

South-South and South-North Dialogues, Freire and Colonialism: the Necessary Connection

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, we locate Freire within an understanding of colonialism and, thereby, read his work within necessary South-South and South-North critical dialogues. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]) is a foundational text, not only for critical pedagogy, but also for humanities in Latin America. Few would doubt that his work was influenced by Marxism and that it reflects and constitutes key currents within both Marxism writ large and Latin American Marxism specifically. Nevertheless, what could be interesting and what we focus on here is, not explaining the Marxist frameworks (again) in Freire's work, but rather re-reading his work within his particular historical context, including an understanding of the confluences of colonialism, class, race, and servitude that persist in the present. Following Adriana Puiggrós continued re-reading and revitalizing of his contributions, we attempt to portray a general map of Freire's connection with colonialism in Latin America to better leverage his thinking as part of emancipatory social movements and institutional interventions in the present. We emphasize leveraging Freire here because we find his work to be a necessary constituent in both South-South and South-North dialogues.

KEYWORDS: Paulo Freire, colonialism, Latin America, critical pedagogy.

Diálogos Sur-Sur y Sur-Norte, Freire y el colonialismo: la conexión necesaria

RESUMEN

En este artículo, estamos posicionando a Freire dentro del tema del colonialismo, y por tanto, hemos tratado de leerlo en el entorno de los diálogos Sur-Sur y Sur-Norte. El libro de Paulo Freire *Pedagogía del Oprimido* (2000 [1970]) es un texto fundacional, no sólo para la pedagogía crítica, sino también para las humanidades en América Latina. Pocos dudarían que *Pedagogía del Oprimido* de Paulo Freire fue influenciada por el marxismo y que este libro refleja y constituye una de las principales corrientes del marxismo mundial tanto como del marxismo latinoamericano. Sin embargo, lo que sería interesante, y lo que consideramos nuestra tarea aquí, no es explicar la perspectiva marxista (otra vez) en el trabajo de Freire, sino *re-leer* a Freire dentro de su contexto histórico incluyendo un exhaustivo conocimiento de las confluencias del colonialismo, clase, raza y servidumbre que persisten hasta el momento. Dándole seguimiento al trabajo de Adriana Puiggrós de releer y revitalizar las contribuciones de Freire, hemos tratado de mostrar un mapa general sobre la conexión del trabajo de Freire y el concepto de colonialismo en el contexto latinoamericano. Hemos realizado esto sobre el trabajo de Freire como parte de un diálogo necesario Sur-Sur, pero también para entender mejor a Freire como parte de los movimientos sociales e intervenciones institucionales emancipatorias en el momento presente. Escribimos este ensayo porque pensamos que los escritos de Freire son un constituyente necesario en los diálogos Sur-Sur y Sur-Norte.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Paulo Freire, colonialismo, América Latina, pedagogía crítica.

Introduction: contextualizing Freire's Work within South Contexts

As a Brazilian author, Freire created his work from poverty, but mostly from within conditions of inequality. For challenging inequality, Freire was imprisoned by dictatorship for seventy-two days, in 1964. After that, Freire's exile in Chile began. He would live in many countries, including the U.S. In the 80s Freire was able to come back to his homeland, Brazil.

Even after the Cold War and the end of official dictatorships, Brazil is still the most unequal nation in Latin America. According to the World Bank, the Gini index of Freire's native country, Brazil, was 0.55 in 2009 while 0.47 for México in 2010 and 0.43 for Angola in 2009.¹ Additionally, it is interesting that according to the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) the simple average of the Gini coefficient of the occupational earnings of those employed is similar to the per capita income of Latin America². This means that even if people work hard, they will face huge

1 See World Bank' Gini indicators available in <http://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/SI.POV.GINI/countries?display=map>

2 See United Nations, CEPAL, Social Panorama of Latin America 2012 available in <http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/5/48455/PanoramaSocial2012Docl-Rev.pdf>

inequality in their incomes, not due to their work performance, but rather because of living in a poor and unequal region: Latin America. Freire's writings both emerges from and is co-constituted by these terrains of Latin American inequality.

From the decolonial perspective, this disastrous scenario is caused by the phenomenon of colonialism) as the constitutive element of the current class inequality in Latin America. Leveraging Quijano's work (2000, 2007) is key to address what we understand as colonialism and coloniality of power. Quijano, who, in turn, draws on world systems (e.g., Grosfoguel & Cervantes Rodriguez, 2000, 2000; Wallerstein, 1991/2007) and Latin American traditions of dependency theory (e.g., Gunder Frank, 1971; González Casanova, 2006), points out that while colonialism has formally ended in the XIX century, coloniality persists on symbolic structures in society that reproduce in a similar fashion those inequalities created from colonial domination. We extend decolonial perspectives via Quijano's notion of "coloniality of power" (2001, p. 201) as analytic concept in re-reading Freire below.

Aníbal Quijano (1992, 2000, 2007) and many others help us understand that present day globalization is "the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of the Americas" (p. 201) that historically and presently instantiates a complex matrix of domination "deploying the idea of race...that permeates important dimensions of inequality and power, including and articulated by a specific rationality, eurocentrism" (p. 201). Quijano's conceptualizations drive key investigations that follow into the coloniality of being (Maldonado Torres, 2007), knowledge (Lander, 2000), gender (Lugones, 2008), cognition (Anzaldúa, 2015; Sousa Santos, 2006) and other areas.

