Intersecting Critical Pedagogies to Counter Coloniality
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Influential critical analyses of the material and cultural legacies of colonialism have come to serve as catalysts for counter-hegemonic thought and mobilisations against racism, inequity and what has been referred to as coloniality (Mignolo, 2002, 2007; Quijano, 2007, 2014), or the enduring and constantly evolving racist, classist and sexist effects of (neo)colonial modes of domination, oppression and epistemic injustice (see also Battiste, 2013; Santos, 2014/2017 or Torres Santomé, 2017). Within the field of education, a growing number of public intellectuals have committed to transforming education into a more just endeavour by steadily incorporating anti-colonial, postcolonial or decolonial perspectives into their critical pedagogical praxis of researching, writing, teaching and mobilising.

This heterogeneous assemblage of educators, whose origins and identities may or may not stem from historically (and, in some cases, recently) colonised peoples around the world, has traditionally found inspiration in a corpus of European social theory rooted primarily in the cultural Marxism of Antonio Gramsci (1971/1999) and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Horkheimer, 1982), a point of reference which is also present in another important source: the liberation pedagogy of Brazilian theorist and educator Paulo Freire (1970). Beyond these sources, critical educationists have further drawn from radical and intersectional feminism; critical race theory (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Taylor, 2017); and post-structural theory, including Michel Foucault’s (1969/1972) genealogical analysis of power, or queer theory, as developed, for example, by Judith Butler (1990).

What is often missing from such perspectives, however – as many postcolonial and (especially) decolonial scholars have pointed out – are voices whose cultural and epistemological frames of reference are not necessarily located in, generated from, or centred on life in ‘the West’. This is why Indian decolonial feminist scholar Chandra T. Mohanty wrote the following about ‘the commodification and domestication of Third World people in the academy’ (2003: 217):

The sort of difference that is acknowledged and engaged has fundamental significance for the decolonization of educational practices. Similarly, the point is not simply that one should have a voice; the more crucial question concerns the sort of voice one comes to have as the result of one's location, both as an individual and as part of collectives.

(Mohanty, 2003: 216)

It is why Ochy Curiel (2007) researches the perspectives of critical Black (and Black lesbian) feminists from her native Dominican Republic and other Latin American countries. It is why Argentine feminist María Lugones (2008) finds ‘coloniality’ more revealing than ‘intersectionality’ for analysing the marginalisation of oth-ered voices within feminist studies – voices that do not meet the White, Western/Northern, hetero-normative, English-speaking standard that affords greater access to a broad academic readership. It is also why Portuguese decolonial scholar Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014/2017) calls for a ‘sociology of absences’ for, as he points out, the resounding perspectival and epistemological absences in dominant research and development, in the mass media, in history books and in textbooks, do not occur on their own; they are actively produced.

True to Freire's (1970) project of conscientização (critical consciousness-raising), more and more critical scholars and educators today are consequently contemplating social and epistemic injustices from subaltern standpoints emerging from the Global South and its diaspora as well as from the so-called Fourth World (Manuel and Polsuns, 1974) in the Global North in which a disproportionately high percentage of Indigenous, Black and Brown people find themselves merely subsisting within otherwise wealthy countries. These
perspectives highlight the need to re-situate, nuance and challenge the Eurocentric premises and applications of critical theory within the sphere of education. In this chapter we argue that such efforts have generally enriched and strengthened rather than detracted from the transformative potential of what some authors refer to as critical pedagogy, while others prefer the term critical education. Aided by the alternative standpoints described herein, we examine coloniality for its imbrications around the world in local, global and glocal social relations and educational policies and realities, and the role critical pedagogy/education can play in countering its ongoing dehumanising effects.

Contesting Coloniality: Seminal Works

Before embarking on that task, however, some preliminary clarifications are in order concerning the focus on coloniality and the terminology used to represent the struggles against it. Some readers may at first question the relevance of addressing issues related to colonialism per se if, as social geographer Joanne Sharp (2009) rightly asserts, by the mid 20th century, there were virtually no peoples or places left in the world to ‘discover’ or ‘conquer’ by sheer, external, imperial force. Nonetheless, the military, political and settler invasions and occupations of territories and peoples through de jure (legally and administratively legitimised) colonisation came to a formal end in the 1960s, having ostensibly been abolished as such by the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960. The fact remains, however, that while officially sanctioned forms of colonialism no longer enjoy legitimacy – although exceptions to this rule do exist – other more tacit and insidious neocolonial means, such as coloniality, live on. Coloniality transcends colonialism to the extent that it embodies and propagates the multifarious (cultural, economic and political) legacies of historic colonial rule. As defined by Aníbal Quijano, coloniality:

[...]

