life, but imbricated in the fabrics of everyday existence, being transmitted through orality, celebration and struggle. Breaking with single thinking implies making room for these other epistemologies and recognizing that the curriculum, as we know it, is only one of the many possible ways of organizing knowledge<sup>21</sup> (Escobar, 2018, p. 119).

Therefore, in the face of the advance of contemporary criticisms, it becomes evident that decolonial education is an urgent and unavoidable theme for the Brazilian and Latin American educational debate. The decolonial proposal dialogues with the demands for cognitive justice, for the recognition of difference, and for the structural transformation of learning spaces. Leanne Simpson points out that "[...] Our land is a pedagogical space – it teaches us patience, reciprocity and humility" (2017, p. 67), valuing the territory as an instance of formation. Paulo Freire, in turn, reminds us that "[...] no one educates anyone,

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including historically silenced voices in the production of knowledge. See: SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. *The end of the cognitive empire: the affirmation of the epistemologies of the South*. Belo Horizonte: Autentica, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Our translation.

no one educates himself, men educate themselves in communion" (1968, p. 52), reinforcing the collective and dialogical character of knowledge.

That is, when one analyzes in detail the curricula, methodologies and school epistemologies, it is found that a conception of teaching centered on the vertical transmission of knowledge and the objectification of the student still predominates. It is urgent, therefore, to rethink pedagogical practice, reorienting it based on values such as dialogue, active listening and horizontality. Dussel states that "[...] modernity hides the existence of the other, denying him a place in history and memory" (2000, p. 47). Fanon, in turn, warns that "[...] the colonized culture is a culture of resistance, which insists on existing despite oppression" (2022, p. 78), indicating that reexistence necessarily passes through the school.

In addition, as one critically observes the educational field, it is perceived that the object of this research resides precisely in the tension between the colonial rationality, which organizes the modern school, and the insurgent knowledge of the South, which claims space and recognition. It is an epistemic dispute that manifests itself in each curricular choice, in each narrative authorized or silenced. Catherine Walsh points out that "[...] the global South is a place of critical enunciation, where knowledge emerges from struggles and resistances" (2019, p. 79). Quijano corroborates by stating that "[...] the coloniality of power is the hidden face of modernity that still determines our ways of thinking" (2020, p. 861).

[...] The colonial difference is not a thing, it is a place. It is the locus of enunciation of knowledge that has been and continues to be silenced by the rhetoric of modernity. Colonial difference is not a given, but a constant confrontation with epistemic injustice. From this locus, epistemic disobedience emerges as a political and pedagogical act of disengagement. Detaching oneself from the canon of Western thought is not a rejection of knowledge, but an affirmation of other forms of knowledge that spring from colonial wounds and their resistance<sup>22</sup> (Mignolo, 2012, p. 122).

Therefore, in view of the urgency that is imposed, the general objective of this research is to analyze how decolonial education can critically transform school paradigms. Its specific objectives include understanding the decolonial turn, highlighting insurgent epistemologies and proposing critical alternatives to the dominant model. Mignolo summarizes: "[...] the decolonial turn is a response to the epistemic arrogance of the West" (2006, p. 72). Boaventura de Sousa Santos reinforces: "[...] the task of the epistemologies

<sup>22</sup> Our translation.

of the South is to broaden the field of the thinkable and the sayable, allowing new forms of intelligibility of the world" (2013, p. 69).

It is important to highlight, above all, that the question that guides this work – how can decolonial education affirm the insurgent knowledges of the global South as a horizon for the critical transformation of contemporary education? – is, at the same time, theoretical and political. It is a matter of questioning the foundations of the modern school and proposing new pedagogical grammars. Hooks writes: "[...] teaching is an act of resistance, an affirmation of freedom and the possibility of reinvention" (2013, p. 23). Smith concludes that "[...] to research from the indigenous place is to challenge the very foundations of Western academia" (2007, p. 125), reaffirming the role of education as a territory of insurgency.

## **METHODOLOGICAL PATHS FOR A CRITICAL AND PLURAL INVESTIGATION: UNDERSTANDING THE DECOLONIAL TURN IN EDUCATION**

The research developed in this article was based on the conviction that understanding education as a social phenomenon required not only the analysis of its structures, but the immersion in its symbolic, historical and territorial dimensions. Thus, a qualitative approach was chosen, as proposed by Minayo, which understands that "[...] working with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes is equivalent to considering a reality constructed from the experience of the subjects" (2007, p. 22). In a complementary way, Stake (2011, p. 23) stated: "[...] qualitative research is interested in how things work in specific situations, being more interpretative than generalizing".

[...] Qualitative research answers very particular questions. In the social sciences, it is concerned with a level of reality that cannot or should not be quantified. That is, it works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes. This set of human phenomena is understood here as part of social reality, as the human being is distinguished not only by acting, but by thinking about what he does and by interpreting his actions within and from the reality lived and shared with his fellow human beings. The universe of human production, which can be summarized in the world of relationships, representations and intentionality, is the object of qualitative research, and can hardly be translated into quantitative numbers and indicators (Minayo, 2006, p. 21).

With the objective of investigating educational practices anchored in insurgent epistemologies, the research was outlined as bibliographic and descriptive. According to Gil, "[...] bibliographic research provides means for the definition of a problem, formulation of hypotheses and development of a theoretical structure" (2008, p. 44), being, therefore,

fundamental for the construction of the analytical framework of the present study. In addition, for Prodanov and Freitas, "[...] descriptive research aims to observe, record, analyze and correlate facts or phenomena without manipulating them" (2013, p. 62), which proved to be pertinent when critically analyzing the knowledge forged in the struggles of the global South.

Thus, the choice for the comprehensive method was based on Max Weber's proposal, which understands the knowledge of social actions as an interpretative process from the perspective of the subjects themselves. Stake stated: "[...] understanding is built from the relationship between those who observe and those who are observed" (2011, p. 23), requiring sensitivity, listening and relational analysis. In other words, more than measuring, the methodological proposal sought to interpret meanings and intentionalities, because "[...] to understand is always to reconstruct the internal logic of social acts based on the meanings they have for the agents" (Weber, 1949, p. 82).

The technique of documentary and bibliographic analysis was used as the main methodological instrument for the collection, selection and interpretation of data. According to Prodanov and Freitas, "[...] this technique allows the researcher a thorough examination of the works and documents, with a view to formulating interpretative categories" (2013, p. 65). Gil added that "[...] documentary analysis is fundamental for studies in which direct empirical investigation is not possible or desirable" (2008, p. 63), which was confirmed in the present work by focusing on theoretical contributions and educational experiences narrated by authors from the global South.

[...] The bibliographic research is developed from material already prepared, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles. Although in almost all studies some type of work of this nature is required, there are studies developed exclusively from bibliographic sources. Part of the exploratory studies can be defined as bibliographic research, as well as a certain number of researches developed from the technique of content analysis. The main advantage of bibliographic research lies in the fact that it allows the researcher to cover a much wider range of phenomena than that which could be researched directly (Gil, 2008, p. 51).

It is important to highlight that, by adopting a critical perspective, this research assumed as a principle the refusal of scientific neutrality. According to Minayo (2007), "[...] knowledge in the Social Sciences is, necessarily, a committed knowledge" (p. 17), as it is immersed in the power relations that structure society. Stake adds: "[...] qualitative research is inevitably linked to ethics and politics" (2011, p. 25), which implies assuming the researcher's position as part of the process of interpretation and transformation of reality.

As can be seen, the selection criterion for the analyzed works was based on the centrality of the global South as an epistemic territory. Gil (2008) points out that "[...] the literature review must be judicious, looking for authors who dialogue with the object of research" (p. 60). In an aligned manner, Prodanov and Freitas highlighted that "[...] the definition of the theoretical corpus must be in line with the proposed problem and the objectives of the study" (2013, p. 133), which justified the choice of authors such as Freire, hooks, Walsh, Mignolo, Dussel, Escobar and Quijano, among others, whose works emerge from resistance to the systems of colonial and epistemic domination.

Likewise, it should be noted that the researcher's position was not one of distancing, but of understanding and critical involvement with the phenomena analyzed. Stake pointed out that "[...] the qualitative researcher is within the field, he is part of the reality he investigates" (2011, p. 27), and his gaze is always situated and implicated. Prodanov and Freitas (2013: 87) added that "[...] the ethical commitment of the researcher translates into the responsibility to represent the subjects of his investigation with fidelity and respect", which is expressed, in this study, in the care when dealing with knowledge from historically silenced communities.

[...] Qualitative study is personalistic. He is empathetic and works to understand individual perceptions. It seeks uniqueness more than similarity and honors diversity. It seeks the point of view of people, reference structures, value commitments. The problems portrayed are usually emic (arise from people) and non-ethical (raised by researchers). Even in interpretations, the use of natural language is preferred, rather than more elaborate constructions. Researchers are ethical, avoiding intrusions and risks to the subjects. The researcher is usually the main research instrument (Stake, 2011, p. 26).

It should be noted that the methodology adopted here also incorporated the principle of theoretical triangulation. Gil explains that "[...] triangulation consists of the articulation of different sources and references for the interpretation of the same phenomenon" (2008, p. 71), which allowed a multifaceted look at the analyzed data. In consonance, Minayo (2007) stated that "[...] triangulation enriches the analysis by broadening the horizons of meaning and avoiding reductionism" (p. 42), which is an essential resource in the composition of a plural and critical look at the educational processes of the global South.

Thus, it is worth noting that all stages of the research were guided by ethical and political criteria. According to Stake: "[...] there is no research without ethical implications" (2011, p. 31), which implies responsibility for the effects of the knowledge produced and for the voices that this knowledge represents. Prodanov and Freitas complemented by stating

that "[...] ethics in research requires respect for the diversity and context of the subjects" (2013, p. 89), reinforcing the commitment to listening to insurgent epistemologies, to the dignity of the subjects and to the transformation of the school space based on epistemic plurality.

