

Decolonial pedagogies: the Latin American decolonial turn in the Brazilian academic context¹

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Abstract: This is a study on decolonial pedagogy. We explore the origins, development, and current state of decolonial pedagogies. The theoretical foundation of our research is based on what Enrique Dussel called the epistemological decolonization of the academic and intellectual world. This is a bibliographic study of decolonial pedagogies in Latin America, framed by the Rede Modernidad/Colonialidad, recognized as the most prominent originator of what we understand as the decolonial turn. It provides a state-of-the-art overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework surrounding decolonial pedagogies in Brazilian master's and doctoral theses in the field of Education. Our results highlight the work of Enrique Dussel, Catherine Walsh, and Zulma Palermo as groundbreaking in this area, with Dussel's pedagogy of liberation seen as a precursor. In Brazil, this discussion began gaining traction in graduate research with Oliveira (2010). According to Dias (2021), the main theoretical contributions to the development of new concepts in decolonial pedagogies come from the works of Mancilla (2014), Mata Neto (2014), Rufino Jr. (2017), and Gil (2021). In our bibliographic study we included an additional thesis (Pereira, 2021), for its contributions to decolonial pedagogies, as well as its precursor, Griô Pedagogy.

Keywords: Latin American context; Rede Modernidad/Colonialidad; decolonial pedagogies.

1 Introduction

This article discusses decolonial pedagogies. It begins by addressing the work of Latin American intellectuals that research the theme, particularly the contributions to this debate made by Brazilian scholars. Below we start by outlining two anchor points that are crucial for our research.

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The first takes place in 1998, at two independent academic events, one in Caracas and the other in New York, both of which converged to the same conclusion: the establishment of a heterogeneous network, to the point where strong criticism existed among its own members. This resulted in the creation of the Modernidad/Colonialidad group (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2013), which since its foundation has become the main exponent of what came to be known as the decolonial turn. It includes authors such as Aníbal Quijano, from Peru; Arturo Escobar from Colombia; the American author based in Ecuador Catherine Walsh; Edgardo Lander, from Venezuela; the Argentinian author based in Mexico, Enrique Dussel; the Puerto Rican author Ramón Grosfoguel; the Colombian author Santiago Castro-Gómez; Argentine author based in the USA, Walter Mignolo; Argentinian author Zulma Palermo, among others. From the analysis of this first development, we derive the following enquiry: How did the Modernidad/Colonialidad group contribute to the development of decolonial pedagogies? To answer this question, our first goal was the identification of the main theoretical contributions made by authors that form this group.

The second point refers to the bibliographical research that comprises the work of Dias (2021), as well as a state-of-the-art research work (Fernandes and D'Ávila, 2016). Both relay the same enquiry: what theoretical contributions to the development of decolonial pedagogies have emerged from the master's and doctoral theses produced by Brazilian researchers?

We chose to focus on the work of Dias (2021) due to the inclusion of four theses that offered original concepts of decolonial pedagogies within the context of stricto sensu research on Education: the Pedagogy of the South (Mancilla, 2014); the decolonial pedagogy (Mota Neto, 2015); the Pedagogy of Crossroads (Rodrigues Jr., 2017); and the feminist decolonial pedagogy (Gil, 2021).

However, the research by Dias (2021) was chronologically limited to the period between 2011 and October 18, 2021. Hence this research's relevance, as it includes data from a second state-of-the-art study that includes master's and doctoral theses from 2021 up to 2023.

The Dias (2021) survey accounted for only 36 works in 2021 across all research fields where the term "decolonial" was mentioned in the Catedi/Capes master's and doctoral theses repository. In our state-of-the-art survey we found 333 records for the same year, in various research fields.

For this state-of-the-art survey, the following methodological steps were taken: the Catedi/Capes repository was queried for master's and doctoral theses from years 2021 to 2023, where the term "decolonial" was mentioned, which belonged specifically to the field of Education.

Based on these criteria, we identified the following quantitative data: 67, 81, and 90 entries were found for the years of 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively, totaling 238 records in the field of Education. Next, we proceeded to analyze the abstracts for these entries. When the reference to decolonial pedagogies was not sufficiently explicit, we downloaded the entire PDF file.

We observed that decoloniality appears in various scientific fields within Education, such as curriculum, didactics, teacher training, education and diversity, etc. Even the works that addressed decolonial pedagogies sometimes focused on the educational practices of a specific social environment, whether in union-related entities, social movements, or formal schooling practices. These documents are of significant scientific interest for future research, but they were not the focus of our current study. Therefore, they were excluded from our research, as they did not strictly focus on the theoretical-conceptual development of decolonial pedagogies, specifically as a contribution from masters' and doctoral theses produced by Brazilian researchers.

This survey also aims at identifying the relevant scientific contributions to the theoretical development of decolonial pedagogies in masters' and doctoral thesis produced in Brazil. This study is relevant because:

[...] decolonial pedagogies are those that search for 'otherness' in educational processes, i.e., processes which positively consider the otherness and pluriversity that defines the human race in all parts of the planet, in its distinct *modus vivendi*, valuing the geopolitical and cultural 'south', but in critical subsumable dialogue with the 'north', in pursuit of the transmodern utopia(Dias; Abreu, 2021, p. 141).