We argue that tackling coloniality through education constitutes an essential undertaking in the struggle to promote anti-racist, anti-sexist, cross-cultural and socio-economic justice throughout the world. And there are at least three overlapping epistemological approaches to denouncing and resisting the racism, classism, sexism and other forms of oppression and violence so inherent to the universalist aspirations of the Western/modern project of coloniality; these three approaches include anti-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial currents of analysis. Such strategies of resistance are explored in this chapter, especially at the points where they converge through educational and scholarly pursuits. And while it would prove futile to attempt to draw any clear and solid epistemological boundaries between these three currents (because they coincide in so many ways, as we shall see), some distinctions can indeed be identified. Another aim, then, is to shed light on why and how the various prefixes (anti-, post- and de-) came into existence in the first place, and to identify the convergences and divergences among them in order to forge a critical pedagogical praxis capable of countering the neocolonial forces of racism, neoliberal capitalism and patriarchy so characteristic of the dominant world-system (Wallerstein, 2009) of our times.

Anti-Colonial Studies

The first of the three major currents mentioned above is largely composed of anti-colonial theories and projects, which are conveyed through a body of literature initially produced under de jure colonialism and apartheid, mostly by African, Afro-Caribbean and African American intellectuals and activists who were strongly influenced by Marxism and critical theory. Classic works from this line of thought include Eric
Williams’ *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944/1994); Aimé Césaire’s *Discours sur le Colonialisme* (1950 [Discourse on Colonialism, 2000]); Frantz Fanon's *Peau Noir, Masques Blancs* (1952 [Black Skin, White Masks, 2007]) as well as his *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961 [The Wretched of the Earth, 1963]); or Albert Memmi’s *Portrait du Colonisé précédé du Colonisateur* (1957 [The Colonizer and the Colonized, 1991]); among various other foundational texts.\(^{14}\)

These lucid analysts of the devastating and lasting psychological, socio-cultural, economic and political effects of the racist institutions of slavery and colonialism influenced Paulo Freire’s ground-breaking reflections on education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In this text – which serves as a cornerstone of critical pedagogy – he refers to Memmi's term *surenchère colonisatrice* (1957: 25) or the ‘colonized mentality’ (as cited in Freire, 1970: 49), as one that is echoed in Fanon's (1961) observations on the mental obstacles to resisting colonialism. Freire writes:

> Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the ‘order’ which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have internalized. […] Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them.

*(Freire, 1970: 62–3)*

Decades earlier, Afro-Caribbean statesman and historian Eric Williams (1944/1994) presented one of the most revealing critical analyses of how the slave trade actually died out, Williams finding it to be much more a question of economics than of social justice:

> The commercial capitalism of the eighteenth century developed the wealth of Europe by means of slavery and monopoly. But in so doing it helped to create the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, which turned round and destroyed the power of commercial capitalism, slavery, and all its works. […] Even the great mass movements, and the antislavery mass movement was one of the greatest of these, show a curious affinity with the rise and development of new interests and the necessity of the destruction of the old.

*(Williams, 1944/1994: 210–11)*

Overall, these inspirational thinkers from both the Global South and the racialised and colonised North put into much needed perspective the lasting damage to the other largest part of humanity caused by colonialism. As Frantz Fanon (1952, 1961) famously argued, colonialism cast people into two totalising and racialised categories: that of the colonisers, whose humanity would always be fully recognised by the powers that be, and that of the colonised, whose humanity would never be fully recognised by those same powers, nor even by many of the colonised themselves. Such was, and in so many ways still is, the depth of the damage.

**Postcolonial Studies**

A second current pertains to postcolonial viewpoints, the majority of which are advanced by diasporic cultural studies scholars with ethnic origins or ties to countries once colonised (primarily, but not only) by the British Empire. These theorists tend to reside and work in the Global North, write in English and draw from postmodern and post-structural theory. They are generally focussed on destabilising essentialised and biased conceptualisations of identity and subjectivity, and aim to promote the idea that cultural/ethnic/racial hybridity, as well as cross-culturally filtered forms of interpretation and representation, are tantamount to the human condition. They consider these epistemological and ontological perspectives to be a key part of forging anti-racist, inclusive and cohesive social organisation, and while their emphasis remains on a cultural plane of analysis,
Some noteworthy examples of the postcolonial corpus can be found, for instance, in Palestinian scholar Edward Said’s magistral works, the two most influential of which are *Orientalism* (1978/2003) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Said's short definition of Orientalism reads as 'a Western [discursive] style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (1978/2003: 3), and as a means of securing and prolonging Western superiority (that is, coloniality) vis-à-vis the Arab and Muslim world after *de jure* colonialism faded. To counter the one-sided depictions and truisms of Orientalists, Said recommended applying 'contrapuntal analysis' (1993: 18) consisting not in replacing one grand narrative with another supposedly more accurate and inclusive one, but in forging counternarratives that challenge and disrupt the hegemony of such representations, much as a musical movement in counterpoint juxtaposes two melodies, this duality affecting the quality and impact of the overall movement.

The postcolonial was also forcefully conveyed in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s highly influential essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (1988), in which she critiqued Western post-structural theorists such as Foucault or Deleuze for their de-contextualised representations of epistemic violence associated with subaltern others whose historical/geographical/cultural situatedness, social class, gender and subjectivities were systematically distorted or overlooked in their analyses. Spivak noted: ‘If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow’ (1988: 287). In a now classic study of cultural hybridity, interpretation and representation, Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) resonates with both Spivak and Said when referring to Fanon’s ability to unmask Western modernity itself as a racist colonial project:

> [A]s much as he writes in ‘The fact of Blackness’ about the temporality of modernity within which the figure of the ‘human’ comes to be *authorized,[*] [I]t is Fanon’s temporality of emergence – his sense of the *belatedness of the black man* – that does not simply make the question of ontology inappropriate for black identity, but somehow *impossible* for the very understanding of humanity in the world of modernity.