## **DECOLONIAL EDUCATION: INSURGENT KNOWLEDGES OF THE "GLOBAL SOUTH" AND THE DECOLONIAL TURN AS A HORIZON FOR THE CRITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION.**

It is important to highlight that, when we talk about the colonality of knowledge, we are not facing a simple legacy of classical colonialism, but an active, operative and structural system that still configures the ways in which knowledge is produced, validated and transmitted. The modern school, born in the midst of European colonial expansion, was designed to impose a single logic of rationality – the Western one – which marginalized other forms of knowledge and condemned to invisibility the knowledge coming from the global South. This logic has shaped not only the curriculum, but also the hierarchies between disciplines, the modes of evaluation and the subjects themselves considered legitimate bearers of knowledge. Instead of acknowledging the epistemic diversity of humanity, the modern-colonial project instituted a totalizing epistemology, based on the split between reason and sensibility, writing and orality, body and spirit. As Quijano recalls, "[...] the colonality of knowledge is the other face of the colonality of power, which acts through the imposition of a Eurocentric matrix of knowledge" (2000, p. 576). In a complementary way, Mignolo (2012, p. 15) states: "[...] The control of epistemology is one of the central mechanisms of colonality, as it defines who has the authority to name the world and who should only be named."

The colonality of power implied the colonization of the imaginary, the imposition of a mode of knowledge production, of control and validation of knowledge that marginalized and denied the validity of knowledge produced outside the Eurocentric circuit. This matrix of power did not disappear with the formal end of colonialism, but remained operative, articulating social, political, cultural, and epistemic hierarchies. [...] The colonality of knowledge, in this sense, is the other face of the colonality of power: it determines who can be recognized as a subject of knowledge and who should only be the object of dominant knowledge. This epistemic structure continues to organize universities, education systems, and forms of knowledge production (Quijano, 2000, p. 577).

Even so, it is observed that the erasure of the epistemologies of the South continues to be present in curricular policies and daily school practices, even in contexts that claim to



be multicultural or inclusive. The mere presence of ethnic-racial content in official documents, such as Law 11.645/2008, does not guarantee the effective recognition of ancestral knowledge as legitimate epistemological foundations. In many cases, this knowledge is incorporated only as peripheral, decorative or folkloric contents, without affecting the hard core of school epistemology. This exclusionary structure transforms the curriculum into a field of symbolic dispute, where only certain ways of knowing, originating from the Euro-Atlantic matrix, are valued as knowledge. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos rightly states, "[...] epistemicide is a systematic process of destruction of the forms of knowledge of subalternized classes and social groups" (2017, p. 22). Arturo Escobar, when reflecting on the impacts of modern rationality, points out that "[...] the coloniality of knowledge marginalizes all forms of knowledge that do not fit into the molds of modern science" (2018, p. 29).

[...] In order to be able to imagine different worlds, it is necessary to give up the totalizing logic of modern Western knowledge. Alternative epistemologies are not mere peripheral variations, but fundamental paths to reconstruct social life. The struggle for cognitive justice is, at the same time, a struggle for territories, for ways of being, and for other forms of coexistence. By denying the validity of this knowledge, the modern system perpetuates epistemic inequality, naturalizing the exclusion of ancestral and popular voices (Escobar, 2018, p. 143).

Thus, Eurocentrism is not only a cultural preference for European knowledge, but a strategy of domination that imposes the superiority of a single epistemic paradigm over all others. This logic manifests itself in a subtle and profound way in educational institutions, which even today reproduce Western thought as universal, rational and neutral. Eurocentrism defines not only what should be taught, but also how, when, and by whom. It establishes norms of objectivity and legitimacy that exclude embodied experiences, oral practices, relational cosmologies, and spiritualities as valid ways of knowing the world. Catherine Walsh reminds us that "[...] Eurocentrism produces a pedagogy of absence, where the knowledge of the other is mutilated, distorted or erased" (2013, p. 44). And Tuhiwai Smith warns: "[...] colonial educational systems were designed to convince indigenous peoples that their knowledge was inferior, irrational and obsolete" (2007, p. 16).

In general terms, it can be stated that the school, as it was historically constituted, was not designed to welcome epistemic plurality. On the contrary, its emergence was deeply articulated with the colonial project of domination. The school form, with its disciplinary rigidity, its transmissive model and its culture of punitive evaluation, served as

an instrument of cultural and epistemological homogenization. This form of organization is not neutral; It carries with it a geopolitics of knowledge that excludes non-Western epistemologies, especially those that operate through orality, circularity, and spirituality. Enrique Dussel states: "[...] modernity was built by denying the other as an autonomous source of knowledge, reducing it to an object of study" (2009, p. 59). Bell hooks, on the other hand, denounces that "[...] white supremacy manifests itself in the way Western pedagogy fragments the subject and annuls the historical experiences of racialized peoples" (2013, p. 105).

In order to break with epistemic hegemony, it is necessary to overcome the monocultural paradigm that structures the school and its practices. This overcoming involves recognizing that there are other ways of producing and legitimizing knowledge, anchored in ways of life that challenge the linearity, abstraction, and individualism of modern rationality. Knowledge rooted in the land, in orality and in collectivity are not residues of the past, but contemporary and vital forms of resistance. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson argues: "[...] the earth is the main educator; it teaches us reciprocity, patience and humility from our relationship with it" (2017, p. 72). Enrique Dussel adds: "[...] to think from the outside is not to reject reason, but to broaden it, broadening the horizon of what is thinkable" (2000, p. 42).

Post-abyssal thinking can be synthesized as learning from the South using an epistemology of the South. It confronts the monoculture of modern science with an ecology of knowledges, insofar as it is based on the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledges (one of them being modern science) and on sustainable and dynamic interactions between them without compromising their autonomy. The ecology of knowledge is based on the idea that knowledge is interknowledge (Santos, 2014, p. 53-54).

By way of illustration, the pedagogical practices in traditional communities, such as quilombos and indigenous villages, show ways of teaching and learning that frontally challenge the Western school model. In these communities, knowledge is not restricted to books or the classroom, but circulates through speech, singing, rituals, bodies and territory. Learning occurs in the relationship with the elderly, with the cycles of nature and with ancestral myths. However, when these modes of knowledge are presented in school, they are often emptied of their original meaning, treated as exotic curiosities or subsumed into categories of Western science. Frigotto observes that "[...] the dominant technical rationality reduces knowledge to a commodity, denying its historical, social and spiritual dimension"

(2001, p. 93). Smith reinforces that "[...] Indigenous peoples resist epistemicide by practicing their pedagogies in silence, on the margins of formal systems" (2007, p. 132).

It should be noted that the concept of coloniality of knowledge implies denaturalizing the foundations of modern thought and highlighting the situated, localized and geopolitical character of all knowledge production. This task is essential to dismantle the mechanisms of exclusion that operate in educational institutions. It is not just about including the "other" in the same molds, but about transforming the molds themselves. The Western matrix of knowledge presents itself as neutral, but it is marked by a history of epistemic violence, which has reduced the cognitive diversity of humanity to a single way of thinking. For Mignolo: "[...] the coloniality of knowledge establishes a cognitive monoculture that claims to be universal, but is profoundly Eurocentric" (2010, p. 89). Walsh adds: "[...] to decolonize education is to disarticulate the devices that sustain the coloniality of knowledge and being" (2019, p. 82).

It cannot be ignored that, by making spirituality invisible, the Western school breaks with the integrality of human experience and compromises its capacity to form full subjects. The separation between reason and emotion, body and mind, sacred and profane, imposed by the modern project, fragments subjectivity and excludes essential dimensions of knowledge. Spiritualities of African and indigenous origin, which articulate knowledge, ethics and ancestry, are systematically silenced in educational spaces. Escobar states that "[...] spirituality is a knowledge of connection, which recognizes the interdependence between all beings and challenges instrumental reason" (2014, p. 66). Bell hooks adds: "[...] to teach with the heart is to affirm that knowledge is also born of affection, lived experience and spirituality" (2015, p. 57).

[...] Each chapter sustains indigenous principles – such as 'the land as a form of literacy' and 'water is life' – that are rooted in specific experiences, such as the creation of indigenous universities and schools, community organizing and social movements, the practices of trans and two-spirit people, rejections of state policies, and pedagogies based on the relationship with land and water (Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2019, p. 3).

Soon, after centuries of imposition, movements of reexistence emerge that, even in the gaps of the school system, claim an education rooted in epistemologies of the South. Decolonial, Afrocentric and intercultural pedagogies do not only propose another way of teaching, but another way of existing. They question the very concept of knowledge as something abstract and neutral, proposing knowledge committed to life, collectivity and

social justice. Smith recalls that "[...] decolonization is not just a concept, but a practice of rupture with the epistemic colonialism that still structures the school" (2007, p. 73). Freire, in defending dialogue as a method, states: "[...] teaching requires listening, it requires humility, it requires recognizing that knowledge is also found in the oppressed" (1971, p. 36).

However, even in the face of ruptures, the current school model still remains faithful to the meritocratic, disciplinary, and monocultural logic that characterizes modern rationality. Educational reforms often only update the mechanisms of exclusion, without breaking with the foundations of coloniality. Epistemic resistance requires not only curricular adjustments, but a true pedagogical insurgency. Frigotto warns: "[...] the public school reproduces a logic of exclusion disguised as inclusion, where popular knowledge is tolerated, but never recognized as central" (2010, p. 41). Quijano states: "[...] coloniality persists because it still organizes our ways of thinking, teaching, and representing the world" (2020, p. 859).