Therefore, it is clear that decolonial pedagogies do not arise from mere theoretical speculations but are born from praxiological developments of decoloniality found in the political and emancipatory experiences of organized peoples that search for social transformation towards a transmodern world. This world has concrete reality as a starting point and is characterized by ethical and political engagement, where all are subjects that overflow with history, ontology, values, learning experiences, and produce culture.

From this decolonial pedagogical perspective, the pedagogical act transcends the school environment, extending to any and all social spaces where one teaches and learns ways to resist, fight, and create, guided by an open dialogue with the whole of human culture, while deeply considering the locus of enunciation of the involved subjects (Dias; Abreu, 2022). This perspective recognizes the socio-cultural diversity denied by the modern/colonial paradigm and the pedagogy it carries, which is commonly "school-centric" and urban-centric due to its fundamentally Eurocentric origin. Such realization requires explicitly

stating its political and cultural assertions, while dialoguing with other forms of knowledge and with the “otherness” of knowledge itself.

Thus, after this Introduction, we present our understanding of how the process of denying socio-cultural otherness occurred and how its unveiling has been taking place through a process of decolonizing knowledge. This process enables the decolonial turn and, consequently, the development of decolonial pedagogies within the context of the Modernidad/Colonialidad group. Next, we discuss how this debate has been unfolding through the analysis of the Brazilian academic output of masters’ and doctoral theses, as previously stated. Lastly, we summarize our main findings in the Final Remarks section.

2 From the Colonial Landmark to Decolonial Pedagogies

Throughout human history, civilizations have overlapped with one another, with some dominating others; however, it is only when colonialism starts, namely, the Spanish invasion in 1492, when the colonizers arrived in what is now the Dominican Republic (De las Casas, 2021), that Europe gained the objective conditions to position itself in the cultural world, establishing itself as the geopolitical and cultural center relative to other regions, its peripheries (Dussel, 2014).

As for the newly invaded territories, those were doubly redefined: not only as peripheries but also as colonies, through expropriation and settlement. This is the case for all of Latin America, which in the Brazilian context primarily occurred with the colonization that started with the Portuguese invasion, in 1500.

Placing oneself as the center in the context of power relations implies establishing oneself as its own reference point, propagating a self-referential, ethnocentric worldview that takes shape in what we commonly call Eurocentrism. This was made possible by the colonization process started in 1492, but also reinforced by philosophers like *Renatus Cartesius* (René Descartes), who, from the frame of reference of a rationalist philosophy, developed the idea of a self-conscious self, immaterial and therefore impersonal. This concept was later reinforced by Positivism and the establishment of sciences based on the principle of scientific neutrality.

This modern, rational subject, that starts and ends in itself, is logically and empirically impossible because humans are also finite bodies, occupying a place in the world, from which, and in interaction with which, they continuously construct themselves. They are beings as they interact, always incomplete, constituting themselves in the contextual reality (Freire, 2019). For this reason, we agree with Dussel (2021), who argues that a subject cannot be completely negated. They remain “uncomfortably” implicit in the social structure, even in the simplest contexts, such as impersonal texts or speeches.

Thus, the subject reappears in the form of the events that make their existence possible, existing as long as the events persist. In Brazil, historically, we have several subjects nullified by the modern colonial paradigm, supposedly made invisible, but who helped to shape the so-called Brazilian nation. Currently, these subjects are found in the ancestral Indigenous peoples of Brazil, and in Brazil's African heritage, forcibly brought during the colonial era. They show themselves and make history when they form collective subjectivities and fight for ethnic and racial recognition, such as the right to education for people with disabilities, Indigenous people, *quilombolas*; as well as fight for education for those that live in various geographic contexts such as those that live in remote areas, riverside dwellers, forest dwellers, and those that live in the urban periphery, from all age groups: children, adolescents, youth, adults, and the elderly.

This understanding of human beings and their subjectivity is relatively recent and emerges from the Latin America, from what Dussel (2020; 2021) calls the epistemological decolonization of the academic and intellectual world. This is characterized by several historical generations, which enabled the rise of decoloniality, as we will see next, through the identification of generations of thinkers.

The first generation is represented by researchers such as Nicolai Danilevsky (geopolitical and civilizational theorist), the Alfred and Max Weber brothers, and the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea, among others. Dussel (2020) highlights that the first contributions made by this generation are dependency theory and the Philosophy of Liberation, dating back to the 1960s.

Mignolo (2014) reaffirms Dussel's (2020) conclusions about this first generation, explaining that the genesis of decolonial thought, from the standpoint of a de-colonial reason, dates back to the 1960s. He also emphasizes the leading role of Philosophy of Liberation (in addition to other expressions of resistance), as highlighted below:

Decoloniality was clearly developed during the 1960s and 1970s by Arab-Islamic thinkers (Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini), by Afro-Caribbean thinkers (Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon), by Philosophy of Liberation in Latin America; and by Indigenous intellectuals and activists from Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada (Mignolo, 2014, p. 28).