(Spivak, 1994: 236–7, emphases in original)

In other words, given that the modern concept itself of ontology – on *being* – was advanced from an understanding of humanity that excluded Black and Brown people, Fanon questioned and even rejected its potential for making sense of human existence.

**Decolonial Studies**

A third current comprises *decolonial* perspectives and mobilisations that promote alternatives to Western and modern universalist moulds for knowing, being and power relations among peoples and with nature (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2002, 2007; Quijano, 2007, 2014). According to South African scholar Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016), decoloniality, as well as a ‘critical decolonial ethics of liberation’ (2016: xvi), differ from postcolonial perspectives in that the former dig further back through history to contextualise today’s racial injustices and coloniality. For instance, from the 15th century onwards, Europeans came to invade and occupy distant lands in unprecedented ways, and to oppress the peoples of those lands. Those were the times of Columbus’ invasion of the Americas and the onset of the slave trade. Postcolonial writers, on the other hand, tend to focus more on the British imperial footprint across the globe. Moreover, while postcolonial scholars prioritise denouncing metanarratives and ideological dogma, ‘decoloniality seeks to attain a decolonized and de-imperialized world in which new pluriversal humanity is possible. Postcolonialism is part of a “critique of modernity within modernity”’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016: 49).
Honduran decolonial feminist Breny Mendoza (2016) has also noted that postcolonial scholarship has not been as receptive to intersectional and anti-colonial feminist thought as have salient decolonial thinkers such as Argentine theorists María Lugones (2008) or Walter Mignolo (2002, 2007), who have drawn on the early border thinking of Chicana lesbian writer Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/1999). Anzaldúa's work represents an intellectual and poetic contemplation on the hybridity of cultural identities and how they may constitute invisible borders. Foregrounding her work is a response to Eurocentric hegemonic norms and a critique of coloniality with its vast domination of geographic, epistemic and psychological space.

Another decolonial scholar, Ramón Grosfoguel (2013), of Puerto Rican origins, has also approached Western patriarchy and domination through the critical lens of coloniality, depicting four ‘genocides/epistemicides’ of modernity that started in the 16th century and include the cruel and fatal persecution of powerful women (North and South) through witch-hunts, as well as the systematic dehumanisation and oppression of three additional collectives: the Iberian Muslim and Jewish populations who were brutally repressed and banished during and after the Spanish Catholic monarchs’ conquest of the al-Ándalus in the 15th century; Indigenous peoples around the world who have suffered sweeping genocide campaigns; and the mass enslavement and displacement of African peoples. These tremendously violent historical undertakings in turn led to the epistemic and material privileging of ‘Western Man’ (Grosfoguel, 2013: 86) and his structures of power and knowledge.

That said, most of these Southern theorists find inspiration in the prolific and illuminating (albeit rarely translated) works of Argentine-Mexican decolonial philosopher Enrique Dussel. He defines his ‘ethics of liberation’ (see, e.g., Dussel, 2013a, 2013b) as ‘transmodern’ (2013a) in nature because it offers an alternative to the falsely universal extension of Eurocentric modern epistemological and ontological thought, values and practices to peoples who, from the very start, were excluded from or oppressed by that same project of modernity. Dussel thus suggests that by uncovering the ‘pluriverse’ (2013b) of human conditions, many alternative paths towards ‘transmodernity’ can be forged. In fact, many other decolonial theorists have emerged from Latin American and/or Indigenous experiences with, and analyses of, (neo)colonial occupation, exploitation, extraction and ‘development’ (see e.g., Doxtater, 2004; Escobar, 2011, 2018; Shiva, 1997; Smith, 1999; Ticona Alejo et al., 2011; Tuck and Yang, 2012). While their gaze extends back to the birth of the modern age in 1492, they highlight the ongoing significance of apprehending that historical turning point in order to decolonise its lasting effects on the structures and operations of power and knowing in today's world.¹⁶

In her now classic Decolonizing Methodologies (1999), New Zealand researcher of Maori descent Linda Tuhiwai Smith presents a critique of Western research methodologies and, in particular, research practices that harm Indigenous populations through extraction and misrepresentation. She argues that many social science disciplines, such as anthropology, are grounded in relations between the coloniser and the colonised. These unequal relations of power shape the research products and relegate the colonised subject to the margins. In a similar but broader sense, Indian decolonial scientist and ecofeminist Vandana Shiva (1997) has advanced the notion of ‘biopiracy’ or the neocolonial extraction and seizure of both local knowledge and natural resources under the banner of scientific investigation and ‘development’.