Quijano's reading of historical colonialism and its continued racialized coloniality of the present is fundamental to our analysis of Freire's work here. Quijano's notions of the coloniality of power, importantly extended by others (Mignolo, 2002; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2010), are now articulated through what has been conceptualized by Grosfoguel (2010) as "the power matrix of the modern colonial world" (p. 7). Though far from being articulated as social science "framework," we believe that this signaling of analytic content supports our aesthetic purposes in keeping with out deployment of the literary genre of the essay, the genre that as the mainstay of Freire's work as well.

Returning to Freire's work and context, Donaldo Macedo explains in the introduction in 30th Anniversary Edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire has a debt "to a philosophical tradition that included Marx, Gramsci, Hegel, and Sartre, among others" (Freire, 2000 [1970], p. 25). Nevertheless, in addition to the Marxist perspective, in the present moment, we believe it is exigent to pursue the following

analytical questions through Freire's work: To what extent current inequalities in Latin America are related to colonialism and how did Freire and his collaborators and friends understand colonialism. Our collectivist-materialist dreaming of reality (Anzaldúa, 2015; Lenin, 1902/2016; Guevara, 2006; Marcos, 2001) parts company with ungenerous dismissals of Freire and instead attempt to re-read him in the present in ways that both understand his contributions and recognize his errors. By pursuing and modestly answer the colonial questions, we hope to critique, revitalize, and keep Freire in the key South-South and South-North dialogues (Jupp, 2023).

Here, we explore the connection between Freire and colonialism, reviewing his work for both his views into colonialism in Africa and his oversights and errors into colonialism in Latin America, especially as read through (Quijano 1992; 2000, 2007) and other discussed above. First, we attempt to identify how Freire speaks explicitly about colonialism in his masterpiece, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) where we can see how Freire draws on Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and even from Pope John XXIII to address this concept. Although Freire in his early works such as *Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1969) speaks of colonialism in Brazil, he refers to colonialism as a problem of a past historical period rather than as a problem in the present. While it is important to add the term critical pedagogy to the conversation on Freire most of the times, it is critical to address how this term has dismissed as *educación popular* the critical pedagogies created from many Latin American countries and social movements. Nevertheless, the term critical pedagogy implies the folklorization of the critical pedagogies from Latin American labeled just as *educación popular* (Fregoso Bailon, 2021a).

Later we looked into Freire's *Pedagogy In Process: The Letters to Guinea Bissau* (1977). Here Freire addresses the concept of colonialism most broadly and directly. One of the problematic points in this respect is that Freire clearly identifies the problem of colonialism as being about Africa, but not about Latin America. In the following sections we study other Freire's works such as *La educación como práctica de la libertad*, (1969); *Pedagogía del Oprimido*, (2000[1970]); *Pedagogía de la esperanza*, (1993); *Política y Educación*, (1993); *Pedagogía de la Autonomía*, (1996); *Cartas a quien pretende enseñar*, (1994); *Pedagogía de la Indignación*, (2001) and Freire's collaboration with Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: reading the word and the world* (1987). Finally we highlight that while Freire did not fully address the concept of colonialism, Freire's followers and collaborators did. Most importantly, many others who have learned from Freire's legacy are expanding and relating his work to other issues needed today, such as modernity, postmodernity, neoliberalism, among others

Why South-South and South-North Dialogues?

Our connection of Freire with colonialism attempts to historically locate and re-read Freire within continental Latin American traditions, as well as within Latin American pedagogical studies. Though self-evident from Author 1's position as Mexican educator and Author 2's position as borderland teacher and teacher educator, we find it necessary to emphasize (a) *first* the necessary South-South dialogues (Jupp et al., 2020; Jupp, 2023) and (b) *second* analectic, South-led, South-North dialogues (Fregoso Bailón, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2021a, 2021b, 2024, Jupp, 2023). Both South-South and South-led, South-North dialogues have distinct aims. But first, we will be precise about what we mean by Global South and Global North, and their intertwined and entangled relationships.

Our understanding of Global North and Global South follow and extend our analyses above on historical colonies and present-day coloniality (Black 1988; Bolívar Echeverría, 2010/2016; De Alba, 2007; Mignolo, 2002; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2010; Quijano, 2000; Wallerstein, 2004), discussed in section one above. We understand *Global North* as pan Europeanizing extractivist vision and project of Europe, the US, and subregional hegemons that have historically depleted natural resources and engaged in exploitative labor relations. Though specifically articulating a located European and US Anglo Saxon project, nonetheless the term Global North is best understood as an articulated network of extractivist economic enunciations-circuits that reproduce European and United Statesian domination-globalization. Therefore, Global North networks also have strongly instantiated presences in Global South territories, such as ex-colonial subhegemonic metropolises with "developed world" facades, fast food franchises, and national offices of multinational corporations. Global North instantiations in the Global South represent "development" often made ostensible by Global South regimes functioning in subhegemonic ways as brokers to Global North interests. Contrasting with Global North, we understand Global South as the dark side of this pan Europeanizing extractivist vision and project.