In the 1970s a second generation representative of the epistemological decolonization of the academic and intellectual world emerged, directly opposing Hellenocentrism (Martin Bernal) and all Eurocentrism, with representatives of the Muslim world (such as Samir Amin), proposing the critique of Orientalism (Edward Said), and the world-systems theory (conceived by Immanuel Wallerstein). Therefore, we agree with Dussel's (2017, p. 32) statement that: "[...] throughout the periphery (Africa, Asia, and Latin America), critical

movements began to emerge, within their own regional realities, which, in some instances, adopted a new form of Marxism as theoretical reference”.

The third generation recognizes China’s importance, its extraordinary, ancient civilizational development, which undeniably and meaningfully influenced the West, in particular. Notable in this subject are Joseph Needham’s research contributions, especially his work on the evolution of science in China from 1954 to 2004. Another name worth mentioning is Kenneth Pomeranz, for his studies on China’s part on the construction of the modern global economy (Dussel, 2020).

The fourth generation also addresses China’s role, especially considering that the Chinese had discovered metal manipulation as early as the second century AD. This discovery influenced the production of tools, machines, and in the development of industrial processes during the Industrial Revolution in England. In this regard, Dussel (2020) highlights the works of John Hobson and Jack Goody, “The Theft of History” and “The Eurasian Miracle”, respectively.

The fifth generation includes Latin American authors such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter Dignolo, and Ramón Grosfoguel, showing the continued influence of intellectuals connected to the Philosophy of Liberation. For Dussel (2020), this generation marks the beginning of an ongoing process full of new discoveries, forming part of our present time.

This process, in its entirety and as described by Dussel (2020) aligns itself with the development of decoloniality, as Maldonado-Torres (2008, p. 70) explains: “[...] the foundations of the decolonial turn could already be found in the works of racialized intellectuals, in oral tradition, stories, songs, etc. Due to specific historical events, they were globalized in the mid-20th century”.

We emphasize that the fifth generation’s innovations on decolonial thought started to gain traction in Latin America starting in 1998, when the Modernidad/Colonialidad group was established, as mentioned in the introduction to this article.

The Modernidad/Colonialidad group has become known for critiquing and for offering ideas — praxiologically, in conjunction with social movements, with an ethical and political commitment to the realization of a world of “otherness” — based on several key concepts: modernity, coloniality, decoloniality, and transmodernity.

Therefore, we recognize decolonial pedagogies, as previously explained, in a praxiological sense, as emerging through social interaction and not requiring theoretical validation. However, we find it important to address the subject within academic and professional spaces. To that end, it is essential to avoid the dichotomy between practice and theory and to invest in the conceptual development of these pedagogies, grounded in the concrete realities from which they arise.

3 Decolonial pedagogies in Latin America via the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group

The following lines summarize the contributions of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group to decolonial pedagogies. We choose to do so because of the group's symbolic significance, and their representation of Latin America, having been born in Latin America and having personally experienced the struggles resulting from the region's opposition to modern/colonial powers, which ultimately led them to engage in the creation of an "other" world. Additionally, out of empathy for these struggles, the members of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group took on ethical and political responsibility to change this reality, as in the case of Catherine Walsh, who, although American, is based in Ecuador and fights organically, supported by decolonial pedagogies, while emphatically defending the critical interculturality common to the peoples of the Andes (Dias; Abreu, 2024).

After analyzing the group's work, we conclude that only Catherine Walsh and Zulma Palermo have been actively engaged in the decolonial pedagogies debate, which may reflect the patriarchal social constructs that elevate the masculine over the feminine and tend to view educational work as a professional duty for women, while considering it secondary for men (Souza, 2010).

Additionally, we include Enrique Dussel (in memoriam) in this discussion, as, although he did not specifically develop the theme of decolonial pedagogies, he is one of the foundational sources for these pedagogies, given that his Philosophy of Liberation predates the debate, especially when considering the so-called Pedagogy of Liberation. Thus, in summary, the following lines highlight the contributions of Dussel, Walsh, and Palermo to decolonial pedagogies.

For Dussel's contributions, we refer to *La Pedagógica Latinoamericana* (Dussel, 1980), contrasting it with the establishment of the Modernidad/Colonialidad group in 1998 to emphasize that, chronologically, the Pedagogy of Liberation predates the decolonial turn. More importantly, *La Pedagógica* serves as one of the philosophical foundations for the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group, particularly in its focus on liberating educational processes carried out "for" and "with" the people.

Dussel's *La Pedagógica* (1980) is an educational, philosophical, ethical, and liberating treatise that offers material and theoretical propositions for educational processes that extend beyond formal schooling but engage with it from an emancipatory and transformative perspective.

We believe it is possible to support decolonial pedagogies with this *pedagógica*, as Mancilla (2014) or Abreu and Dias (2021) do, by considering education denied to those categorized as "other," from a decolonial perspective. According to the framework proposed by Dussel (1980), the Pedagogy of Liberation encompasses three praxiological moments that

contribute to decolonial pedagogy praxis: (1) the pedagogically oppressed as external, (2) action “for” and “with” the people, and (3) analectic interaction between subjects who “co-teach” and “co-learn” through collaboration, convergence, creativity, and organization.