Analysing the situation of Indigenous nations subject to US cultural, political, legal and economic impositions, anthropologist Audra Simpson (2014) problematises the notion of postcoloniality as she argues that existing governance and treaties serve to re-colonise Indigenous people through everyday activities and structural constraints. The treaty represents codified European dominance over the Indigenous other, who is situated both historically and presently. The legitimacy of such treaty arrangements is seldom questioned, and their legality is affirmed by the logics of technical rationality. Simpson (2014) notes that global Indigenous populations face similar challenges related to the legality of land seizure within (neo)colonial frameworks that legitimise such practices.
Simpson's perspectives run parallel to those of Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck, who understands decolonisation as something much more than the mere decolonisation of discourse, which represents the 'metaphorisation' of decolonial work (Tuck and Yang, 2012). That is, by focussing primarily on the North American context of settler colonialism – where the colonisers arrived to stay, and have long occupied Indigenous lands – Tuck and colleagues denounce the fact that much of so-called decolonial scholarship evades the main objective of decolonisation in the context of settler colonialism: that of repatriation of Indigenous land and life. We will address this perspective in greater detail in the next section, where we explore the ways in which many critical researchers and practitioners of education are responding to these injustices through their own intellectual work.

Anti-Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory in Educational Studies

The destiny of a people is intricately bound to the way its children are educated. Education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next. It shapes the language and pathways of thinking, the contours of character and values, the social skills and creative potential of the individual. It determines the productive skills of a people.

(Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996: 404)

Scholars in the field of education studies have engaged with anti-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial theories through problematics related to intersectional identity, alterity, recognition, representation and power, and the equitable redistribution of social goods (social and epistemic justice). These general themes are addressed through scholarship on Indigenous knowledge systems; African Indigenous thought; research on democracy and citizenship; diasporic, migrant, subordinated and/or racialised others; and on the neocolonial dynamics of power and oppression (domination, occupation, exploitation, discrimination, subordination, exclusion) vis-à-vis resistance, transformation and emancipation through education. Coloniality being transversal in nature, and education being an interdisciplinary field, scholars aiming to reveal, denounce, intercede and counteract the ongoing violence produced by coloniality strive to integrate history, political theory, philosophy, sociology, economics, linguistics, literary studies and lived experience in their analyses. This section will focus on two major areas influenced by anti-/post/de/colonial theory in education: epistemic justice for subaltern peoples and decolonising critical pedagogy/education.

Epistemic Justice and Indigenous, Diasporic or Racialised ‘Others’ in Education

Indigenous scholars in educational studies regard colonialism as a violent form of oppression that has led to both biological and cultural genocide on a global scale. For them, decolonising education has the moral and practical obligation of acknowledging historical injustices while simultaneously re-examining current systems of power and thought in order to foreground Indigenous epistemologies. For instance, Marie Battiste (2013), education scholar from the Potlotek First Nation in Nova Scotia, Canada, asserts that we must dismantle the historical inequities perpetuated through education that resulted in the systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples. This long-standing form of injustice is grounded in the transmission of collective imperialist and colonial cognitive frameworks in schooling. She observes that efforts in the past three decades to increase the population of Indigenous students in post-secondary or tertiary education are nonetheless counterbalanced by the ideology that undergirds most Western post-secondary curricula: the fact that Eurocentric knowledges are considered universal and essential for everyone. This ‘cognitive assimilation’, as Battiste (2013: 136) terms it, is implicitly fostered throughout the West by its canon of scholarly literature. For Battiste, then,
to decolonise education is to restore Indigenous (epistemic and ontological) ecologies.

Elaine Coburn (2016), feminist scholar specialising in international studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, contends that Indigenous studies and scholarship remain segregated through divisions of academic labour in most institutions. The scholarly fields of study that constitute ‘ethnic studies’, ‘gender studies’ and ‘Indigenous studies’ are spatially and ideologically marginalised from mainstream academic discourses. Attending to the colonial history of Canada and its role in the dispossession of its First Peoples, Coburn (2016) cites the work of Indigenous scholars, observing that colonial relationships of superiority and inferiority shape contemporary discourses around Indigenous relationships with systems of education, justice, social services and health. She also asserts that many Indigenous people are able to resist through resilient practices that include reclaiming language, history and traditions denied under (settler) colonialism and residential schooling.

Sherene Razack (1998/2000) is a postcolonial feminist educational researcher and activist of West Indian descent who examines the relationship between White-settler colonialism and Indigenous peoples within the context of legal institutions. Razack (2002) firmly implicates racism and the legacy of colonialism as causes of Indigenous deaths within custody, as well as the disproportionate number of Indigenous people incarcerated. Paralleling Fanon’s (1952: 6) powerful ontological image of the symbolic zone de non-être (zone of non-being) inhabited by the colonised Black body, Razack further maintains that colonial relationships, which are perpetuated through educational systems, are inscribed on the body itself, the Indigenous or racialised body being marked as less human or bestial, while the White-settler bodies represent order and civility. In her more recent work, Razack (2016) has addressed the national crisis around murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

As noted earlier, Eve Tuck has honed in on the ongoing violence and multiple manifestations of settler colonialism. Apart from the genocide, epistemicide and ecological disaster tied not only to the White settlers’ historical massacre, dehumanisation, enslavement, displacement and containment of Indigenous peoples, but to the more recent practices of mass sterilisation, criminalisation, subordination and marginalisation – all of which are inextricably linked to the overarching usurpation, occupation and spoliation of Indigenous lands – Tuck and colleagues further expose settler-colonial operations within the field of education, among other fields and spheres of daily life. In reference to educational scholarship, Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) claim that:

> even as multiple responses have evolved to counter how curriculum continues to enforce colonization and racism, these responses become refracted and adjusted to be absorbed by the whitestream […] White curriculum scholars re-occupy the ‘spaces’ opened by responses to racism and colonization in the curriculum, such as multiculturalism and critical race theory, absorbing the knowledge, but once again displacing the [Indigenous] bodies out to the margins.

(Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013: 73)

This appropriation of decolonial space and discourse by non-Indigenous scholars of education is, once again, a form of colonisation. By this view, the analysis put forth in this very chapter is not exempt from potentially contributing to that process, for as Tuck and Yang contend, ‘the decolonial desires of White, non-White, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism’ (2012: 1). Our attempts to decolonise schools, methods and minds, then, can serve as mere metaphors of decolonisation if in the process they marginalise Indigenous scholars and educators and evade the much more unsettling end-goal of decolonising Indigenous lands and lives. Tuck and Yang (2012) acknowledge that there is no easy solution to this ‘incommensurability’, their aim solely being to alert non-Indigenous scholars and educators such as ourselves to the possible effects.
of our respective positionalities and purposes in settler-colonial dynamics, and to advance the cause of Indigenous land and way-of-life decolonisation.

Non-Indigenous, diasporic or long-standing subaltern peoples also face ongoing injustices from the legacies of colonialism and actualities of coloniality. Decolonial scholar Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti (2014) maintains that education, despite its role in the reproduction of multiple forms of oppression, can also allow students to deconstruct historical relations of power that contribute to systemic violence. Andreotti (2014; Andreotti et al., 2015) has been inspired by Spivak’s (2004) and Santos’ (2014/2017) critiques of collective complicity in the West towards epistemic injustice, as manifested in discursive knowledge production that privileges Eurocentrism. She presents a series of discursive and epistemological frames and questions that may offer a solution to the issue of this complicity in educational studies. We need to decentre our subjectivities in order to expand our conceptualisation of educational thought beyond normative ideologies. The analysis laid out in Andreotti et al. (2015) in their cartography of the ‘violence of modernity’ in higher education focusses on interpretations and practices of decolonisation – as classified into ‘soft-reform space’, ‘radical-reform space’ and ‘beyond-reform space’ – this last space resonating with Dussell's (2013a) realm of the ‘pluriversal’.

While not explicitly situated in educational studies, Himani Bannerji (2002, 2011) presents a Marxist-feminist discursive analysis of the language used to reify social relations under the coloniser/colonised binary. Bannerji (2002) argues that embedded in the language referring to immigrants and racialised or ‘visible’ minorities is the encoding of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ that influences political, social and economic relations of power. This set of colonial social relations has shaped the formation of many nation-states. John Porter has identified this as a ‘vertical mosaic’. In a vertical mosaic, colonised societies position each ethnic group as occupying a place within the hierarchy, the top representing those who are closest to the British or French colonisers. This vertical mosaic has structured ethnic group stratification by influencing the distribution of social status, power and prestige (Porter, 1965/2016). In educational studies, these theories are highly relevant because of the historical and current marginalisation of non-European and Indigenous scholarship. This vertical mosaic influences who may lay claim to citizenship rights, access resources in order to achieve social mobility, and achieve socio-economic and political power.

Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe (2014, 2016) contemplates the Western influences in African universities and speculates on the implications of decolonisation. He argues against the contemporary neoliberal frame for higher learning in which university students are regarded as consumers or clients, and acknowledges that the Eurocentric canon present in most global universities tends to normalise colonialism and colonial relationships. Mbembe (2016) asserts that Western epistemologies promote a mind and body dualism that differs from African and other Indigenous thought about the interdependence of all living things. Scientific paradigms that arise out of Western epistemologies foreclose alternative methodologies and invalidate other ways of knowing.

Further ontological and epistemological lines of analysis of difference in social organisation and interpretation, pursued as a means of countering the colonial order of life today, can be found in the work of George J. Sefa Dei (2010, 2011), a critical sociologist of education of Ghanaian descent who is based in Canada and has written prolifically from anti- and decolonial perspectives. He, too, argues that because colonialism is entrenched in quotidian social relationships, drawing from Indigenous philosophies to challenge Descartes’s mind-body dualism represents an important way of countering the oppressive effects of modern thought. By proposing an anti-racist ‘trialectic’ space for ‘dialogic encounter’ where learners of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds can ‘openly work with the body, mind, and spirit/soul interface in critical dialogues about their education’ (Dei and McDermott, 2014: 3), Dei hopes to open up a more just epistemic space. He also discusses the challenges of claiming African Indigeneity as an act of resistance in the face of ongoing colonial efforts that seek to erase or marginalise African history. As other researchers reviewed in this section have argued, Dei (2011) finds that Indigenous and racialised scholars in the area of educational studies are marginalised by coloniser/
colonised relationships in global contexts. Epistemic justice would emerge from methodologies and literature that value their knowledge.