Global South represents vast continental bioregions plundered and sacked by Global North economic projects that bleed natural resources and exploited racialized labor value toward Global North treasurization-accumulation financial cycles, that, at a world level, articulates the present 90/10 relationship of Global North/Global South wealth/consumption relations. Global South helps us describe Europe and the US's extractivist economic designs which continues today and has represented a 500 year dark night of colonial domination conjugating supremacists racialized histori-

cal, economic, social, and knowledge relations. These relations presently articulate colonial relations between Global North capitalist centers in Europe, the US, and Asia with so-called “under-developed” continents, bioregions, and counties of African, Latin America, and Asia, previously called “Third World.” On Latin American terrains even prior to the paternalistic Monroe Doctrine, Global South has been articulated via historical colonies and present day coloniality manipulated via Global South subhegemonic coercive cooperation on extractivist projects. Yet beyond coercive cooperation, the US has advanced a countless number of *coup d’ tats* with special reference to mid 19th century relations to the present exemplified, to name just a few of these, north American support and open political manipulation-intervention into De la Huerta in México, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Duvalier in Haiti, Batista in Cuba, Pinochet in Chile, and Somoza in Nicaragua, to name but a few.

It is with two distinct dialogues—South-South and South-led North dialogues—

that we wish to re-read Freire in this essay. Reading Freire within South-South dialogues, we follow Freire and others in aiming to protect our minds and those of our students from colonized intellectual habits of always importing ostensibly “new” European, US, and Anglophone frameworks and resources and instead think historically and contextually from within our own bioregional trajectories and using our archives. South-South dialogues require connecting Freire within the specific anti-imperialist Marxian praxes, with special emphasis on Mariátegui’s (1925, 1928/2007) trajectory. Following Manuel Gonzalez Prada’s (1895/1997, 1908a, 1908b) transnational localizations of Russian and Spanish Marxian currents, we emphasize Mariátegui’s (1925, 1928/2007) historical analysis of continued colonial European and US economic dominance via oligarchic feudal *gamonales* within world economic systems’ extractivist exploitation. Following these currents, we connect Freire with historical resources in Neruda (1950/1993), García Márquez (1955/1986), Galeano (1971/2008) along with sociological connections to dependency theory (e.g., Gunder Frank, 1967; Marini, 1972; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, Prebisch, 2016;), world systems analysis (e.g., Wallerstein, 1991/2007) and coloniality (Maldonado Torres, 2007; Lugones, 2008; Quijano, 2000), along with testimonio critical narrativizing methods (Barrios de Chüngara & Viezzer, 1975; Menchú & Burgos, 1983).

Further supporting South-South dialogues, we emphasize an archive of Latin American pedagogical studies, including critical pedagogies antedating Freire’s work. Aníbal Ponce’s *Educación y Lucha de Clases* originally published in 1934 and which he already reflects the tangible and concrete role of education in the

systematic reproduction of inequalities within colonial histories is key in this discussion. Among other antedating directions, we recovered *normalistas*-teachers's work such as Genaro Vázquez Rojas' and Lucio Cabañas Barrientos' with his *Partido de los Pobres* and his *Brigada Campesina de Ajusticiamiento* from the 1960s and 1970s along with Othón Salazar with the *Movimiento Revolucionario del Magisterio* (MRM) and Raul Ferrer's (1979) critical literacy campaigns associated with the Cuban Revolution.. Collaborating with and postdating Freire, we also took into consideration the theoretical work from Carlos Nuñez Hurtado (1971, 1985) and Oscar Jara (1984, 1992, 1998) who followed Freire's legacy. We also follow the necessary National Autonomous University of Mexico/Argentina connection pointing out critical pedagogy's negative dialectic (Díaz Barriga, 1985) and subsequent crises amidst broader generalized left crises (De Alba, 1995/2006, 2007) along with the need to vindicate Freire's notion of generative praxes (Puiggrós, 2004/2023/2010) from new left nihilisms within North readings (e.g., Apple, 1979/1990, 1982/1995; Giroux, 1981, 1983/2001; Illich, 1970). Important for us in the South-South dialogue is, not providing an exhaustive genealogy of everything but rather simply locating Freire as an interlocutor within an already existing and continuing South-South dialogue on Latin American critical pedagogies, a dialogue whose interlocution we participate in with our students.

Reading Freire within South-led, South-North dialogues, represents an imperative project. In this endeavor, we aim to advance a difficult and problematic (perhaps impossible) yet, nonetheless, exigent interlocutionary transnational and authentic left alliances (e.g., Amin, 2006; Jupp, 2023;; Marcos, 2000; Paraskeva, 2022; Santos, 2006; Santos et al., 2007).

This interrogative insists that that subalternized intellectuals have (always-already) existed within nexus of knowledge/power in which such a power dynamics in academia (i.e. re-stated in South contexts as obligatory familiarity with North canon and English) is automatically assumed, normalized, and hegemonic common sense among subaltern intellectuals. Within the quotidian workings of North intellectual production even critical intellectual production, we follow Mexican curriculum theorist Alicia de Alba (1995/2006) in noting "in the immense majority of cases for First World intellectuals" subalternized intellectual production "...does not exist" (p. 113).