In the first moment, the victim of the world-system (or the oppressed individual, as termed by Freire) has their ontology denied and is, therefore, positioned outside of what is deemed an ideal “human being.” This critical awareness becomes liberating when the victims emerge as the “source” of new expressions: “[...] the people as subject of a popular culture put forward their word. [...] ‘I am a new history which you do not understand, nor interpret’” (Dussel, 1980, p. 95). At this point, the myth of modernity begins to be dismantled, and the path forward involves surpassing post-modernity, which is seen as a limited and repetitive critique of the culture of the center. Without transcending modernity, all alternative pedagogical proposals remain unintelligible and up to interpretation.

In this context, the people’s voice is a “word-action” that unveils the alterity that was previously denied. This praxis, which we reinterpret as a decolonial pedagogical praxis, is always aimed at transformation, not merely economic or cultural, but fundamentally decolonial, as it seeks to create an “other” world by implementing transmodernity. This transformation unfolds in everyday life, through collective experiences, though at the micro-social level.

Starting from this initial praxiological transformative moment, the victim begins to express themselves and yearns for a genuine existence, rather than merely living “externally,” where they are regarded as “not being.” Therefore, we affirm that Dussel (1980, p. 96) contributes to the debate on decolonial pedagogies when he clarifies that:

To desire political, economic, and cultural independence means wanting to speak one’s own language, worship one’s own god, honor one’s own heroes, and wear one’s own symbols... It is a yearning to live at the heart of the popular culture from which we were born and nurtured.

As we understand it, the assertion of the otherness that has been denied is directly linked to the self-affirmation of the Latin American peoples and their various ancestors: the Indigenous peoples who suffered genocide at the hands of colonizers, the Black individuals who were forcibly displaced and dehumanized in multiple ways, including through slavery, and the European colonizers themselves.

Currently, these Latin American “denied othernesses” are present in the Brazilian Amazon: riverside dwellers, *quilombolas*, and, in urban areas, youth from marginalized neighborhoods, senior citizens without access to welfare, the homeless, individuals of various sexual orientations, and others. In this sense, we once again affirm that Dussel’s *pedagógica* serves as a foundational source for decolonial pedagogies, embodying a pedagogical and decolonial praxis.

His *pedagógica* is easily distinguishable from formal schooling and the system that supports it. It is ethically and concretely based on face-to-face interaction, where the act of believing a human person's word serves as the foundational premise: The premise of "I am hungry" as primordial material need, that does not require proof for goodness to be enacted (Dussel, 1980).

The *pedagógica* is not vanguardist or elitist; instead, it materially recognizes the potential for sociocultural learning among the people and embraces the various expressions of their otherness. Thus, it emerges from popular culture, the struggles and resistance of the people, and stands in contrast to the asymmetry of the modern/colonial paradigm.

The second praxiological moment, action "for" and "with" the people, describes a transformative process that shifts from a professor-like action, as in "professing" the static truth to be accepted by the denied othernesses, to an action centered on listening to the pedagogical "other". In this instance the transformation happens through humanization grounded in otherness, which consequently requires questioning the system that perpetrates victimization (Dussel, 1980).

In summary, this praxiological moment becomes humanizing when it engages with genuine otherness and serves it without resorting to vanguardism, elitism, or despotism, as Dussel states (1980, p. 98):

To honor the voice of the other and trust in what it reveals is the starting point for achieving authentic teaching that can genuinely educate. The disciple's inspiring and probing remarks convert (and converge) a mere parent or citizen into a master. [...] A master emerges when someone, anyone, listens to and trusts the voice of another who may be served that which they need, but lack.

This information is essential for constructing "other" pedagogies that respond to the demands of popular movements. There are those who have heeded the voices and pleas for education expressed by social movements and individuals living in rural areas, who rely on agricultural activities for their sustenance. As a result, we now have, even amid various political and ideological conflicts, a proposal for a political and pedagogical rural educational project (Caldart, 2012).

The third praxiological moment calls for dismantling the modern *pedagógica* to foster the emergence of a pedagogy of liberation that establishes a symmetric relationship, one characterized by collaborative, convergent, mobilizing, organizing, and creative actions (Dussel, 1980).

While Dussel's contributions to decolonial pedagogies offer a philosophical foundation and serve as a precursor to the movement, Walsh (2009, 2013, 2014, 2017) stands out as the first to lay the groundwork for a decolonial pedagogy rooted in her praxis with

the social movements of the Andes. Specifically, she frames decolonial pedagogies as an expression of decolonial praxis that centers on educational processes.

In this praxiological context, one of Walsh's key contributions to decolonial pedagogies is her emphasis on the inter-dialogue between researchers and social movements, which is mediated by the diverse socio-educational realities (Walsh, 2013, 2014, 2017).

Not without reason, Walsh (2013, 2017) asserts that decolonial pedagogies are understood as decolonial struggles. They manifest as the material need for learning, unlearning, relearning, action, creation, and intervention, primarily rooted in social realities. This perspective of pedagogy emerges from insurgency, organization, and action processes primarily initiated by Indigenous peoples, followed by the African peoples who were forcibly brought to the "American" territories.