Philosophical issues around social cohesion, representation and justice have long occupied a central place in critical pedagogical discourse. Turkish-born American political philosopher Seyla Benhabib (1999) – while not directly addressing coloniality per se – addresses a series of notions around belonging, socio-cultural cohesion and equity, which are also essential cross-curricular concerns to researchers of coloniality in education. Benhabib (1999) situates culture and cultural difference within hegemonic power relations as a symbolic form of identity marker which peoples of varying ethnic identities may organise around to assert power or struggle for recognition. Given that such a struggle necessarily involves the challenge of redistribution of societal resources as well, and resonating with Nancy Fraser's work,18 Benhabib (1999, 2002) contends that, in order to maximise representation and wellbeing within a (modern) polity, recognition of the particular needs and rights of culturally marginalised populations depends on the just redistribution of social goods, and vice versa. However, in her analysis of multiculturalism as a social and political philosophy, Benhabib (1999) raises questions about the legitimacy of assigning lasting or reified group-based cultural identity categories, and draws on Spivak's (1985/1995) concept of ‘strategic essentialism’ to account for social and political circumstances that may allow individuals to claim allegiance with a particular cultural category, albeit for collective gain.

At the same time, however, Benhabib (2002) – and here is where her theory, while aligning more closely with decolonial scholarship, still cannot be considered as such – takes issue with universalism when used to silence or oppress cultural groups who are either in need of or demand particular forms of recognition in order to attain equitable wellbeing within a polity. She thus questions the interpretation and application in France of laïcité, or the secular public sphere. Since 1989, laïcité has served to justify banning the use in public institutions of the Islamic (or culturally customary) veil by female students of North African, Arab, Asian and Muslim descent, thus projecting laïcité beyond its relevance to the secular institution of public schooling itself and onto the othered, racialised, subaltern body. This restricts rather than upholds these women's human right to religious freedom.

In what may at first seem to be a parallel line of argument, Franco-Algerian Indigène and political activist/writer Houria Bouteldja (2016) also sees this ban as responding much more to Islamophobia than to upholding laïcité. But unlike Benhabib, whose answer to this particular manifestation of coloniality is ‘a pluralistically enlightened ethical universalism’ (2002: 36) grounded in the episteme of modern democratic thought, Bouteldja aligns much more with Dussel's (2013b) call to transcend modern thinking by developing the notion of the pluriverse: Bouteldja questions integration, inclusion and social cohesion under coloniality and calls for strategic alliances among subaltern peoples worldwide in order to collectively overcome the racist and gendered cultural/material violence so deeply ingrained in the transnational and neocolonial political economy of modernity with its overarching institutions, such as neoliberal capitalist democracy. Her aim is to forge alternative approaches to the common good through what she calls ‘revolutionary love’. Much as Mohanty in 2003 called for working with White women feminists from wealthy Western countries (the ‘One-Third World’) against the ongoing exploitation and subordination of all women – but especially of the ‘Two-Thirds World’ (poor, Black and Brown) women from the Global South – as perpetuated by ‘capitalist commodity culture and citizenship’ (Mohanty, 2003: 196), Bouteldja calls for working with the White Western ‘Other’ to achieve dignity and emancipation for ‘Us’ (the subaltern): ‘Dignity is […] our capacity to love ourselves and to love that Other […] Dignity? It's as simple as revolutionary love’ (Bouteldja, 2016:126).

Decolonising Critical Pedagogy and Education

Considering that Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) represents a cornerstone of the fields of
critical pedagogy and critical education (along with key influences from critical theory, Gramsci (1971/1999) and Marxist analysis), it would be safe to say that critical pedagogy/education has been informed right from the start, if only indirectly through Freire, by the anti-colonial thought of Frantz Fanon (1952, 1961) and Albert Memmi (1957), among others. That said, Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that Freire’s more abstract categories of ‘oppressor/oppressed’ diluted Fanon’s focus on the colonisers and the colonised, for, as Fanon himself noted: ‘Decolonization never takes place unnoticed’ (cited in Tuck and Yang, 2012: 36).

In a complementary line of argument, critical decolonial scholar Catherine Walsh (2013, 2017), who has been based in Ecuador for more than 20 years and at one time worked closely with Freire, has been developing ethical, critical and dignifying forms of resistance to Eurocentric, racist, classist and sexist coloniality through pedagogy. She believes that very-other worlds are best supported through a decolonial pedagogy that we ‘feel-think’ (2017: 43). She points to the Fanon-Freire connection in education, noting that, ‘[b]y advancing a decolonising attitude and a decolonising humanism (Maldonado, 2009: 305), Fanon happened to turn the sociogenic [highlighted by Freire] into a decolonial pedagogy’ (Walsh, 2013: 45).

These are powerful arguments. Nonetheless, Fanon was not an educationist; Freire was. Freire's early critical engagement with anti-colonial cultural perspectives represented an initial attempt at nuancing the more prominent influences in his pedagogical thought from critical theory and liberation theology. This process in Freire's thinking at minimum served to introduce decolonial influences into the field of education studies, and to lay the foundations that guide critical pedagogy/education away from absorbing the legacies of coloniality.