It is worth noting that the decolonial turn<sup>23</sup> is not a rejection of modern knowledge, but a radical expansion of the field of knowledge. He proposes an ecology of knowledge<sup>24</sup>, in which different rationalities can coexist, dialogue and mutually transform each other. This implies shifting the axis of epistemological authority to recognize historically silenced voices. Santos states that "[...] the epistemologies of the South propose a cognitive horizontality, where all knowledge has something to teach and something to learn" (2013, p. 51). Mignolo concludes that "[...] to disobey epistemically is to resist the arrogance of single

<sup>23</sup> The decolonial turn constitutes a theoretical, political, and epistemic movement that seeks to destabilize the foundations of Western modernity and its forms of domination, proposing the valorization of knowledge historically silenced by colonial projects. This turn is not limited to the critique of Eurocentrism, but proposes the construction of a pluriversity of knowledge, in which multiple epistemologies can coexist in a non-hierarchical way. It is a shift that shifts the axis of knowledge production to the margins, recognizing that modernity has always been accompanied by coloniality. In this context, the decolonial turn denounces the epistemicide practiced by colonial institutions and proposes a rearticulation between knowledge, territory, body and memory, opening space for fairer, more affective educational practices rooted in local contexts. See: MIGNOLO, Walter D. *Epistemic disobedience: rhetoric of modernity, logic of coloniality and grammar of decoloniality*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Signo, 2010

<sup>24</sup> The ecology of knowledges is an epistemological proposal formulated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos that aims to overcome the monoculture of Western scientific knowledge through the recognition of the epistemic diversity that exists in the world. This conception argues that different forms of knowledge – such as indigenous, Afro-descendant, popular and spiritual knowledge – have their own rationalities and should be valued on an equal footing with hegemonic knowledge. Instead of subordinating or assimilating this knowledge to the dominant model, the ecology of knowledges proposes a horizontal dialogue between different knowledges, based on respect, listening and co-learning. In the educational field, this perspective establishes a process of curricular and pedagogical reconstruction capable of promoting cognitive justice and broadening the horizons of human formation, recognizing that no knowledge is complete in itself. See: SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. *The grammar of time: towards a new political culture*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2006.

reason and to affirm the legitimacy of multiple forms of knowledge" (2006, p. 76). For Walter D. Mignolo (2012, p. 14):

The question, however, is not where you *reside*, but where you *dwell*. Césaire and Fanon, both Martinicans, inhabited the history of the Middle Passage, of plantations, of slavery, of decolonization. This dwelling shaped his thinking, not only about the past, but about the future, not only about identity, but about liberation. Thinking from these local stories of pain, resistance, and survival is what makes epistemic disobedience possible<sup>25</sup>.

However, when considering the colonality of knowledge as a persistent mechanism, it is understood that the decolonization of education requires a complex, collective process that is deeply committed to cognitive justice. It is necessary to refound the pedagogical project on other bases, where listening, territory, ancestry and care are recognized as essential dimensions of learning. Walsh writes, "[...] to recreate education is to recreate the world; it is to remake the forms of relationship between knowledge, subjects and territories" (2019, p. 87). And Freire points out clearly: "[...] teaching requires the recognition of the other as an unfinished subject, bearer of knowledge and capable of transforming the world" (1996, p. 49).

It should be noted that the decolonial turn does not intend to reform Western modernity, but rather to destabilize its ontological and epistemological bases, denouncing the epistemic violence that sustains its alleged universality. This rupture requires deconstructing the myth of scientific neutrality and unveiling the racial, cultural, and gender hierarchies embedded in academic discourses. For this reason, the decolonial turn is opposed to the multiculturalization of oppression, which only tolerates difference without altering power structures. In universities, for example, this turn proposes a profound reconfiguration of the production and validation of knowledge, defending methodologies rooted in territories and decolonial practices that value embodied and relational knowledge. For Dussel (2000): "[...] transmodernity is not the beyond of modernity, but its confrontation with the radical other, historically denied" (p. 67). Simpson (2017) argues that epistemically resisting is not only rejecting Eurocentrism, but "[...] to build forms of life that do not depend on the recognition of modernity" (p.88).

Dussel proposes confronting Eurocentric modernity through a multiplicity of decolonial critical responses that start from the subaltern cultures and epistemic places of colonized peoples around the world. [...] Transmodernity is the utopian project that

<sup>25</sup> Our translation.

aims to transcend the Eurocentric version of modernity. [...] Instead of a single modernity centered on Europe and imposed on the rest of the world as a global design, it is a critical frontier thinking as an epistemic intervention of the various subalterns. [...] Subaltern epistemologies could provide a 'diversality' of answers to the problems of modernity (Dussel apud Mignolo, 2000, p. 27).

Therefore, in the face of the current epistemic scenario, crossed by multiple crises – environmental, social, ethical and cognitive – the decolonial turn proposes a reorientation of thought beyond the technical-instrumental paradigm. Modernity has failed to offer answers to the structural inequalities that it itself has engendered, and its project of universalization has proved to be exclusionary. The decolonial turn, therefore, points to the need to produce knowledge from historically marginalized places of enunciation, such as quilombola, indigenous, peasant and peripheral communities. This epistemic displacement also implies questioning the idea of linear progress, replacing it with conceptions of time and history anchored in circularity, ancestry, and respect for the cycles of life. For Smith (2007): "[...] decolonizing knowledge implies questioning the landmarks that sustain the colonial logic of academic knowledge" (p. 88). Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2013) argues that "[...] there is no social justice without cognitive justice" (p. 65).

It should be noted that, by displacing the center of thought, insurgent epistemologies call for listening to historical silences and validating the knowledge that springs from pain, exclusion, and resistance. This knowledge arises from bodies marked by racialization, from ancestral orality, from songs and dances as embodied pedagogies, from rituals as a form of production of meaning. It is not a matter of including this knowledge in the current school molds, but of recognizing its ontological capacity to reconstruct the very meaning of what it is to know, teach and learn. This entails creating curricula that not only mention the other, but that are woven with the other. Escobar states that "[...] insurgent epistemologies are forms of reexistence that challenge the logic of epistemic monoculture" (2018, p. 102). According to hooks (2013), "[...] insurgent thinking is born of the ability to say no to the norms of white supremacy" (p.132).

[...] The concept of *diseño de culturas* (culture design) emerged as a political and professional tool applied to working with grassroots organizations, especially in the field of popular education, community art, and alternative development projects aimed at indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, in which oral traditions were still predominant. These popular communication movements, deeply inspired by Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, Orlando Fals Borda's participatory action research, and liberation theology, constituted a critical and creative basis for working with subalternized communities in Latin America (2018, p. 12).



In fact, it can be said that these epistemologies not only resist, but produce worlds. Thus, they destabilize cognitive hegemony and put on stage other forms of rationality, based on collectivity, sensitivity, listening and spirituality. In educational experiences built in peripheral and indigenous territories, for example, knowledge takes place in the encounter with the land, with natural cycles and with the elders – and not only in books or laboratories. In this way, such educational practices, even if invisible, build networks of resistance and life. Freire states that "[...] authentic knowledge emerges from the curiosity of the oppressed, when he begins to name the world in his own words" (1971, p. 62). Walsh (2013) argues that epistemic insurgency requires "[...] displacing the centers of knowledge production, legitimizing the knowledge that springs from lived experience" (p. 54).

Thus, it is understood that the frontier thinking, proposed by Mignolo, represents one of the most powerful tools for thinking about the gaps in the "world-system". It starts from living in zones of contact and tension, where different epistemic logics collide, intertwine and reinvent themselves. Thus, it is at the borders that new categories, new vocabularies and new practices emerge. This thought is built between worlds, refusing epistemic purity and affirming the right to the hybrid, to the mestizo, to the crossroads. That said, in educational contexts, he points to pedagogies that break with binary logic and promote coexistence between different matrices of meaning. Mignolo points out that "[...] frontier thinking proposes a geopolitics of knowledge that starts from the decolonial experience" (2010, p. 123). Smith (2007, p. 142) recalls that "[...] frontier knowledge operates between worlds and builds bridges between rationalities that modernity has kept separate".

The notion of critical frontier positioning is rooted in Mignolo's (2002) conception of frontier thinking: "[...] a way of thinking about otherness, of moving through an 'other logic', in short, of changing terms not only in the sense of maintaining a conversation". While the very construction of interculturality is an obvious example of frontier thinking, its epistemic and sociopolitical application to what the movement designates as "pluriversity", as opposed to the university, makes the idea of frontier thinking very clear. [...] The curriculum places them in critical dialogue with the forms of knowledge typically associated with the Western world, reverting to historical subordination and proposing a different incorporation (Walsh, 2019, p. 30).

It is essential to note that the notion of pluriversity<sup>26</sup>, so central to the decolonial turn, redefines the politics of knowledge. It opposes the universalist pretension of modernity,

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<sup>26</sup> The notion of pluriversity is central to the decolonial turn because it breaks with the universalist logic of Western modernity, which historically imposed a single worldview as legitimate and superior. Unlike exclusionary universalism, pluriversity recognizes the simultaneous and interdependent existence of multiple epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies, without hierarchizing them. This idea holds that no knowledge can claim totality or neutrality, because all knowledge is situated and relational. In the decolonial turn,

which attempts to standardize diversity in the name of a supposed common rationality. On the contrary, pluriversality affirms the simultaneous existence of multiple worlds, multiple ways of living, thinking and existing. This means recognizing that no knowledge can arrogate itself as superior, but that everyone must be placed in horizontal dialogue. In education, this principle requires the revision of the canon, the decolonization of contents, and the reconfiguration of evaluation methods. Escobar (2018, p. 123) states: "[...] pluriversality is the recognition of epistemic diversity without hierarchies". Walsh, in turn, endorses that "[...] pluriversality is an insurgent life project, a bet on coexistence without subordination" (2019, p. 94).