Our interrogative also insists on historically locating the bioregions of knowledge production-consumption in which Global North knowledge production historically results in eugenic onticide and epistemicide of subalternized realities and knowledges (Paraskeva, 2022). Following Paraskeva's (2022) work in curriculum

theory, the onticide and epistemicide refers to the imposition of whitening and eugenic Global North solutions, with special emphasis on functionalist-positivist “problem solving” as a means of both eradicating Global South realities but also invisibilizing and disappearing local racialized and subaltern knowledge based and practices. It is important to follow the racialized content of the onticide-epistemicide impositions of Global North ontological and epistemological practices, embodied and made apparent in the mercantilization of, to name just one sector, of what the Global North would call *retailing*. Documented in Puiggrós’ *Imperialismo y Educación en Latinoamérica* (1980/2015) early on, the onticide and epistemicide resulted in grand schemes of functionalist-pragmatic and also racialized “problem-solving” massively proliferated under euphemisms of economic development, marketization, and individual consumers, all of which, after the more than 50 year experiment of (neo) “liberalizations” has resulted in a massive wealth transfer to Global North centers followed by equally massive re-territorializations of Global North by Global South (coerced) migrations with bioregional economies *sacked*. Such economic programs in Latin America —first advanced by the U.S. State Department during the Eisenhower administration, later handed off to international agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, or United Nations, and in the 2000s, deposited within private publishing entities like Pearson— have historically advanced, not only the racialized onticide and epistemicide of bioregional and sustainable knowledges, but also a continual administration of racialized cheap labor along with extractivism of natural resources.

Yet, perhaps most treacherous in this difficult South-led, South-North encounter is folklorization of Latin American knowledges. Precisely *here*, it is important to point out that the distinction between the *Educación Popular* (Gomez & Puiggrós, 1986) as trafficked in the North as a clear sign of a folklorization of Latin American thought that makes evident an epistemic racism providing evidence of colonization built from Latin America. In extractivist knowledge processes, Latin American critical pedagogies are reduced to popular folklore. Recently, the Zapatista experience in Mexico (Caudillo Felix, 2014, Silva Montes, 2019) and the *normalista* epistemologies (Fregoso Bailon, 2021a, 2021b, 2024) have made it evident that Latin American knowledges do not exist in the Western canon seriously, only as appendix of “interesting practices” reconstituted as U.S. marginalized Anglophone “identities”. Within Latin American contexts, it is imperative to recognize that critical pedagogies represent, not folkloric-symbolic content for Anglophone North identity consumption among academics, but rather instrumental and intellectual-epistemic matters that includes, among other initiatives, the need to democratize access to technology,

the internet and social networks in the education, and social-historical critical literacies (Lay Arellano, 2018; Le Mur, 2018) that are also part of the struggle against colonialism in the creation of knowledge as a process that includes the digital production of content. We emphasize that theorizing and articulating an authentic South-led, South-North dialogue represents an exceedingly complex task that must recognize historical antagonisms of onticides and epistemicides (Paraskeva, 2022) along with labor exploitation and resource extractivism of economic development arguments outlined under discussions Global North/Global South relations above. Adding to the complexity, this dialogue must also be protected from Global North folklorization tied to Anglophone academic identity consumption.

Our notes below, reading Freire's connection to colonialism, support our aims on addition to the Marxist perspective in Freire's work the conversation on how colonialism is also a problem that explains the inequalities Freire attempted to eradicate. The South-South dialogue is one in which reading Freire is located within a panorama of historical Latin American Marxian interlocutory efforts, specifically read as part of a long tradition through which Freire runs. The South-led, South-North dialogue seeks pedagogical leadership with North interlocutors in which Latin America interlocutors clearly confront historical antagonists of onticide and epistemicide, labor exploitation and natural resource extractivism, and North folklorization and identitarian appropriating infantilisms.

Colonialism, some notes from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to *Pedagogy of Hope*

The references to colonialism in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]) are few, but significant. One of them is a quote from Frantz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968) that Freire uses to addresses how violence among the oppressed is exercised by each other:

The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa. . . . While the settler or the policeman has the right the livelong day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last

resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-a-vis his brother (Fanon as cit. In Freire, 2000 [1970], p. 62).

What is significant is that Fanon's quote addresses many aspects of colonialism (historical, geo-political, etc.) at a deep level, rather than only about violence between the colonized.

Another one is from Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1967) especially about the question on "...How could he hate the colonizers and yet admire them so passionately?" (Memmi as cited in Freire, 2000 [1970], p. 63). Freire uses that quote to address the attraction and the internalization of the oppressors by the oppressed. Another reference from Memmi appears when Freire talks about how the colonizer constructs the image of the colonized: "By his accusation the colonizer establishes the colonized as being lazy..." (Memmi, as cited in Freire, 2000 [1970], p. 140).

Another reference in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* about colonial aspects appears when Freire is explaining the way in which Pope John XXIII in the Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* and in articles 171 and 172 refers to the fact that giving aid to pauper countries is another form of colonialism (Freire, 2000 [1970]). The Ernesto "Che" Guevara's journals *Diarios de motocicleta: Notas de un viaje por América Latina, Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria cubana* and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* are clear reference on colonialism as imperialism. Nevertheless, Freire did not go deeper into the topic of colonialism in his most famous book. It is Donaldo Macedo (2000) who further addresses colonialism in the introduction to the 30th Anniversary Edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) but he only talks about his experiences as a Cape Verdean individual living in the United States. Macedo (2000) explains that in many of their conversations Freire accepted that it would be necessary to expand the category of "oppressed" more deeply. As Macedo describes: "In a long dialogue we had during his last visit to New York—in fact, the last time we worked together—he [Freire] again said that although one cannot reduce everything to class, class remains an important factor in our understanding of multiple forms of oppression" (2000, p. 14). Macedo explains how Freire tried to incorporate race, class and even colonialism in his work; nevertheless it seems that colonialism is reduced to an appendix of the class analysis:

For example, he [Freire] resisted the essentialist approach of reducing all analysis to one monolithic entity of race. For instance, African functionaries who assimilate to colonial cultural values constitute a distinct class with very different ideological cultural values and aspirations than the bulk of the population (p.14).