Freire (1970, 2013) argued that educators can improve the human condition by counteracting the effects of oppression through dialogue, conscientisation (critical reflection) and action. Although he drew from Frankfurt School critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse (1969), who defended the ideals of radical social change and liberation for the oppressed, at the heart of Freire’s (1970, 2013) pedagogical theory and practice was a struggle for justice for and with the oppressed of his native Brazil, a former colony of Portugal. Freire rejected what he called the ‘banking’ model of education, which was and still is – now more than ever! – oriented towards the transmission of standardised information from teachers to students, as if such information could be objectively absorbed and stored in each student’s brain equally, only to be accumulated and equally retransmitted later ‘with interest’, just as an economic investment can yield gains at a future date. Freire claimed that critical reflection on practice involves a dynamic between ‘doing’ and ‘reflecting on doing’, and that educators following these principles must examine critically the conditions and causes of oppression. Importantly, he also argued that the purpose of education was not to integrate the oppressed into the structures of oppression, but to transform the oppressive structure itself (Freire, 1970, 2013), an idea that has also been expressed, as we have seen, by Dussel (2013a), Bouteldja (2016), Andreotti et al. (2015), Dei (2011) and a growing number of other researchers.

During Freire’s political exile from Brazil and his academic career in the United States, his ideas were rapidly absorbed by critical educators coming from marginalised backgrounds, especially in terms of race, ethnicity or social class. For instance, North American critical educational researcher Henry Giroux (1988, 2011) was highly influenced by direct contact with Freire early in his academic career. For Giroux, Freire’s pedagogy spoke better than anyone else’s to Giroux’s working-class background. He thus attributes his commitment to critical pedagogy to Freire, and has long argued that a political framework that examines power, systemic cultural violence and social justice should shape education in the United States. Other well-known researchers and educators of critical pedagogy (McLaren and Kincheloe, 2007) and critical education (Apple and Au, 2014; Apple and Buras, 2006) recognise Freire’s influence in their own work. For instance, Apple and Buras note: ‘Paulo Freire (1993) early understood the liberating potential of viewing the world from the vantage point of those living on the margins’ (2006: 31).
Nonetheless, it is in bell hooks’ and Antonia Darder’s publications that Freirean thought comes to be ‘translated’ in ways that make it highly relevant to the Fourth World within the North/West, and to anti-racist education. African American critical educator and feminist writer bell hooks dedicates a chapter to Freire in Teaching to Transgress, in which she writes: ‘There was this one sentence of Freire’s that became a revolutionary mantra for me: “We cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become subjects’’” (1994: 46). She thus notes that teachers and students have possibilities within the educational structure to creatively resist the hegemonic control of institutional power, finding love (like Freire and Bouteldja) to be a crucial part of the practice of freedom. Resistance is an idea that Puerto Rican-American critical pedagogy scholar Antonia Darder also takes up in her anti-racist decolonial writing, including her book Freire and Education, where she conceives of Freire’s teaching critical literacy – that of ‘reading the word and the world’ (2015: 103) – as a decolonising practice. She, too, encourages educators and public intellectuals to ‘launch a liberatory pedagogy of love, anchored in an ongoing commitment to our collective emancipation’ (ibid.: 170).

The links between anti-racist, critical and anti-/post/de/colonial pedagogies, then, constitute a space for action. Alastair Bonnett (2000) asserts that the term ‘anti-racism’ is a 20th-century creation that did not appear in regular usage until the 1960s, and we would add that that period coincided with the end of formal colonial structures and the rise of anti-racist leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X or Angela Davis in the United States. Soon thereafter, in the 1970s, the Combahee River Collective was founded by African American queer feminists (Taylor, 2017) who drew from the writings of Angela Davis (1981), bell hooks (1981), Audre Lorde (1984) and other Black and Brown feminists, their work eventually coalescing into what is predominantly referred to today as the intersectional analysis of multiple, interconnecting and mutually constituting forms of oppression (Carastathis, 2016; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989; Ng, 1993).

As noted earlier, decolonial feminists from the Global South have found inspiration in intersectional thought, although some are currently debating its epistemological viability for the pluriverse (Lugones, 2008; Mendoza, 2016). For instance, Maria Lugones (2010) and others (see Carastathis, 2016) argue that intersectionality emerged from, and focussed primarily on racialised women of the Global North, which has limited its representability of the plight of the greater majority of subaltern Black, Brown and Indigenous women across the globe. They also contend that the transformative potential of intersectional analysis is disappearing thanks to the White establishment’s appropriation and selective deployment of this conceptual tool. In fact, Indigenous decolonial educationist Sandy Grande takes issue with post-structural ‘whitestream’ feminism in general, asserting that colonialism itself has been more damaging to Indigenous women than patriarchy, and that ‘feminist pedagogies that merely assert the equality of female power and desire are accomplices to the projects of colonialism and global capitalism’ (2003: 346).