After the denunciation of coloniality, the dialogue between knowledges appears as an insurgent practice, which subverts the monological logics of modernity. This dialogue, however, is not a cordial exchange between worldviews, but an epistemological dispute that requires listening, humility, and openness to the other. To dialogue is to run the risk of transforming oneself. It is to abandon the position of master and recognize oneself as an apprentice. In educational processes, this means welcoming orality, community knowledge, myths, songs and daily practices as legitimate sources of knowledge. Simpsom (2017) attests that "[...] true dialogue is born from respect for autonomy and coexistence with difference" (2017, p. 103). Santos (2017, p. 81) recalls that "[...] the dialogue of knowledge must go beyond translation; it must create new vocabularies and insurgent practices."

[...] The initial idea was to show that the belief in a single sustainable system of knowledge – formulated initially in theological terms and later in secular philosophies and sciences (both in the human and natural sciences; nomothetic and ideographic sciences, as Wilhelm Dilthey distinguished the 'sciences of the spirit' from the exact sciences) – is pernicious for the well-being of the human species and for life on the planet. Such a system of knowledge, here referred to as the 'Western code', does not serve humanity, but only a small portion of it that benefits from the belief that, in epistemological terms, there is only a single game going on (Mignolo, 2011, p. 13).

To broaden the cognitive horizon, it is essential to consider the body, emotion, territory and spirituality as legitimate dimensions of knowledge. Modern rationality amputated these dimensions in the name of objectivity, creating an abstract, disembodied, and universal epistemic subject. The epistemologies of the South, on the contrary, claim a

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pluriversality not only proposes an opening to dialogue between knowledges, but also affirms the dignity of historically silenced voices, being, therefore, an ethical, political, and epistemic principle for the construction of a more just and diverse world. It inaugurates a horizon of critical coexistence, in which differences are not obstacles, but powers for the collective reinvention of knowledge. See: MIGNOLO, Walter D.; WALSH, Catherine. *On decoloniality: concepts, analytics, praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

pedagogy of the sensible, where knowledge is born from lived experience, ancestry, and affective relationships with the world. This profoundly transforms the classroom, the curriculum, and the role of the educator, who ceases to be a transmitter to become a facilitator of encounters, connections, and listening. Dussel endorses that "[...] the territory is a condition for the possibility of life and autonomous thought" (2000, p. 53). For Walsh, "[...] the body is a territory of knowledge, where memories of resistance and ancestry are inscribed" (2013, p. 61).

While the critique is consolidated, it is necessary to reflect on the internal challenges of the decolonial field itself. The risk of institutionalization, empty rhetoric and neoliberal appropriation threatens the political power of this turn. Decolonial critique can be captured by the dominant academic discourse and transformed into yet another commodity in the marketplace of ideas. For this reason, its strength depends on the connection with social movements, territorial struggles and insurgent educational practices. Smith states that "[...] the decolonization of knowledge is a long struggle, as it requires breaking with deeply rooted historical privileges" (2007, p. 150). For Mignolo (2010: 130), "[...] care must be taken that decolonial criticism is not appropriated by academia as another aesthetic or rhetorical tendency."

[...] The ecology of knowledge is the proposal with which he advances to confront the logic of the monoculture of scientific knowledge and the rigor of knowledge, identifying other knowledge and criteria of rigor and validity that operate in a credible way in social practices. [...] It implies, on the contrary, using it [scientific knowledge] in a broader context of dialogue with other knowledge. In this sense, this use of scientific knowledge is counter-hegemonic. The objective of the ecology of knowledges is, on the one hand, to explore alternative conceptions internal to scientific knowledge [...] and, on the other hand, to continue with the interdependence between the scientific knowledge produced by Eurocentric modernity and other non-scientific knowledge (Santos, 2014, p. 29).

In order to reconstruct knowledge, it is urgent to invent other methodologies, other narratives and other pedagogies that are not limited to including the other, but that are generated with the other. This requires the abandonment of scientific neutrality and the recognition of bias as an epistemic condition. It also requires placing life at the center of the educational process, understanding knowledge as a practice of care, bonding and transformation. For hooks, "[...] teaching is an act of hope and reinvention of the world, especially when teaching from the margins" (2015, p. 98). Escobar, in turn, sentences that "[...] epistemic reconstruction requires practices that recognize the interdependence between knowledge, community, and social justice" (2014, p. 57).

In order to highlight the rupture, it is necessary to reaffirm that the decolonial turn is not a simple theoretical alternative, but an ethical, political, and epistemic insurgency. He calls us to abandon the comfort of universalism and to inhabit the fissures of the world, where knowledge springs up that heals, resists and recreates the world. It is, therefore, a call to reexistence. Mignolo states that "[...] epistemic disobedience is a gesture of radical love for the non-colonial possibilities of living and knowing" (2006, p. 84). Freire endorses that "[...] it is in the incompleteness of the world that the possibility of transformation resides" (1996, p. 47).

Epistemic disobedience is both a rejection and a proposition. It rejects the place that the logic of modernity/coloniality imposes on subalternized epistemologies and ontologies. And it proposes the opening to other ways of thinking, feeling and living that are not based on the universality and homogenization of knowledge. [...] This gesture is not only political or theoretical; it is also ethical and affective. It is an act of radical love for the possibilities of life that have been denied, for the silenced histories and for the worlds that can still be built from the ruins of colonialism (Mignolo, 2010, p. 52).

In fact, it cannot be ignored that the insurgent knowledges of the global South emerge as counter-narratives that destabilize the foundations of modern Western thought. Instead of presenting themselves as exotic or folkloric alternatives, this knowledge brings a historical and existential density built from pain, resistance and collectivity. They are lived epistemologies, which take root in territories of exclusion and announce other possibilities of the world. The valorization of this knowledge implies, therefore, a double gesture: on the one hand, the recognition of the epistemic injustice promoted by colonialism and, on the other, the strengthening of pedagogical practices that start from community experiences. Santos warns that "[...] cognitive justice requires listening to the historical silences that were imposed by epistemicide" (2017, p. 91). Dussel (2000) argues that "[...] the knowledge of the South is an ethical source of reconfiguration of the human, as it springs from the experience of exclusion" (p. 63) and points to a future where epistemic dignity is universalized.

In fact, recognizing indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and traditional communities as full epistemic subjects is an urgent task, but one that is still neglected in educational systems. This task requires overcoming a model of knowledge that associates scientific value with writing and objectivity, disqualifying orality, spirituality and the link with the territory as legitimate modes of knowledge. The school, as one of the main ideological apparatuses of the State, according to Althusser (1970), has historically served epistemic

homogenization, which today implies its radical reorientation towards plurality. Smith, in turn, states that "[...] the epistemic subject is not the one who masters abstract concepts, but the one who knows from the body, the earth and memory" (2017, p. 118). According to Smith (2007, p. 103), "[...] Indigenous peoples have been producing knowledge for millennia, even though the Western system insists on denying them as valid producers of science."

[...] the creation of the UINPI<sup>27</sup> does not mean the division of science between that which is and that which is not indigenous. It means the opportunity to immerse yourself in a theoretical dialogue based on interculturality. It means the creation of a new conceptual, analytical and theoretical field that can generate new concepts, categories and notions under the construction of interculturality and the understanding of otherness. [...] represents the construction of a new epistemological space that incorporates and negotiates indigenous and Western knowledge (and both its theoretical and experimental bases), consistently maintaining as fundamental the coloniality of power and the colonial difference to which they have been subjected (Walsh, 2019, p. 18).

By way of illustration, curricular decolonization, more than an adjustment of content, represents a profound restructuring of the hierarchies of knowledge within the school. It requires the recognition of ancestral pedagogies as complete and autonomous forms of knowledge, which articulate orality, corporeality, territory and spirituality. In quilombola and indigenous communities, for example, the teachings of the elders, the rites, the stories, the plants and the natural cycles constitute a matrix of integral education that challenges the fragmentation of the Western curriculum. Freire (1996) states that "[...] teaching requires the recognition that there is much possible and equally valid knowledge" (p. 49). Walsh, in turn, points out that "[...] the decolonial curriculum is not the one that only mentions the other, but the one that is reconstructed with the other" (2013, p. 61).

<sup>27</sup> The creation of the Indigenous University in Brazil represents a historic milestone in the appreciation of the epistemologies and cultures of native peoples. In April 2024, the Ministry of Education (MEC) established a working group (WG) through Ordinance No. 350/2024, with the objective of carrying out technical studies and debates that support the implementation of the Indigenous University. This WG is composed of representatives from various secretariats and bodies linked to the MEC, including the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Youth and Adult Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (Secadi), the Secretariat of Higher Education (Sesu), the Secretariat of Professional and Technological Education (Setec), the Secretariat of Regulation and Supervision of Higher Education (Seres), the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) and the National Institute of Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep). The university's proposal is to offer higher education that respects and integrates traditional indigenous knowledge, promoting interculturality, bilingualism and the appreciation of indigenous languages and cultures in their territorial contexts. In addition, it aims to ensure that the courses offered consider the specificities of indigenous peoples, such as good living, health and their own legislation, strengthening the autonomy and protagonism of these communities in the Brazilian educational scenario. See: BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. MEC begins the process that will create the Indigenous University. Agência Gov, 17 Apr. 2024. Available at: <https://agenciagov.ebc.com.br/noticias/202404/universidade-indigena-tera-grupo-de-trabalho-no-mec>. Accessed on: Apr. 12, 2025.

Therefore, it is essential to observe that the hegemony of modern scientific knowledge was not established by merit, but by imposition. What is called science has often served to justify racism, sexism, and the extermination of entire populations in the name of progress. This model reduced knowledge to quantifiable experimentation, erasing the senses, affections and ancestry as dimensions of knowledge. Mignolo tensions when he states that "[...] modern epistemology is based on the separation between subject and object, ignoring that all knowledge is situated and relational" (2006, p. 83). Santos (2013) reinforces that "[...] The monopoly of science is one of the most violent faces of the coloniality of knowledge (p. 56).