A winding methodological path, it draws on memories from long ago and has the potential to invigorate pedagogy and decolonialism in the pursuit of much-needed social transformation. It takes into account the destroyed othernesses and alternative social and political forms of organization while also recognizing the other facets that constitute a human being, such as ontology, epistemology, and cosmogony (Walsh, 2013).

Walsh (2009, 2013, 2014, 2017) expands the conventional notion of pedagogy, which is often used as a technical reference within educational contexts, viewing it instead as a mechanism that sustains the modern/colonial paradigm. In other words, her perspective transforms pedagogy into a tool that "pedagogizes" the social relations of popular revolt and resistance, effectively turning the social movements themselves into educational environments for educational practice.

Social dynamics are the key to understanding the connection between decolonization and pedagogy, shaping decolonial pedagogies. For Walsh, these pedagogies are strictly praxis, deeply intertwined with the struggle for decolonization. Metaphorically, they carry the smell, color, and flavor of the people, as they emerge from the heart of the people themselves. Consequently, these pedagogies embody their dreams, utopias, and hopes for fostering a world that is just, inalienable, and both humanized and humanizing toward otherness. These guidelines outline two key steps toward pedagogical and decolonial transformation: first, the identification and recognition of a problem, and second, taking a stance against the modern/colonial paradigm in favor of transmodernity (Walsh, 2013).

Walsh advances further in her understanding of decolonial pedagogies by referencing Rolando Vásquez and Caribbean feminist Jacqui Alexander. She emphasizes the plural inflection of the term "pedagogies" and introduces the concept of "pedagogization": the act or process of pedagogizing within a decolonial context (Walsh, 2017).

Zulma Palermo (2014), professor emeritus at the National University of Salta, Argentina, contributes to the discussion on decolonial pedagogies by focusing her analysis

on the role of the university, while also offering insights into the construction of decolonial pedagogies.

According to Palermo, decolonial pedagogies are rooted in the materiality of social relations, particularly in the pedagogical and political expressions of social struggle. She also introduces the notion of critical interculturality, which, along with Dussel's analectic, offers a viable path toward achieving transmodernity.

By questioning the university's strategic role as an institution that perpetuates colonial knowledge, the author suggests that it must take on a political, ethical and epistemological role as a horizontal mediator of knowledge production. This mediation would incorporate the political and pedagogical experiences that contribute to a paradigm shift, usually prompted by the erased people, the subaltern, the oppressed, social movements and such (Palermo, 2014).

Scientifically, the author makes a qualitative leap by breaking away from the modern/colonial paradigm, placing less importance on theory. Educationally, she defines the university's role, from a decolonial perspective, as educating individuals who are aware of their capacity to live decoloniality.

Methodologically, the author suggests several steps towards the creation of decolonial pedagogies: (a) emphasizing the role of enunciation (who is speaking, to whom, and where it takes place), which retains a direct connection to the historical-colonial subjectivity of those involved in decolonial practices; (b) adopting interculturality and pluriversality as guiding parameters; (c) questioning notions that are irrelevant to native peoples; and (d) increasing the number of localized studies on the processes that lead to the formation of new subjectivities (Palermo, 2014).

These are the main contributions from Latin America to the discussion of decolonial pedagogies, with Dussel serving as a critical predecessor and Walsh and Palermo as prominent members of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group who have significantly advanced the topic.

4 Decolonial Pedagogies in Brazil's Postgraduate Education

Although Dias and Abreu (2020) strive to substantiate the spread of decolonial didactics in master's and doctoral research in Brazil, they also explain that:

[...] The first doctoral thesis in the field of Education to utilize decoloniality as its theoretical foundation was titled *Histories from Africa and the African in School: Perspectives for History Teacher Training When Differences Become Part of the Syllabus*, authored by Luiz Fernandes de Oliveira and presented on April 8,

2010, to the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio).

Dias and Abreu (2020) note that Oliveira's thesis (2010) did not center on decolonial pedagogies; however, it contributed to the discourse by analyzing the subject in light of Law No. 10.639/2003. Our investigation indicates that if the foundation of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group in 1998 is regarded as the first milestone, then Oliveira's presentation in 2010 marks the second milestone, highlighting a twelve-year gap since any research on Education addressed decoloniality, even though decolonial pedagogies are not its main theme.

Consequently, Dias's doctoral research (2010) aimed to analyze Brazilian master's and doctoral theses in the field of Education that contributed theoretically to decolonial pedagogies. The author identified four theses, with the first being Mancilla's work (2014), which, according to Dias (2021), presents a conception of decolonial pedagogy referred to as the Pedagogy of the South. This approach emerges from the struggles and resistance of the people, along with their enunciations. Here, 'people' is defined broadly to encompass both native communities and social movements. The author defines what Pedagogy of the South "is" and "is being" in the following terms:

This pedagogy, whose foundations were already laid by the praxis of popular education and the dialogical thought of Paulo Freire, develops within the context of Freire's pedagogy, while also drawing on a long tradition of emancipatory and liberating critical-transformative pedagogies. It is characterized by an ongoing reinterpretation of an educational practice that is multiple and diverse. Within this framework, the voice of the subaltern, based on a dialogical and collaborative platform (which extends the potential of new technologies rooted in human networks for the exchange of experiences, light social technologies, and re-signifiable subaltern knowledges), becomes a key element in establishing an effectively multicultural curricular practice. This is a dynamic curricular practice that, by its active and insurgent nature, would be capable of producing pluriversal knowledge (Mancilla, 2014, p. 211).