It is significant how colonial issues are narrowed through the lenses of class analysis: "African functionaries who assimilate to colonial cultural values constitute a distinct *class*" (italics added).

The book where Freire directly addresses colonialism is *Pedagogy In Process: The Letters to Guinea Bissau* (2011 [1977]). The African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde islands (PAIGC) as well as its leader, Amílcar Cabral gained independence from Portugal in 1974. One year later, the Commission on Education of the independent government invited Freire and his team of the Institute for Cultural Action (IDAC) to develop a national literacy program in Guinea-Bissau. *The Letters to Guinea Bissau* (2011 [1977]) mostly consists of the letters-reports that Freire sent to Mario Cabral, the Commissioner of State for Education and Culture in Guinea Bissau, in which Freire reflects on the importance of colonialism, a national literacy program and the political literacy of the people of that African nation.

In this book colonialism is a foundational social structure for Freire. He discussed colonialism that the Guinea and the Cape Verde society faced at that time. Freire makes interesting contributions to the understanding of the importance of the rupture with the positivity of the colonizer's framework in order to achieve a complete independence.

Freire denounces in his letter-reports the fact that four centuries of Portuguese colonialism left behind a "civilizatory" legacy of a 90% illiterate population in Guinea Bissau, but at the same time Freire brought out the problem of what kind of pedagogical work is necessary to do in a country that is officially illiterate, but politically highly literate. This problem led Freire to reflect on the fact that the "civilizatory" colonial effort (Freire, 2011 [1978], p. 14) of the Portuguese colonizers was about imposing such as perspective on which history and culture of the colonized had started with the invasion of the colonizers; in other words, the idea of before the colonizers was nothing.

In this manner, Freire in *The Letters to Guinea Bissau* (2011 [1977]) pointed out how the first President of Cape Verde from 1975 to 1991, Aristides Maria Pereira, talked about the need of decolonizing the mind, or what Amílcar Cabral called the "reafricanization of mentalities" (Freire, 2011 [1977]) p. 24).

On the other hand, in *Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*, (1994, [1993]) Freire mentioned again his experience in Africa, but particularly only to describe how he, along with the people of Sau Tomé Island, in the Guinea's Gulf, problematized what teaching and learning meant in West Africa, but without going further into the topic of colonialism.

Some years later, Macedo and Freire in *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (1987) would reflect together about their experience in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. In this book, both construct a dialogue in which they emphasized the importance of language and literacy programs as a key element in maintaining or destroying Portuguese colonialism. They insisted that literacy programs should be based on the aim of the re-appropriation of the African culture: "In the struggle to re-create a society, the reconquest by the people of their own world becomes a fundamental factor" (p. 233).

Even though the latter is a great epistemological awareness of the kind of inquiry that fighting against colonialism requires, it seems that Freire still applied notions of a conventional dimension of colonialism about a direct invasion of a foreign European country against a remote one.

In some other of his works, Freire expresses the conception of colonialism as a thing of the past, especially taking as examples the case of his native Brazil and Africa. Especially in *Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1969), Freire talked in depth about the colonial *historical* era in Brazil having as a key element Alejandrina's Bulas in 1493 by which Pope Alejandro VI distributed the colonial right to the Spanish and Portuguese empires to invade the American continent.

Freire described the importance of the sugar refinery and the *hacienda* in the colonial and feudal control of Brazil by the Portuguese oligarchies and the role of the external and dominant authority from Portugal as the metropoli in relation to Brazil as the colony. What is interesting is how Freire talks about "our colonization [the Brazilian one]" (p.31) "our colonizers [the Portuguese]" (p. 38) in past tense. Nevertheless, in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1993a) Freire affirms that Brazil is still a colonial country as it was in the sixteenth century when it was only a region to be inhabited in order to be exploited by Portugal, since it was, and still is, known as a great fertile land. In *Pedagogy of Hope* (1993a) Freire coins the term of *régimen esclavócrata* (slavery-cratic regime) where slavery, the latifundium and the monoculture of the sugar cane were some of the most important elements of the colonial economy in Brazil in the next three centuries after the Portuguese invasion.

In *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (1996), Freire talked again about colonialism in past tense, since he explains in this book that the kind of control upon the oppressed is no longer the same as that between colonizer and colonized, but rather it is the control exercised by a bureaucratization of minds in which people face the world as a *fait accompli*.

Regarding colonialism in other countries, Freire in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1993a) talked again about colonialism in Africa, specifically in Mozambique and Tanzania.

He described how he spent some nights writing his reports about literacy while he was between Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Kitwe, Zambia transcribing oral stories from the people about the period “before the independence” (p. 180). Freire expressed again a traditional conception of colonialism as the direct appropriation of lands and peoples by a foreign country. For instance, he describes how a Tanzanian teacher described to him how the people were not allowed entry to beaches before independence from the United Kingdom between 1961 and 1963, since there were big signs saying “Blacks and dogs are not allowed” (p. 212).