Thus, cognitive justice appears as an ethical and political imperative in the face of the continuity of epistemicide in schools and universities. The challenge is to recognize, legitimize and include the knowledge of oppressed peoples, not as a complement to the dominant scientific knowledge, but as their own horizons for the construction of reality. This means, among other things, transforming the school into a space for dialogue between epistemes, where community, spiritual, oral and experiential knowledge is treated with the same value as canonical scientific content. Smith reinforces that "[...] the epistemic recognition of the other is a condition for any emancipation project" (2007, p. 87). According to Escobar (2018), "[...] cognitive justice will only be possible when science gives up its hegemonic claim and learns from the territories" (p. 99).

Alternative social practices will generate alternative forms of knowledge. Not recognizing these forms of knowledge implies delegitimizing the social practices that sustain them and, in this sense, promoting the social exclusion of those who promote them. The genocide that so often punctuated European expansion was also an epistemicide: alien peoples were eliminated because they had forms of alien knowledge and forms of alien knowledge were eliminated because they were sustained by social practices and alien peoples. [...] Against epistemicide, the new paradigm proposes to revalue non-hegemonic knowledge and practices that are, after all, most practices of life and knowledge within the world system (Santos, 2018, p. 201).

In this way, ancestral knowledge is not a remnant of the past, but technologies of the present and the future, as they carry a rationality based on collectivity, sustainability, and interdependence. They constitute sophisticated systems of thought that integrate nature and the cycles of life, and do not separate them as modernity does. Escobar (2014, p. 71) points out that "[...] ancestral knowledge is a form of life that teaches us to inhabit the world with respect and reciprocity." Walsh points out that "[...] ancestry is an epistemic field that



challenges the cumulative logic of knowledge and proposes a knowledge that cares" (2019, p. 104).

In the same way, decolonial narratives place lived experience back at the center of knowledge, challenging abstraction and neutrality as the only criteria of epistemic validity. By bringing corporeality, territory, affections and memory to the field of knowledge, these narratives denounce that all knowledge is political, situated and historically constructed. Listening to black, indigenous, peripheral and feminine experiences has the power to displace the centers of enunciation of truth. For hooks, "[...] the narrative of those who resisted is also a theory of life and struggle" (2015, p. 95). According to Simpson (2017), "[...] experience is not the opposite of science, but its condition of legitimacy in contexts of coloniality" (p. 109). That said, hooks strengthens the argument that black, peripheral, feminine, and indigenous experiences are not just personal experiences, but carry epistemic density and transformative theoretical capacity:

The essential connection between critical thinking and practical wisdom is the insistence on the interdependent nature of theory and fact, coupled with the awareness that knowledge cannot be dissociated from experience. Ultimately, there is an awareness that knowledge rooted in experience shapes what we value and, consequently, how we know what we know – and, likewise, how we use what we know. [...] When we create a world in which there is a union between theory and practice, we are able to engage freely with ideas (2010, p. 222).

Despite this, the school continues to operate as a normalization machine that universalizes ignorance about non-Western knowledge. The official curriculum, in general, makes oral pedagogies, the knowledge of the territory, the Afro-indigenous cosmograms, and the symbolic forms of knowledge transmission that do not fit into textual linearity invisible. Frigotto says that "[...] the school, by devaluing orality and rituality, breaks the bonds of the subjects with their own history" (2010, p. 73). Mignolo (2010, p. 88) recalls that "[...] Eurocentrism educates the world instead of educating it for plurality."

After the recognition of historical epistemic damages, it is urgent to think of pedagogical strategies that promote the encounter between knowledge without hierarchization. This requires practices of listening, recognition and intercultural translation, but it also requires the willingness to transform the very idea of teaching. A good example of this is the practices of popular education that emerged in peasant movements and

grassroots communities<sup>28</sup>, where learning is linked to doing, celebrating, and sharing. Santos points out that "[...] the dialogue between knowledges is an exercise in mutual decolonization" (2007, p. 122). Freire, in turn, states that "[...] there is only dialogue when there is a willingness to open oneself to the unknown with respect" (1971, p. 85).

Much of the work of intercultural translation takes place in militant meetings or workshops dedicated to training, popular education and empowerment, and is carried out with interventions by the different participants, but without any special protagonism. For this reason, in terms of building resistance and social struggles, intercultural translation is also not a particularly individualized activity. It is a dimension of cognitive work whenever the ecologies of knowledge, the exchange of experiences, the valorization of struggles (one's own and others') and a prudent examination of the knowledge that the dominant social groups mobilize to isolate or disarticulate the oppressed are present (Santos, 2010, p. 330).

As a result, the decolonization of educational thought demands the revaluation of popular wisdom as the legitimate foundation of pedagogy. Midwives, capoeira masters, healers, griots and shamans are not just folkloric figures – they are intellectuals of their people, transmitters of memories and shapers of subjectivities. They operate in a logic that does not dissociate teaching and life, reason and spirituality. That said, hooks states that "[...] to decolonize education is to include the masters of life as teachers of the world" (2013, p. 122). Walsh (2013, p. 69) states: "[...] traditional knowledge is insurgent because it challenges the boundaries of the epistemologically acceptable."

Therefore, when talking about cognitive justice and insurgent knowledge, we also speak of epistemic sovereignty. It is about ensuring that peoples have the right to name the world based on their own cosmologies, without having to go through the sieve of Western validation. This means advocating for public policies that protect territories, languages, and ways of life as inalienable cultural and epistemological assets. Escobar states that "[...] epistemic sovereignty is the right to think with one's own categories and feel with one's own

<sup>28</sup> A good example of the valorization of the non-hierarchy of knowledge can be found in the practices of popular education that emerged from peasant movements and basic ecclesial communities in Latin America, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. These experiences, inspired by Paulo Freire's pedagogy, assumed that every subject is the bearer of legitimate knowledge, built from their experience and insertion in the world. By breaking with the banking model of education, these practices put in dialogue the knowledge of the land, faith, daily life and political struggle with school content, establishing a pedagogy of listening, horizontality and commitment to social transformation. This conception is profoundly convergent with the proposal of decolonial education, which rejects epistemic hierarchization and proposes the construction of an ecology of knowledge, in which scientific, popular, and ancestral knowledge coexist in dialogue and mutual respect. See: FREIRE, Paulo. *Extension or communication?* 16. ed. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2014.

myths" (2018, p. 133). Dussel, on the other hand, points out that "[...] every emancipation project begins with the liberation of the imaginary" (2000, p. 91).

Thus, it can be affirmed that insurgent knowledge and cognitive justice challenge not only the contents of the school, but also its form, its time, its methods and its meanings. It is about reinventing the school as a crossroads territory, where multiple epistemologies meet, confront each other and mutually transform each other. It is a difficult task, but absolutely necessary if we want an education committed to human dignity and to the plurality of the world. According to Mignolo (2006: 97): "[...] decolonial education is the ethical gesture of listening to the world that has been silenced" (p. 97). Thus, for Santos (2017): "[...] the knowledge of the South does not ask for permission: it requires recognition, listening and reciprocity" (p. 114).

Decolonial education is not limited to the superficial celebration of diversity, but seeks to question and transform colonial and capitalist structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. [...] This decolonial perspective requires a review of pedagogical practices, curricula and epistemologies, in order to value local knowledge and the historical resistances of marginalized cultures, transforming education into a space of emancipation and social justice. [...] The objective is to contribute to the construction of an education that not only recognizes diversity, but also questions and transforms the social structures that perpetuate oppression (Santos et al., 2024, p. 9).

Not only the physical structures of the school, but also its epistemological and organizational foundations bear deep marks of the Western civilizational project, committed to the reproduction of relations of domination. Decolonial education, in this sense, faces the challenge of operating in an institution whose foundation is impregnated with coloniality, discipline and standardization of knowledge. In other words, the modern school is not a neutral space for socialization, but a functional cog in the nation-state and capitalism. It shapes docile subjectivities, normalizes inequalities, and silences dissident epistemes. For Althusser (1970): "[...] the school apparatus is designed to guarantee the ideological continuity of the dominant system, functioning as a factory of social consent" (p. 42). According to Antunes (2021, p. 81), "[...] the school, by functioning as an educational factory, transforms the training process into training for productivity and not for criticality".

Therefore, it is essential to observe that the school curriculum – a central element in the pedagogical organization – reflects not only pedagogical choices, but political and ideological interests aimed at maintaining social order. The school, as an ideological apparatus of the State, structures its contents based on a rationality that privileges Eurocentric, scientific, and liberal culture, marginalizing popular, indigenous, and Afro-

Brazilian knowledge. This rationality is manifested in homogeneous curricula, standardized assessments, and the linearity of school time, which ignore plural ways of learning. That said, for Frigotto (2010: 55): "[...] the modern school form is inseparable from the colonial and capitalist logic of production of useful and obedient subjectivities". Meanwhile, Laval (2019, p. 39) states that "[...] By conceiving knowledge as a commodity and the student as human capital, the neoliberal school becomes a cog in the market."

The era of 'human capital' [...] translates a very real tendency of contemporary capitalism to mobilize knowledge in ever greater numbers, under the double aspect of factor of production and commodity. [...] Human capital brings together 'the knowledge, qualifications, skills and individual characteristics that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being'. [...] This notion has the advantage of reflecting the weakening of the link between diploma and employment and justifying the greater selectivity of employers in a period in which the inflation of titles tends to increase the importance of the 'informal' components, especially social origin, in the analysis of the 'employability' of salaried workers (Laval, 2019, p. 85).