Thus, one of the cornerstones of this approach is popular education, which begins with a decolonial reassessment. Dias (2021) also identifies several other theoretical foundations, including Dusselian *pedagógica*, a critique of Eurocentric universalism, the rejection of the ontology of exteriority, the concept of otherness as explored in the Ethics of Liberation, and a South-South epistemological reconversion. These elements contribute to a Philosophy of Liberation that serves the marginalized and supports a project for a pedagogy of the South as a new pedagogy of externality.

Next is Mota Neto's (2015) thesis, which, like Mancilla's, identifies a decolonial interpretation of popular education as one of its theoretical foundations, primarily drawing on the

works of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda. This interpretation leads to the development of a decolonial pedagogy, as explained below:

if decolonial thought refers to the epistemic practices of recognizing and challenging coloniality—practices that emerged in Latin America and other colonized regions in response to domination—then we can say that decolonial pedagogy involves the theories and practices of human education that empower marginalized groups to resist the oppressive logic imposed by modernity/coloniality, with the goal of building a free, loving, just, and supportive society and human being” (Mota Neto, 2015, p. 312).

For Dias (2021), this definition is broad enough to encompass educational processes that take place in various settings, including within the formal school system. Moreover, it emphasizes a humanistic approach, striving for existential dignity, solidarity, and compassion as a shared trait of humanity.

The third thesis is by Rodrigues Jr. (2017), which, according to Dias’ (2021) interpretation, bases its concept of Crossroads Pedagogy on a theological, philosophical and educational theological framework that is not Christian, and its philosophy has African roots, specifically from the Yoruba tradition.

It acknowledges the existence of the divine, which directly influences its scientific methodology by proposing a pedagogy of the ‘cruzios’. For us, this represents a significant rupture in the modern/colonial research model. Dias (2021) highlights that, according to this reasoning, “there is continuity between the immanent and the transcendent, without dichotomies”. The author proposes his Crossroads Pedagogy as an anti-racist, decolonial, and consequently pluriversal project.

The crossroads master represents the power to be embodied by an anti-racist/decolonial pedagogy, which shifts the *orixá* (cosmic force) beyond a purely religious interpretation. This perspective arises because the *orixá*, before anything else, is the element that enables presences, grammars, and their respective intersections. Thus, in this crossroads project, which intertwines acts of resilience and transgression, called the Crossroads Pedagogy, various performative experiences from the diaspora converge. These experiences are characterised by the various ways of creating language, both as a means of making oneself present and to express oneself in the world. The pedagogy embodied by Exu is translated as a political/poetic/educational action that engages with different performances, seeing them as conceptual tools for envisioning other possible horizons.” (Rodrigues Jr., 2017, p. 45).

From this definition, Dias (2021) infers that it represents an original pedagogical perspective, emerging from an anthropological understanding of education, committed to life and wrapped in aesthetics (poetics). Precisely because it stems from this anthropological

root, it sees culture as a foundational element, a rich expression of the ways in which education is practiced.

The fourth thesis is by Gil (2021). Unlike the other three, which are theoretical, this one outlines four educational practices as a feminist decolonial pedagogy in action, within the scope of the World March of Women (WMW) movement. In this sense, Dussel (1980), Walsh (2013), Palermo (2014), Mancilla (2014), Mota Neto (2015), and Rodrigues Jr. (2017), Gil (2021) points to a much broader understanding of pedagogy compared to the modern/colonial, school-centered model.

The first practice of the World March of Women (WMW) highlighted by Dias (2021) in Gil (2021) concerns learning an 'other' way of engaging with the economy, which goes beyond the paradigm constraints of capitalism. In this context, the 'other' emphasized in this economic dimension arises from the recognition, valuing, expansion, and legitimization of the knowledge held by the activists involved, without relying on colonial frameworks. The second decolonial-pedagogical practice pertains to access to common goods and public services, approached from an ethical-political awareness that unfolds into acts of solidarity among WMW members who do not share the same realities, but empathize with each other and fight for dignified living conditions. The third pedagogical practice focuses on non-violence against women, while respecting local forms of struggle among members, which implies an understanding that violence may be tolerated in contexts where it is unavoidable. The final highlighted practice is the eradication of violence against women, to be achieved through initiatives aimed at raising awareness about violent and abusive relationships.

Despite having conducted another state-of-the-art survey, encompassing 238 new records of master's and doctoral theses, in the field of Education, published between 2021 and 2023, we found only one thesis addressing a concept of decolonial pedagogy. This is the thesis by Luciana de Araújo Pereira, titled 'Griô Pedagogy and Its Interfaces with Teaching Practices in Quilombola Communities: (De)colonization of the Teaching Profession,' presented to the Postgraduate Program in Education at the State University of Bahia (UNEB).