In *Politics and Education* (1993b) and *Pedagogy of Hope* (1993a) Freire introduced himself into the debate of the late nineties about postmodernism that appeared as an exciting theme after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. At that time, many intellectuals tried to challenge Fukuyama’s conservative idea of “the end of History” (1992) and Freire was no exception. Freire proposes a progressive postmodernism as a way to understand history as a latent possibility. In the posthumously released book *Pedagogy of Indignation* (2001) Freire expressed his concern about the relationships between parents and children and teachers and students. In this manner it seems that Freire continued the discussion about the ultimate modern world and their problems instead of insisting on the idea of colonialism as a current phenomenon.

Nevertheless, Freire makes important nuances when he exposes the idea of neocolonialism in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1993a) when he talks about how he proposed the governments of Angola, Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe analyzing the identity of being ex-French, ex-English. He suggested rescuing native African languages as a way of constructing their own discourses for the independent nations of Africa and avoiding neo-colonialism (Freire, 2011 [1977]). In *Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1969), Freire also mentioned the notion of “*formas disfrazadas de dominio colonial*” (p. 21) (disguised forms of colonial domination) when he remarked how Pope John Paul XXIII in the *Mater et Magistra* document suggests that the relationships between rich and poor nations should not be framed by “*formas disfrazadas de dominio colonial*” but rather by authentic intention of nations to help each other.

In *Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*, (1994, [1993]) Freire applied the idea of colonialism as a perspective when he is talking about the difficulties that teachers face in their laboral conditions denouncing that teachers suffer the legacy of living in a colonial society.

Freire and Colonialism: further contributions on this connection

It is interesting how some of Freire's friends and colleagues have developed more in depth the notion of colonialism in critical pedagogy. Macedo as Freire's friend and collaborator has broadened Freirean thought in terms of colonialism since he has this kind of direct experience in his native country. Macedo has made explicit the idea that most of the affluent people have the colonizer mentality (1994) and how it is possible to see direct aspects of colonialism on education: "...far from a democratic education we claim to have what we really have in place is a sophisticated colonial model of education... The major objective of a colonial education is to further de-skill teachers and students to walk unreflectively through a labyrinth of procedures and techniques"(Macedo, 2000, p. 3). In fact, as Macedo describes, he and Friere shared engaging conversations on the topic of colonialism: "As you see Donaldo, my collaboration in the fight against colonialism invariably involved a fight against racism. All anticolonialist leaders and intellectuals fighting to break their countries from the yoke of colonialism were very clear about the colonizer's violent racism"(Freire as cited in Macedo, 2006, p. 114).

Another of Freire's friends and colleagues is Peter McLaren who, since *Life in Schools* (1998 [1989]), had urged for the need to study schools as forms of colonial cultural politics, in which teachers tend to not discuss colonial invasions such as the Vietnam one. McLaren (1994) has insisted on being aware of the risk of being colonized by epistemological categories and how important it is that teachers talk about how the Third World constantly struggles against permanent attacks from current colonialism; from the Palestinian's struggle to secure their homeland to the indigenous people's resistances. McLaren's emphasis on students being colonized by epistemological categories predates and is supported Paraskeva's (2022) notions of racialized onticides and epistemicides laid out in section two. McLaren has argued the way in which even a "critical postmodernism" (1995, p. 204) can be useful to challenge the "archival knowledge of Western colonialism"(1995, p.116). He has also proposed a "critical and resistance multiculturalism"(2002 [1995], p. 42) to challenge the "conservative multiculturalism"(p. 35) tied with the "colonialist legacy of white supremacy" (p. 36). In developing the Freirean legacy on critical pedagogy, McLaren has alerted the adaptive capacity of capitalism to create new types of colonialism through financial capitalism and he has emphasized that the revolutionary pedagogy give voice to those who do not participate in the colonial repartition of the world (2001).

Another scholar that has expanded class in their studies is Douglas Foley (1977, 1988 & 1990). In *From Peones to Políticos. Class and Ethnicity in a South Texas Town 1900-1987* (1988) Foley talks about the “capitalist racial order” (1988, p. 305) between Anglos and *Mexicanos* from the first edition of this book in 1977. After more than ten years of fieldwork in a place called “North Town”, Foley (1988) explains what kind of class analysis his study represents, and in this effort, he makes an interesting reflection about class and colonialism in critiquing the cultural nationalist perspective on internal colonies³: “The major deficiency in the internal colony metaphor is its lack of any explicit concept of capitalist development and class struggle” (1988, p. 301) because “[t]he internal colony theory’s concept of exploitation is one of conquest empires rather than of capitalist production system organized into antagonistic classes” (1988, p. 301).

Furthermore, in *Learning Capitalist Culture. Deep in the Heart of Tejas* (1990) Foley portrays how in “North Town, schools are cultural institutions where capitalist culture is learned by youth (Anglos and *Mexicanos*) through the cultural side of pedagogy. Therefore, boys and girls grasp their future roles within capitalist society in informal rituals, sports, dating, games during classes, etc. In this way he expands the category of class and demonstrates how this category can explain complex educational phenomena if it is linked with other categories like race, gender, culture, rituals, etc.

On the other hand, Lesley Bartlett, (2007) describes how while she was doing fieldwork in Brazil, she realized how Freire’s framework about class did not allow her to see shame as an important element in literacy learning. Doing a 24-month ethnographic study of youth and adult literacy in two Brazilian cities: Rio de Janeiro and Joao Pessoa, she demonstrated how other qualitative elements such as speech shame produces and maintains social inequalities (Bartlett, 2007).