Although the official discourse insists on the neutrality of public schools, in practice, it acts as an instance of perpetuation of social and racial inequalities. Black, indigenous, and peripheral children face a daily school routine that disregards their histories, knowledge, and ways of existence, being constantly interpellated by a normativity that values whiteness<sup>29</sup>, Western rationality, and hegemonic masculinity. The epistemology of the South, therefore, has no recognized place in most schools, except as "cross-cutting themes" or folklore. In this sense, Santos warns (2017: 72): "[...] the universalization of school culture was made at the cost of the denial of the insurgent voices that inhabited and resisted the margins of modernity". According to Antunes (2009), "[...] the school, instead of critically including, has become one of the main instruments for concealing diversity and inequality" (p. 49).

Thus, it should be noted that neoliberalism imposed on the school a new management grammar based on goals, results and competitiveness, transferring the

<sup>29</sup> The modern-colonial model of knowledge structurally values whiteness, Western rationality, and hegemonic masculinity as universal standards of humanity, neutrality, and authority. This triad operates as a matrix of epistemic and social exclusion, legitimizing only the knowledge produced by white, male and Western subjects, while silencing female, black, indigenous and peripheral voices. In the educational field, this logic is manifested in the curricula, methodologies and in the choice of authors and references considered legitimate, reinforcing the monoculture of knowledge and being. On the other hand, decolonial education proposes a break with this exclusionary paradigm, by affirming the epistemic dignity of other bodies, other histories, and other rationalities. It is a pedagogical project that not only fights racism, sexism and Eurocentrism, but also builds educational practices based on plurality, listening and the insurgency of the margins. See: LUGONES, María. *Coloniality and gender*. In: PEREIRA, Ana Claudia; COSTA, Sérgio (Org.). *Coloniality and racism: debates on Latin America and the Caribbean*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2020. p. 19-41.

business logic to the educational practice. In this logic, teachers are charged as workers in the production of indexes, students are held responsible for their failures, and managers function as CEOs of school effectiveness. This transformation radically compromises the possibility of building an education project committed to social justice and epistemic plurality. Frigotto points out that "[...] the culture of performativity transforms the educating subject into an executor of plans and not a critical mediator of learning" (2010, p. 112). As Antunes (2021) points out, "[...] the new reason of the world has hijacked critical education and shaped it according to the imperatives of profitability and obedience" (p. 67).

By way of illustration, the model of the educational factory<sup>30</sup>, so criticized by Marxist thinkers and critics of education, does not only concern the physical structure of the school, but its way of operating. The division of time, spaces, contents and bodies responds to a disciplinary rationality that aims to produce subjectivities useful to the capitalist production system. This model empties the affective bond, the sense of learning and the freedom of creation. For Laval (2019: 88), "[...] economic rationality has penetrated the meanings of pedagogy, even defining the value of knowledge as an index of employability" (p. 84). Antunes, in turn, states that "[...] the logic of productivity replaces dialogue with performance, care with control, and knowledge with competence" (2009, p. 108).

Education has undergone a continuous process of rationalization since the origins of the school in the West: disciplinary and intellectual contents, forms of transmission and control, organization of levels and divisions, materials and places have undergone a standardization and standardization that allowed the development of educational action, in the form of a 'mechanical bureaucracy'. [...] This centralized organizational form composed of cells with an identical base was a very effective means of expanding and rationalizing education, until the moment when it did not seem to allow sufficient productivity gains and became an obstacle to pedagogical rationalization (Laval, 2019, p. 72).

Therefore, it is not only a matter of questioning the curriculum, but of questioning the epistemological architecture of the modern school itself. The Western school was constituted as a space for the exclusion of ancestral, oral, bodily and spiritual forms of

<sup>30</sup> The model of the educational factory, as a critique formulated by Marxist authors and critics of education, describes the school as a space for the reproduction of the factory logic of capital, where time, body, knowledge and relations are organized in a disciplinary, fragmented and productivist way. In this model, the student is conceived as a "raw material" to be molded for the market, and the teacher as a technical worker in the transmission of contents. This rationality transforms the school into a space of training for obedience and competitiveness, silencing territorial, affective and collective knowledge. Decolonial education, on the other hand, denounces this formative mechanism and proposes a rupture with the logic of productivity, epistemic hierarchy and control. By valuing experience, listening, bonding, and ancestry, she seeks to rebuild the school as a territory of freedom, encounter, and plurality. See: ANTUNES, Ricardo; PINTO, Geraldo Augusto. *The factory of education: from the factory school to the flexibilization of school processes*. São Paulo: Xamã, 2017.

knowledge, privileging an instrumental reason that fragments knowledge and denies the sensible. For decolonial education to flourish, it is necessary to open epistemological gaps that welcome the knowledge of the territory, orality, the body and the collectivity. For hooks (2013), "[...] the modern curriculum disqualifies sensitive knowledge, lived knowledge and non-linear ways of learning" (p. 77). According to Santos (2013), "[...] a decolonial epistemology implies relearning to listen to the world with the ears of the body, with the eyes of history and with the feet planted in the territory" (p. 94).

As a result, one of the main challenges for the effectiveness of decolonial education is to face the internal contradictions of the school itself. Despite being immersed in normative and excluding structures, the school is also inhabited by subjects who resist and create fissures in the system. Committed teachers, organized students, and pedagogical collectives build counter-hegemonic experiences even within institutional limitations. That said, hooks (2015) states that "[...] the school can also be a territory of struggle, invention and reexistence, as long as its actors are willing to challenge the imposed norms" (p. 103). And Freire (1996: 89), in turn, points out that "[...] education is not a neutral act; every pedagogy is an ethical, political and epistemological choice".

It is impossible, in fact, the neutrality of education. And it is impossible not because 'troublemakers' and 'subversive' teachers determine it. Education does not become political because of the decision of this or that educator. It is political. [...] What I should aim for is not the neutrality of education, but respect, at all costs, for students, educators. [...] That is why I must fight without tiring. To fight for the right I have to be respected and for the duty I have to react to being mistreated. To fight for the right that you, who read me, teacher or student, have to be yourself and never, ever, fight for that impossible, grayish and bland thing that is neutrality (Freire, 2014, p. 106).

Therefore, it is essential that the project of a decolonial school be articulated with the anti-racist, anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist struggle. It is not just a matter of adding black authors to the curriculum, but of questioning the very criteria for validating school knowledge, its languages, its temporalities, and its methodologies. The struggle for cognitive justice needs to dialogue with social movements, with traditional territories and with invisible knowledge. Walsh defends the "[...] urgency to reconstitute the meanings of the school beyond performance, recognizing that listening is also recognizing the right to know of the other" (2013, p. 59). Smith, with this, points out that "[...] the centrality of the global South in the production of knowledge involves the recognition of experience as a legitimate place of knowledge" (2007, p. 112).



Therefore, teacher training plays a central role in this process. Teachers need to be trained not only to teach content, but to critically read reality, listen to the historical subjects who inhabit it, and reconstruct the curriculum in dialogue with insurgent epistemologies. Teaching needs to detach itself from the paradigm of neutrality and assume an ethical posture of engagement. Freire points out that "[...] the decolonial teacher is the one who refuses to be a technician and recognizes himself as an organic intellectual of his territory" (1996, p. 103). Thus, hooks states: "[...] teaching in a decolonial way is teaching from affection, listening and bonding with the community" (2013, p. 116).

As we can see, many of the elements learned from his relationship with Freire and in the respect I have for his thought are present in [my] 'teachings'. [...] Engaged pedagogy establishes a mutual relationship between teacher and students that fuels the growth of both parties, creating an atmosphere of trust and commitment that is always present when genuine learning happens. By expanding the heart and mind, engaged pedagogy makes us better learners, because it asks us to welcome and explore together the practice of knowledge, to see intelligence as a resource that can strengthen our common good (hooks, 2010, p. 102).

Subsequently, it should be noted that Brazilian educational legislation, although it advances in legal frameworks such as Law 11.645/2008<sup>31</sup>, has not yet managed to profoundly transform the curriculum and pedagogical practice. The presence of content on African and indigenous history and culture in schools is still superficial, punctual and disconnected from a real epistemological change. For Smith (2007), "[...] it is not enough to include content if the look at these contents continues to be colonizing" (p. 134). While Mignolo (2006) states that "[...] the normativity of the Western school still organizes time, space and the body based on European parameters" (p. 84).

<sup>31</sup> The enactment of Law 11.645/2008 represented an important advance in the recognition of ethnic-racial diversity in Brazilian education, by making the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture mandatory in the official curriculum of elementary and high schools. This legislation reaffirms the right of native peoples and black populations to see their knowledge, memories and contributions represented in school spaces, breaking with a long history of institutional erasure and silencing. However, despite its normative character, the implementation of the law faces significant challenges, such as the lack of specific teacher training, the scarcity of multi-epistemic teaching materials, and the resistance of an educational structure still rooted in Eurocentric paradigms. It is precisely in this context that the perspective of decolonial education gains strength, by proposing a curricular reconstruction that goes beyond symbolic inclusion, assuming the centrality of Afro-indigenous epistemologies in the construction of a critical, plural school committed to cognitive justice. See: BRAZIL. Law No. 11,645, of March 10, 2008. Amends Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996, modified by Law No. 10,639, of January 9, 2003, which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education, to include in the official curriculum of the school system the mandatory theme "Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture". Diário Oficial da União: section 1, Brasília, DF, year 145, n. 48, p. 1, 11 mar. 2008. Available at: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2008/lei/l11645.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2008/lei/l11645.htm). Accessed on: 8 Apr. 2025.

In general, educational policies aimed at racial equality and the appreciation of diversity cannot be sustained without a transformation of the school's material structure. The absence of infrastructure, the precariousness of teaching work, institutional racism and symbolic violence exert enormous pressure on subjects who seek to build alternatives. That said, "[...] the school without territory, without community and without bonds cannot be a place of reexistence", says Escobar (2018, p. 143). Therefore, Santos (2017) points out, "[...] the struggle for a decolonial education is also a struggle for material conditions that allow pedagogical dignity" (p. 128).