As we "looked" comprehensively at this thesis, we identified two key ideas: decolonial scientific enunciation and praxiological approaches with conceptual innovations. As to the former, we consider that enunciation relates to the 'place' of speech, not only in a spatial-physical sense but also in 'bringing forth' the full potential of a black women, black writing, and a black body. This enunciation carries the coloniality-decoloniality tension, highlighting the challenges of being a black woman while seeking to reclaim an 'other' life that evokes her ancestral roots.

It is particularly important to mention this aspect of the thesis in this article, as it goes beyond merely contextualizing or linking a research 'object' to an individual's life. From the perspective of decolonial enunciation, it concerns the self-awareness of her pains as well as

of her potential, evoking historical, ancestral, and affective dimensions as an inherent part of the research. This is what distinguishes it from mere contextualization and, above all, from the mono-thematic approach, based on logical and rational knowledge, so well represented by René Descartes.

Decolonial enunciation, as we understand it, according to Oliveira (2005) and Oliveira and Ramos (2020), is described as an ethical-liberating movement. From this perspective, authorial identity is present in all its existentiality as a decolonial power. Therefore, if the enunciation is decolonial, it is inherently 'alternative' (in the strict sense of otherness). It cannot simply be about belonging to a certain 'nativeness' (I am black; I am a riverside dweller, etc.), but it must also encompass the experience of an individual, a subject who is sensitive to the pain of victimized "otherness". This subject recognizes the suffering of 'the other', their traumatic experiences, and is moved by it, standing alongside them in the fight for transmodernity.

Given this, we characterize the author of the thesis as a human in every aspect, as a woman who bears the marks of the colonality-decoloniality tension and becomes ethically and politically engaged with causes that have the potential for decolonial transformation. In this case, her engagement is connected to a *griô* pedagogy, as we will explore further.

However, it's important to note that enunciation is not an attribute exclusive to the author of a thesis. It also pertains to the advisor, the evaluation committee members, and the postgraduate program itself. This constitutes an ethical, political, and epistemological stance that is institutionally adopted, though with its nuances and tensions.

Regarding Pereira's (2021) praxiological approaches to decolonial pedagogies, we highlight that *Griô* Pedagogy, like other pedagogies discussed by Dias (2021), emerges from a concrete reality. In this case, it was shaped within a context of resistance praxis in the 1990s, when the economic crisis hit the Chapada Diamantina region, following the prohibition of diamond mining and trading.

Like other Brazilian decolonial pedagogies discussed by Dias (2021), such as Pedagogy of the South (Mancilla, 2014), decolonial popular pedagogy (Mota Neto, 2015), Crossroads Pedagogy (Rodrigues Jr., 2017), and decolonial feminist pedagogy (Gil, 2021), *Griô* Pedagogy does not emerge out of nothing. On the contrary, it reinterprets its context creatively. Pereira (2021) offers a reinterpretation of *Griô* Pedagogy, initially proposed by Pacheco (2006), who defines it as follows:

A pedagogy of affective and cultural experience that facilitates the dialogue between different age groups, between school and community, and between ethnic-racial groups. It interweaves ancestral knowledge from oral traditions with academic sciences to develop knowledge and life plans that focus on strengthening identity and celebrating life" (Pacheco, 2006, p. 86 as cited in Pereira, 2021, p. 20)

This is the key point: to offer, pedagogically, “other” educational paths that have historically been effaced by the modern/colonial paradigm, particularly in Education and the Pedagogy that represents it. Without thoroughly exploring the concept of Griô Pedagogy, here are some of its elements that correlate with decoloniality. The first is the material starting point, from which theory is also developed:

The social foundations of this pedagogy are not centered on the research of individual academics, but rather on the actions proposed by authors, research and study groups, community action groups, and social movements that produce knowledge in a transdisciplinary and connected manner, advocating for an ordinary intersection of culture and education, as well as cultural diversity (Pereira, 2021, p. 90-91)

We identify other similarities between Griô Pedagogy and decolonial pedagogies: a pedagogy of lived experience, the mediation between different cultural expressions; inter-generational communication, decolonial teaching and its role within the educational system, and a pedagogy that requires praxiological commitment.

In our understanding, two key points contributed to the success of the praxis that led to the organization of Griô Pedagogy: a quest for existential roots and the mediation of knowledge. Specifically, the ancestral existential roots that shape an Afro-Brazilian identity and the mediation between a regional African culture and common culture.

The first involves deliberate practices aimed at fostering learning in conjunction with subjectivity, engaging with oral traditions and other cultural symbols that call for a conscious recognition of a rich expression of ways of living that have been effaced for centuries due to racial inferiority notions. This is done without neglecting common culture: “This experience occurs through the encounter of arts and traditions with sciences” (Pereira, 2021, p. 102).

Through pedagogical practices based on one’s lived experience, the learner can subjectively find their “self”, which helps form “our-selves” within a framework of critical-conscious recognition of ancestry and identity that continuously intertwine.