Portuguese colonialism in Brazil, which has established colonial stereotypes about language and literacy, is still alive among the Brazilian population. Bartlett explains that “The belief of a single, “correct” form of Portuguese exists and that it is learned at school had distinct consequences for youth and adults” (Bartlett, 2007, p. 559).

Nevertheless, Bartlett (2007) emphasizes how Freire’s framework about class was not useful at the beginning at her research because she needed other con-

3 As Foley (1988) points out, one of the most important works about this theme is Rodolfo Acuña’s *Occupied America* (1972). It is also interesting how some other works have appeared about *Occupied America*, like Armando Navarro’s *Mexicano Political Experience in Occupied Aztlán. Struggles and Change*. Alta Mira Press, 2005, among others.

ceptual frameworks to recognize other themes emerging from the interviews: the students' shame about writing or speaking the colonial language: Portuguese.

According to her, she did not impose the topic of speech or literacy shame on the project:

I was certainly not looking for it in the data; on the contrary, I went to Brazil with the expectation of studying whether and how Freirean literacy programs empowered students, and I (naively) thought speech mattered little to a study of literacy. Indeed, I had heard narratives of shaming from at least 15 students before I finally realized that a pattern was emerging (Bartlett, 2007, p. 553)

In this study, she illustrates how teachers made comments that reportedly made students feel ashamed, because even though they are supposedly empowering students by teaching concepts like "consciousness", "praxis", "oppressed", "oppressors" etc. at the same time they were teaching "the standard Portuguese language". In other words, teachers were teaching their students the language they spoke was incorrect, non-standard and not legitimate. Bartlett interprets this in the sense that shaming depends on the widespread acceptance of the belief in a single 'correct' way to speak and therefore a colonial perspective is evident in ordinary school tasks

As can be seen, colonialism persists in language hegemony and, insofar as Freirean teachers don't lose sight of this relationship, they will be able to teach "Freirean education" without reproducing colonial perspectives.

Bartlett then illustrates another paradox about Freirean models of literacy that teach standard Portuguese:

The suggestion that schooling is the best path to linguistic improvement and, ultimately, to the avoidance of speech and literacy shaming is somewhat ironic, given the major role that schools play in establishing and maintaining the belief in "standard" and "shameful" varieties of languages (Bartlett, 2007, p. 560).

On the other hand, Bartlett (2007) continues describing some interesting feedback about Freire's work in her book: *The Word and the World: The Cultural Politics of Literacy in Brazil* (2010). She starts by talking about how some new Freirean approaches in education have included considerations of race, violence and sexuality but not colonialism. In that book, Bartlett critically views other aspects of Freire's work, specially she empathizes they way in which Freire's model of literacy is near to an autonomous model of literacy.

Bartlett goes on to illustrate the differences between: a) an autonomous model of literacy, b) an ideological model, c) new literacy and d) her own proposal: new critical literacy studies. Whereas an autonomous model of literacy addresses a direct relationship between literacy and upper mobility, an ideological model views literacy “as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and recognizes the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts” (Street, cit. in Bartlett, 2010, p. 5). On the other hand, teachers who are working with critical literacy approaches “endeavor to reflect on the ways in which language interactions reproduce existing structures of power and to develop strategies to interrupt such reproduction” (Bartlett, 2010, p. 9). Finally, she strongly proposes the new critical literacy studies that urges “to remain constantly aware of the ways in which thinking about, teaching, and practicing or performing literacy entails cultural politics, and to continuously reflect on and revise our literacy practices” (Bartlett, 2010, p.11).

For Bartlett, Freire understands power as possession that teachers can give to students, but as she says, this does not necessarily allow teachers to see the impact of their actions (Bartlett, 2010). As can be appreciated, she illustrates how Freirean pedagogy can see some inequalities, but remains blind to others.

Another scholar whose work is interesting about Freirean framework and colonialism is Ira Shor. He relates his experience as a teacher in a freshman writing class in a college in New York city in his book *Empowering education : critical teaching for social change* (1992). He proposes an engaging idea he calls empowering education:

[E]mpowering education, as I define it here, is a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change. It is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in school and society. It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other (Shor, 1992, p.15).

In order to construct this empowering pedagogy, he suggests an agenda of values that represents this kind of education: “participatory, affective, problem-posing, situated, multicultural, dialogic, desocializing, democratic, researching, interdisciplinary and activist” (Shor, 1992, p. 17).

Some other scholars, such as De Lissovoy, Romo Torres, Fregoso Bailón, among many others have expanded Freire’s legacy toward the need for addressing colonialism in education. For instance, De Lissovoy has explained the way in which Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* entails the next epistemological paradox: “The

emergence he [Freire] evokes for the oppressed is supposed to be precisely out of the one dimensional dialectic of (neo) colonialism. But this emergence itself, as a theory of history, seems to be at least partly produced by the assimilative and imperialist cultural logic it would defy" (De Lissovoy, 2008, p. 15). He draws from Fanon to propose a stretched dialectic (De Lissovoy, 2008) as a "...materialist framework [that] understands the economic, social, psychic, and cultural dimensions of oppression as organically interconnected within the problematic of colonialism" (p. 71). De Lissovoy, (2007) rescues Fanon as an important philosophical reference that can prevent critical pedagogy from reducing its frame of reference to a Eurocentric perspective. As De Lissovoy (2010) emphasizes: "In contrast to the postcolonial, the decolonial emphasizes the ongoing process of resistance of colonialism while also connoting a wider field of application – one which extends from material projects that challenge the hegemony of capital to philosophical projects aimed at reconstructing fundamental understandings of ethics and ontology" (p. 285).