In fact, the construction of a decolonial school requires a new ethical and political pact between educators, students, families and communities. It is about repositioning the center of knowledge, making room for ancestral and popular knowledge, rebuilding the ties between school and territory and recognizing that learning is also an act of listening, caring and resisting. Walsh points out that the "[...] decolonial education is the commitment to another form of life, where knowledge serves dignity and not domination" (2019, p. 98). Dussel (2000) points out that "[...] when the school learns to listen to silenced knowledge, it ceases to be an apparatus of the State to become a territory of emancipation" (p. 106).

Decolonial education, by articulating with counter-hegemonic movements, can act as a powerful instrument of social transformation. This transformation requires a continuous commitment to criticism and reflection on educational practices, as well as on the power relations that permeate these practices. In this way, education becomes a dynamic space of struggle, where knowledge is not only transmitted, but collectively constructed from the experiences and needs of local subjects. [...] By valuing and integrating diverse knowledge, by promoting critical pedagogy, and by articulating social struggles, decolonial education has the potential to become a true engine of social, cultural, economic, ideological, and militant-political transformation (Santos et al., 2024, p. 28).

It cannot be ignored that the paths to a decolonial pedagogical praxis demand, above all, a rupture with the traditional school paradigm. Education, when detached from the context and listening to historically marginalized voices, reproduces coloniality. Therefore, emancipatory pedagogical practices need to emerge from the territory, the body and memory. That said, for Simpson (2017), "[...] the school can be a space for reexistence if it learns to listen to the territory" (p. 92). In addition, Freire points out that the "[...] liberating education is not depositing contents, but constructing meanings" (1970, p. 72). This implies, therefore, a continuous process of decolonization of pedagogical thinking, which involves the criticism of the prescriptive curriculum, standardized assessment, and the epistemic monoculture imposed by neoliberal guidelines. Decolonial pedagogical praxis

must be anchored in the concrete experiences of students, recognizing their territories, languages and memories as legitimate foundations for the production of knowledge. It is not a matter of denying modern science, but of centering it as the only way to access knowledge. Decolonial pedagogy is thus made at the crossroads between the denunciation of coloniality and the announcement of new possible horizons.

As a result, the educator committed to cognitive justice does not act as a transmitter of ready-made content, but as a facilitator of the dialogue between epistemologies. As curricula open up to pluriversality, the school ceases to be a space of silencing to become a territory of recognition. Thus, hooks states: "[...] decolonial pedagogy needs to recover the dignity of all ways of knowing" (2013, p. 122). In addition, "[...] the plural curriculum must be woven with the voices that history has tried to silence" (Walsh, 2019, p. 106). The training of the decolonial teacher therefore involves their willingness to listen, welcome and transform the knowledge that emerges from resistance, and not simply tolerate diversity as something peripheral. The school, in this sense, should not be an instance of domestication of difference, but a space where differences can flourish as educational powers. It is up to the educator, in this process, not only to transmit content, but to act as a political subject that recognizes education as an act of liberation and insurgency.

Decolonial education, by articulating with counter-hegemonic movements, can act as a powerful instrument of social transformation. This transformation requires a continuous commitment to criticism and reflection on educational practices, as well as on the power relations that permeate these practices. In this way, education becomes a dynamic space of struggle, where knowledge is not only transmitted, but collectively constructed from the experiences and needs of local subjects. [...] By valuing and integrating diverse knowledge, by promoting critical pedagogy, and by articulating social struggles, decolonial education has the potential to become a true engine of social, cultural, economic, ideological, and militant-political transformation (Santos et al., 2024, p. 28).

It should be noted that the practice of freedom, so dear to Paulo Freire, requires active listening and radical openness to the other. It is not just about teaching, but about building meaning with the students, valuing their knowledge, their stories and their ways of life. Thus, "[...] the practice of freedom begins with the recognition of the other's word", says Freire (1971, p. 77). Likewise, hooks states that "[...] experience is the ethical foundation of every educational act" (2015, p. 101). In this sense, a decolonial praxis is only possible when the school takes on the challenge of breaking with the verticality of the pedagogical

relationship. In other words, it is necessary to refuse the banking model<sup>32</sup> of education and assume dialogicity as a structuring principle of knowledge construction. The practice of freedom is realized when the student ceases to be a passive recipient and becomes the protagonist of the educational process. This requires courage to face rigid curricular structures, timed school times and standardized assessments, because freedom requires time, listening and affection.

Thus, critical interculturality, as developed by Catherine Walsh, points to a political and pedagogical horizon that goes beyond mere contact between cultures. It requires structural ruptures with the colonial paradigms that format the modern school. That said, "[...] critical interculturality requires ruptures and not just encounters" (Walsh, 2013, p. 54). In other words, according to Smith (2007), "[...] teaching is also an act of insurgency when knowledge is denied" (p. 119). This conception breaks with the logic of liberal multiculturalism that tolerates difference without altering it structurally. On the contrary, critical interculturality requires institutional and epistemological transformation. The school, in this context, must be rethought as a territory of intense and unequal epistemological encounters, demanding affirmative policies of listening and recognition of oppressed worldviews. It is a matter of recognizing that difference is not an obstacle to education, but the very raw material of human formation.

Interculturality is an 'other' paradigm, which questions and modifies the coloniality of power, while at the same time making the colonial difference visible. By adding an 'other' epistemological dimension to this concept – a dimension conceived in relation to and through true experiences of subordination promulgated by coloniality – interculturality offers a way to think from difference and through decolonization and the construction and constitution of a radically different society. [...] The logic of interculturality compromises a knowledge and thought that is not isolated from dominant paradigms or structures; Out of necessity (and as a result of the process of coloniality) this logic 'knows' these paradigms and structures. And it is through this knowledge that 'other' knowledge is generated (Walsh, 2019, p. 27).

It is essential to note that, by proposing multi-epistemic and territorialized curricula, a transformation of the very concept of school is also proposed. It is not only a matter of

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<sup>32</sup> The banking model of education, as criticized by Paulo Freire, is characterized by an authoritarian and verticalized pedagogical practice, in which the teacher deposits ready-made content in the students, treated as empty and passive containers. This conception of teaching disregards the lived experience of the students, their histories, cultures and knowledge, and reinforces the logic of the reproduction of dominant knowledge, aligned with the interests of the current order. By denying dialogue and problematization, the banking model contributes to the maintenance of structures of oppression and to the erasure of popular and ancestral epistemologies. In opposition to this paradigm, decolonial education claims a dialogical, horizontal and critical pedagogy, based on listening, the exchange of knowledge and the recognition of students as historical subjects and producers of knowledge. See: FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 63. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2019.

including new contents, but of reorganizing school knowledge based on other logics and temporalities. For Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the "[...] pluriepistemic curricula create bridges between lifeworlds" (2017, p. 116). Simpson, in turn, states that "[...] the territory is a pedagogical master who teaches through coexistence" (p. 86). A decolonial curriculum, therefore, needs to be sensitive to the languages, rituals, and times of the subjects who inhabit it. It must be built with the collectives, and not just for them. This means valuing knowledge that is born from the land, the body and the collectivity, such as prayers, graphics, planting methods and care practices. By territorializing the curriculum, it is recognized that knowledge is not universal, but rooted and situated.

Therefore, not only school content, but also methods and forms of evaluation must be rethought from a decolonial perspective. The standardization of knowledge, typical of neoliberal logic, needs to be replaced by the valorization of epistemic diversity and community bonding. Thus, for Freire "[...] dialogue is the mediation that humanizes the process of learning" (1996, p. 88). In addition, "[...] ancestral knowledge does not ask for recognition, it imposes itself through life", according to Escobar (2018, p. 135). Evaluation practices that ignore the cultural context and the time of learning make essential formative processes invisible. A decolonial pedagogical praxis requires formative evaluations that recognize the trajectories of the subjects, their modes of expression and their ways of solving problems based on their reality. This also implies the displacement of the teacher from a position of judge to that of companion in the formative journey.

In this sense, decolonizing education involves valuing local, indigenous, and ancestral knowledge, which is often relegated to the background or completely ignored in educational institutions. The practice of integrating this knowledge into the school curriculum is critical for students to develop a solid identity and a broader understanding of the world around them. This does not mean replacing one knowledge with another, but creating a space where multiple voices and experiences can coexist, enriching the teaching-learning process. [...] Educational practices that prioritize interaction, collaboration, and critical reflection are essential for students to be able to actively engage in their learning (Santos et al., 2024, p. 21).

Despite this, advances in the institutionalization of pedagogical proposals based on cognitive justice are still timid. The resistance of school structures and bureaucratic apparatuses reveals how much the coloniality of knowledge is rooted in everyday practices. For Walsh (2013), "[...] traditional knowledge is insurgent because it challenges the boundaries of the epistemologically acceptable" (p. 69). According to Escobar (2018, p. 133), "[...] epistemic sovereignty is the right to think with one's own categories and feel with one's own myths." The difficulty in breaking with the curricular canons, the lack of critical

teacher training and the absence of public policies aimed at the decolonization of the school reveal that the fight against epistemicide is still a project under construction. However, the growing presence of indigenous, quilombola, and peripheral educators has tensioned these limits and built new possibilities.

In this way, the school needs to stop being a space for the reproduction of Eurocentric logics to become a territory of reexistence, where historically subalternized identities and knowledge can flourish. That said, "[...] ancestry is an epistemic field that challenges the cumulative logic of knowledge and proposes a knowledge that cares", according to Walsh (2019, p. 104). Dussel, thus, states: "[...] every emancipation project begins with the liberation of the imaginary" (2000, p. 91). Reexistence is, therefore, the refusal of an epistemic life guided by the denial of oneself. It is about affirming the right to dream, spirituality, memory and bonding as the foundations of education. In this sense, traditional communities, *terreiros*, villages and peripheries offer methodological and ethical clues for the reinvention of the school.