Due to this existential (re)connection, no educational practice can be merely an imposition of one knowledge over another. This is where Griô Pedagogy acts as a mediator between distinct cultural expressions. For instance, it bridges the gap between written and oral language:

[...] writing creates the law, promotes legitimacy, and grants social power, but it rarely manages to surpass, as knowledge source, what can be found in the oral traditions of specific social groups. From this statement, we can understand why oral tradition, as a transport medium for ancestral knowledge, serves as the foundation of Griô Pedagogy. **Griô Pedagogy seeks to bridge written and oral tradition, establishing dialogues between the two modalities** (Pereira, 2021, p. 110, emphasis added).

An eminently decolonial pedagogical practice promotes an “other” kind of class, an “other” kind of teaching, as transcribed below:

Griô Pedagogy’s didactic approach begins with a ritual enchantment, a ritual identity and ancestry, referred to as “vivência” (lived experience), a dialogical ritual, and a knowledge sharing ritual. Each of these corresponds to a moment in a class, forming a methodological sequence (Pereira, 2021, p. 95).

No more rows of desks, no more professors “professing” the truth to students who are assumed to know nothing (Freire, 2019), and this does not make it anti-scientific or dismissive of common culture. The distinction lies in pedagogical decolonization, which allows for an ontological and epistemological revision of formal education.

The educational system exhibits a tension between reproduction and liberation. As we’ve seen thus far, Griô Pedagogy is much more aligned with the decolonial commitment to liberation from the dehumanizing constraints of the modern/colonial paradigm. In this sense, it presents itself as a means to create “fissures” (Walsh, 2013) in society, even if only on a regional scale, by bringing to light what coloniality insists on submerging, i.e., participation, voice, affection, memory, and the indigenous-African oral traditions of the Brazilian people, thereby promoting the emancipation of individuals.

Griô Pedagogy “[...] proposes the construction of an alternative model of society and community, mediated by cooperation, affection, and respect for the elders and for our ancestry” (Pereira, 2021, p. 99). Thus, we understand it as a pedagogy rooted in popular choice that advocates for transmodernity, striving for a society characterized by social justice, equalitarian in its ways of life, and respect for cultural pluriversality.

We assert that, based on Pereira (2021), Griô Pedagogy, while an intellectual precursor to decolonial pedagogies, also constitutes a Brazilian decolonial pedagogy. It emerges from the ethical-political praxis aimed at the infant victims of social neglect and inept public administration of the city of Lençóis, in the state of Bahia, a praxis whose methodological principles disrupt the modern/colonial paradigm by recognizing and valuing the ontology of the Brazilian people, particularly the ethnic diversity of African heritage, through their ways of life and their knowledge. This is achieved through the mediation of oral and written language, across different generational groups, and between general and regional cultures, intertwining ancestry and identity.

5 Final Remarks

The epistemological decolonization of the academic and intellectual world is a currently occurring process that allows us to enunciate the alterity that has been denied by the modern/colonial paradigm. A significant aspect of this process is the establish-

ment of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group, in 1998, which, though not without internal tensions, has brought together Latin American intellectuals and has played a key role in disseminating decoloniality.

Among the members of this group, we single out Enrique Dussel, Catherine Walsh, and Zulma Palermo as important contributors to the discussion on decolonial pedagogies. Dussel, a critical precursor, developed his pedagogy of liberation as part of his philosophy of liberation. Meanwhile, Walsh and Palermo have contributed theoretically to the subject, with Walsh focusing on praxis in the Andean context and Palermo offering insights from an Argentine perspective.

In Brazil, the first academic work in the field of Education anchored in the decoloniality debate was Oliveira's 2010 dissertation. According to Dias (2021), it wasn't until 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2021 that additional theses in Education began to develop theoretical concepts of decolonial pedagogies.

In another state-of-the-art survey, from which this article emerges, we extended the research timeline from Dias (2021), which originally spanned from 2011 to October 18, 2021, to now cover the entirety of 2021 through 2023. As a result, the number of theses examined increased from 871 to 1,109 records.

However, in this expanded research, we only found one additional thesis: Pereira's (2021), which introduces Griô Pedagogy both as a decolonial pedagogy and as its precursor. This is due to Griô Pedagogy being organized before the creation of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group, despite sharing features with Enrique Dussel's pedagogy of liberation and the decolonial pedagogies of Walsh, Palermo, and the theses explored by Dias (2021).

We argue that, while decolonial pedagogies may have emerged intellectually from the broader context of epistemological decolonization within the academic and intellectual world, they are fundamentally the result of a process of struggle and liberation that is contextualized in every enunciative act. This is what enables, for instance, to view Griô Pedagogy as a precursor to decolonial pedagogies, if we adopt the establishment of the Modernidad/Colonialidad Group as a chronological landmark.

Finally, the five Brazilian theses highlighted in this article offer significant contributions to the scientific advancement of decolonial pedagogies. We conclude by asserting that we must push forward towards more anthropological approaches to pedagogy that are focused on educational practices beyond the school environment. At the same time, it is essential to work toward the decolonization of formal education, making it alternative and contextually relevant to the lives of those who engage with it, all without compromising the rigor required in addressing curricular components.

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