Giroux has pointed out how conservatives politics of culture (2000) reproduces "...the legacy and racially and coded discourse of Anglo-European colonialism" (p. 71). For instance, Giroux and Pollock (2010) describe how Disney portrays a version of history where "...colonialism never happened, and the meeting between the Old and New Worlds is simply fodder for another "love-conquers-all" narrative (p. 107) or how some "...Hollywood films combine narrative and spectacle to glorify colonial power and imperialism from the dominant perspective (p. 236)".

Likewise, Kincheloe talks about the colonization of fun (2010) to describe how schools and media participate in the consumerist connection between children's culture and products. In the same sense, about the critical pedagogies of consumption, Steinberg, (2010) explains the fact that in the early 1990s, Mattel released a Pilgrim Barbie with a storybook that neglects the history of genocide and colonialism. For his part, Fregoso (2015a, 2015b) describes how decolonial critical pedagogy should address sophisticated forms of colonialism today in epistemology in Latin America.

Discussion

In our review of Freire's thinking on colonialism, we have resituated Freire within more recent yet related understandings of Freire's thinking within notions of historical colonies and present-day coloniality within both South-South and South-led South-North dialogues. With Puiggrós' (2004/2023; 2010) and other interlocutors of critical pedagogy including Freire's collaborators and friends discussed above,

we hope we have provided a generous reading of Freire, but also one that points out how beneficial is addition to this conversation the notion of colonialism.. The latter, of course, is to generate better deployments and readings of Freirean critical pedagogy by terrain and update and rethinking teacher-Freire's positions to add to productive work within necessary present framings of critical pedagogy within notions of coloniality/globalization.

We *have wondered* how this reading of Freire around colonialism and their collaborators and readers help us better instantiate the dialogues laid out at the beginning of this manuscript. Our overall impression is that the reading of Freire helps us historically locate him on South terrains and establish both what he did and did not do, and as those who look toward decolonial pedagogies it helps us see where to read and what to rescue from Freire, what to develop more in relation to his frailties but also read him with generosity in seeing his legacy. What world was Freire's world in which independence seemingly handled colonialism, though partially, as he did wield the concept differently on different terrains?

Colonialism is important for Freire as a latent inquiry, but not as much as class analysis. As has been described, whereas in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* colonialism as a perspective is an accessory, in *The Letters to Guinea Bissau* it is a constitutive social structure that explains political and educational inequalities in Africa. It seems that Freire made use of colonialism as a perspective to observe the living conditions of the people living in Africa that faced oppression from the Portuguese,, but it is not clear if he made use of colonialism as a perspective in observing the oppression that the Latin American peoples suffer by the U. S. imperialism, a country in which Freire worked harder. In some other of his works, it seems that Freire's conception of colonialism remains in its conventional dimension of a direct invasion by a foreign European country (in this case Portugal) in a remote continent (Africa) or a thing of the past (in the case of Brazil).

However Freire makes important nuances on the issue of colonialism in terms of alerting about the colonial aspects of inquiry in education, since Freire mostly used categories opposed to positivistic perspectives. If the structural-functionalist perspective on education was challenged by the Weberian interpretative inquiry, especially from phenomenology (Husserl, Schutz, Geertz, Berger y Luckman, mostly) and from symbolic interaction (Mead, mostly) in order to lay down the foundations of qualitative educational research, critical theory from the Frankfurt school (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, etc.) was the base to the developing of the critical pedagogy from which Freire drew most of his contributions. Even though Freire also introduced his work on the nineties debate, around postmodernism (1993a, 1993b),

he was not part of the postcolonial wave. Nevertheless, Freire talked about the importance of the rupture with the positivity of the colonizer's framework; to that end, he encouraged to create literate political efforts in order to achieve a complete independence from "civilizatory" colonial attempts (Freire, 2011 [1978], p. 14). He also mentioned the need of decolonizing the mind (Pereira as cited in Freire, 2011 [1977]) p. 24) or what Amílcar Cabral called the reaficanization of mentalities to prevent neocolonialism (Cabral as cited in Freire, 2011 [1977]), but it is not clear if Freire also urged chicanx-latinx peoples to decolonize their minds in the middle of the internal colonialism (Casanova, 1962) that they experienced in the U.S.

It is significant that Freire's friends and some other critical pedagogy scholars are those who have developed the notion of colonialism in critical pedagogy more deeply than Freire. Exploring the concept of colonialism in relation to Freire's work is necessary and relevant because it allows the concept of colonialism to regain its materiality. That is, Freire's work was situated in a struggle to improve the living conditions of oppressed communities (hence the title of his most famous work). For Freire, however, this oppression was not only symbolic in terms of identity, ethnic or linguistic representation, but referred to a material oppression in the distribution of economic resources. Although Freire's work conceived of the problem of colonialism as something that only affected Brazil in the past, and as a direct invasion of a European country in Africa, the concept of the colonality of power can also benefit from the material (rather than symbolic) sense of Freire's notion of oppression. Thus, both Freire's discussion benefits from the contemporary debate on decolonial studies, and decolonial studies is enriched by the concrete oppression still suffered by thousands of communities in the South and the North.

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