Ancestry, thought of as an epistemic field, allows us to break with the Western linearity of time and history, to affirm other forms of knowledge, linked to memory, spirituality and the body-territory. [...] It is in this knowledge that resistances and reexistences are forged that escape the logic of colonial domination. It is not about folklore or frozen tradition, but about living ways of existing and knowing that defy epistemicide. [...] Decolonial education feeds on these sources to transform the school into a territory of roots, care, and dignity (Walsh, 2019, p. 104).

Even so, decolonial praxis cannot do without the affective bond between educators and students, because it is on affection that true listening and openness to the other are founded. For Smith (2007: 87), "[...] the epistemic recognition of the other is a condition for any project of emancipation". Consequently, "[...] there is only dialogue when there is a willingness to open oneself to the unknown with respect", confirms Freire (1971, p. 85). Affection<sup>33</sup>, often ignored in rationalist pedagogical projects, is a structuring element of a humanized education. It allows knowledge to be shared in a generous and welcoming way,

<sup>33</sup> Affection, often neglected in rationalist pedagogical approaches, reveals itself as a structuring element of a truly humanized education. The methodological proposal of the "Pedagogy of Encounter" (2025) highlights the centrality of the affective bond, sensitive listening, and mutual recognition in the relationship between teacher and student, going beyond the mere transmission of content. Inspired by the theoretical contributions of Paulo Freire, bell hooks and Haim Ginott, this approach proposes an educational praxis that values presence, trust and ethical commitment, resignifying teaching authority through horizontality and coherence. By incorporating affection as an ethical posture, the "Pedagogy of Encounter" transforms the classroom into a space of dignity, dialogue, and care, promoting a more inclusive and transformative education. See: DOS SANTOS, Antonio Nacílio Sousa et al. For a "Pedagogy of Encounter" – Bonding, listening, affection and recognition in the teacher-student relationship in humanized education based on the theoretical contributions of Paulo Freire, bell hooks and Haim Ginott. *Revista Aracê*, São José dos Pinhais, v. 7, n. 5, p. 21416-21459, 2025. Available at: <https://periodicos.newsciencepubl.com/arace/article/view/4816/6731>. Accessed on: 11 Apr. 2025.



creating an environment conducive to criticism, listening and co-authorship of meanings. In many situations, in contexts of vulnerability, affection is the link between knowledge and dignity.

Likewise, it is urgent to reinvent the relationship between theory and practice in teacher training. Teachers need to be recognized as intellectuals committed to social transformation and not as mere applicators of techniques. Diante said, for hooks (2013: 1120), "[...] to decolonize education is to include the masters of life as teachers of the world." Thus, "[...] the decolonial curriculum is not one that only mentions the other, but one that reconstructs itself with the other" (Walsh, 2013, p. 61). Teacher training must be crossed by intercultural experiences, visits to traditional communities, reading authors from the global South and collective experiences of learning from the territories. Teacher educators need, first of all, to educate themselves in listening, epistemic humility and pedagogical co-authorship.

The training of educators is a fundamental pillar for a decolonial education. Training teachers in teaching methodologies that dialogue with traditional and indigenous knowledge is essential to ensure that they become agents of social transformation. [...] This implies the creation of formative spaces that include active listening to communities, valuing lived experience as a source of knowledge, and breaking with pedagogical practices based only on the reproduction of content. Education must be continuous and connected to the territories, social struggles, and specific cultural contexts in which educators work (Santos et al., 2024, p. 24).

Soon after this recognition, the need for public policies emerges that sustain this pedagogical reorientation, with continuing education, plural teaching materials and strengthening of schools in vulnerable territories. Thus, Santos states that "[...] cognitive justice requires listening to the historical silences that were imposed by epistemicide" (2017, p. 91). That said, "[...] the school, by devaluing orality and rituality, breaks the subjects' links with their own history", says Frigotto (2010, p. 73). These policies need to be committed to confronting epistemic racism and to fostering localized curricula, designed with and not only for communities. For this, it is necessary to abandon the logic of adaptation and advance in the logic of co-authorship.

Thus, it can be affirmed that decolonial pedagogical praxis is, above all, an ethical commitment to life and to the plurality of ways of existing and knowing. It is, therefore, a political choice by a school that recognizes diversity as a power, and not as a problem. In view of this, Mignolo (2006: 97) states that "[...] Decolonial education is the ethical gesture of listening to the world that has been silenced." Santos (2017), in turn, attests that "[...] the knowledge of the South does not ask for permission: it requires recognition, listening and

reciprocity" (p. 114). In this way, this pedagogy is not only resistance, but invention. It is not reduced to a critique of the current system, but points out concrete paths for an education that recognizes, affirms and reinvents the worlds that fit in the world. And this is, without a doubt, the most radical form of pedagogical hope.

## CONCLUSION

When we revisit the role of the modern school in the process of social conformation, it becomes evident that it has historically operated as one of the main ideological apparatuses of the State, as Althusser already warned. Far from being restricted to the mere transmission of contents, the school has consolidated itself as a space for the production of subjectivities, the validation of narratives and the reproduction of the values of the dominant order. In this sense, he actively participated in the project of erasing non-Western epistemologies, denying validity to forms of knowledge arising from orality, spirituality, the body and territory. It should be noted that this silencing did not occur directly only, but through the curricular structuring, the choice of legitimate authors and the standardization of the ways of teaching. Thus, the knowledge of the global South, deeply linked to lived experience, was classified as inferior, folkloric or imprecise, being replaced by Eurocentric, scientific, and disciplinary knowledge.

In addition, it should be noted that the coloniality of knowledge – as elaborated by Aníbal Quijano – is not limited to a legacy of classical colonialism, but presents itself as a structuring logic that persists in current educational systems. In other words, it is not only a matter of inserting Afro-indigenous content in the curricula, but of recognizing that the school model itself was constituted on the denial of ancestral epistemologies. As can be seen, this exclusionary matrix transforms knowledge into a device for the selection and hierarchization of knowledge, marginalizing those who escape the logic of objectivity and linearity. In this way, the insurgent knowledges of the global South not only tension this system, but also propose an ontological rupture with the modern paradigm.

Therefore, it is essential to observe that the epistemic insurgency promoted by the peoples of the South does not represent a demand for inclusion in the current molds, but a proposition of new ways of life and learning. Reexistence, a concept that is intertwined with Mignolo's epistemic disobedience, is not just resistance: it is the creation of worlds. From this perspective, teaching is not repeating content, but cultivating relationships, valuing listening, affection and the bond with the land. It is in this soil that educational proposals

that challenge school epistemicide germinate, valuing the memories, struggles and cosmologies of oppressed peoples.

Likewise, it is worth noting that the decolonial turn, by shifting the epistemic axis from modernity to pluriversality, proposes a new ethical and political horizon for education. It is a matter of abandoning the illusion of neutrality and universality in order to affirm the legitimacy of other forms of knowledge, based on orality, circularity, spirituality and the relationship with the territory. Therefore, this turn is not merely theoretical, but profoundly practical, as it requires curricular reforms, critical teacher training and openness to dialogue between knowledges.

Therefore, it is important to highlight that critical interculturality, proposed by Catherine Walsh, is not limited to the harmonious encounter between cultures, but implies a rupture with the colonial logic that hierarchizes and dominates. In other words, it is not a matter of celebrating difference as exoticism, but of recognizing conflict, historical inequality, and the need for a pedagogy of listening and confrontation. For this reason, the decolonial school needs to be a space for the production of new meanings, where the knowledge of the South is not only tolerated, but recognized as central to human formation.

Therefore, it should be noted that the curriculum is neither neutral nor universal, but a historical and political device that reflects the disputes for the control of knowledge. The coloniality of knowledge instituted a curricular organization that marginalizes collective, oral and spiritual knowledge, transforming diversity into a lack and the different into a deficiency. In this sense, the decolonial curriculum needs to be woven with the subjects, based on their memories, their pains and their dreams. It must make room for Afro-indigenous epistemologies, for knowledge of the territory and for the pedagogies of ancestry.

It should be noted that, for the peoples of the South, knowledge is not separate from life, but is built in the body, on the ground and in the relationship with other beings. Modern instrumental reason has fragmented knowledge, devaluing the sensible, the affective and the sacred. In contrast, decolonial pedagogies propose an integration between mind, body and spirit, between knowing, doing and feeling. This implies a radical reconfiguration of the school space, transforming it into a territory of life and encounter.

Therefore, it cannot be ignored that teacher training plays a decisive role in this process of epistemic transition. Teachers need to be trained not only to teach content, but to critically read the world, listen to insurgent knowledge, and reconstruct the curriculum in dialogue with epistemic diversity. It is necessary to abandon the idea of the educator as a

neutral transmitter and recognize him as a historical subject, rooted in territories and committed to transformation.

In the same way, it is worth noting that the decolonial school is a school at a crossroads: a place where epistemes meet, where ruptures are produced and where possibilities are built. It does not reject modern knowledge, but places it in relation, in tension and in dialogue with ancestral, popular and community knowledge. It is a matter of breaking with the monoculture of knowledge and affirming an ecology of knowledge, as proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, where all knowledge has something to teach and something to learn.

In this way, it can be affirmed that the insurgent knowledges of the global South, articulated with the decolonial turn, offer concrete paths for the construction of a plural, critical education committed to cognitive justice. They denounce epistemic violence, but they also announce other forms of life, relationship and knowledge. Decolonial education, in this sense, is more than a pedagogical proposal: it is an act of reexistence, of listening to the silenced and of reinventing the world from the margins.

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