Within critical pedagogy and education, however, other anti-racist decolonial scholars, such as Haitian critical pedagogue Pierre Orelus (2013) – who analyses his own and others’ experiences with ‘linguoracism’ (see also Orelus et al., 2016) – find intersectionality to be a powerful analytical tool. What all of these scholars are concerned with is the degree to which racist, Eurocentric and patriarchal practices of dehumanisation have been integral to the formation of structural (economic and institutional) discrimination towards Black and Brown peoples. Decolonial thought on the notion of White discomfort, in Michalinos Zembylas’ words, ‘opens up a realm that situates the pedagogisation of White discomfort within the broader decolonising project of disrupting White colonial structures and practices’ (2018: 88). And while anti-/decolonial scholar George Sefa Dei (2000) argues that anti-racism interrogates and seeks to rupture the social power, privilege and dominance accruing to Whiteness, Barbados-born postcolonial educational researcher Cameron McCarthy (2013) draws on the work of Stuart Hall (1992, 1996) to refer to racial identity as a form of contextual performance that is historically, geographically and culturally situated, and suggests that curricular reforms in education that purport to address diversity are achieved within the confines of a technical rationality that isolates knowledge into siloed disciplines, while ‘diversity’ and ‘difference’ have been appropriated to fit neoliberal ends (see also Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001; McCarthy and Kenway, 2014). And in Spain, Galizan critical education-
ist Jurjo Torres Santomé provides a very detailed and eye-opening analysis of what he terms the construction of neoliberal and 'neocolonial/colonised' personalities today (2017: 92).

We also find the anti-racist pedagogical work of African American critical education scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings (2014) to be highly relevant to combating coloniality despite her not identifying directly with anti-/post/ decolonial studies per se. Several decades ago, she articulated an educational approach termed ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ which, when effectively developed and employed in everyday teaching practices in schools, becomes cultural competence in teachers. For Ladson-Billings (2014), this refers to the idea that teachers learn to appreciate and value their students’ and their families’ cultures. Several scholars have extended her work, but it remains informed by critical pedagogy.

Conclusion

The majority of perspectives presented in this chapter converge to form a clear and resounding message: that the global project of decolonising education must begin with epistemic justice that decentres Eurocentric hegemonic power relationships by valuing the knowledge production of racialised and Indigenous others (Andreotti et al., 2015; Emeagwali and Dei, 2014; Mbembe, 2016; Quijano, 2014). Pedagogical goals must also align with non-Eurocentric practices in ways that demonstrate an ethic of care and respect for cultural differences, and an ethic of decolonial emancipation and love, in keeping with Freire, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Dussel, Bouteldja, hooks, Darder and others. Tuck and Yang’s ‘ethic of incommensurability’ (2012: 1), on the other hand, represents a formidable challenge as a demand for restorative justice, one that nonetheless offers a necessary compass not only to the ‘unfree’, to use Dussel's (2013a) term, but to the rest of us as well, in undoing a violently imposed historic dispossession.

Both authors of these pages are researchers and teacher educators who live to a great extent in diaspora. We strive to decolonise our own thinking and praxis, as well as that produced within the field of critical pedagogy on both sides of the Atlantic. Author bell hooks once wrote about ‘radical openness’ asserting that ‘[t]he will to keep an open mind is the safeguard against any form of doctrinaire thinking’ (2003: 110). This represents another important aim, as does problematising what is taken for granted in education, such as (neo)colonial forms of violence that have become banal – ‘the new normal’: de facto racial segregation through neoliberal education policy (school choice and privatisation schemes) and racist containment through urban planning (Shahjahan, 2011; Torres Santomé, 2017; Tuck and Yang, 2012, Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013); growing Islamophobia in the West (Benhabib, 2002; Bouteldja, 2016; Kincheloe et al., 2010); intensification of meritocratic controls and competition at all levels of education (Apple and Au, 2014; McCarthy and Kenway, 2014); and ongoing cultural and epistemic closure and violence (Andreotti, 2014; Battiste, 2013; Coburn, 2016; Dei, 2011; Orelus, 2013; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013).

In keeping with the scholars reviewed in this chapter, we too stand behind the recognition and reaffirmation of cultural difference vis-à-vis the norm/universalism that silences and excludes, and therefore oppresses. We support a healthy dose of strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1988) or ‘identity politics’ inasmuch as they work to dignify and emancipate, and facilitate respect for one’s own difference and therefore for others’ as well. We thus encourage fellow educators to engage critically and dialogically not only with students’ diverse histories and identities but with those of other educators and community members as well, for even the transversal nature of domination and oppression under neoliberal capitalism is inevitably conditioned by coloniality.

These are some ways in which we as critical educators can work towards what Dussel has referred to as ‘Freire’s transmodern pedagogy of liberation, by practising “dialogism” – the discursive action of the community of subjects in its struggle for liberation – as a method that allows the unfree to practice their freedom’ (2013a: 318). This is a major goal, as is developing Said’s (1993) contrapuntal analysis, Santos’ (2014/2017)
sociology of absences and Mohanty's cultures of dissent, which 'must work to create pedagogies of dissent rather than pedagogies of accommodation' (2003: 217). Intra- and intercultural dialogue informed by such strategies, as well as radical openness (hooks, 2003), revolutionary love (Bouteldja, 2016), radical love (Darder, 2014; hooks, 1994), and forging more equitable projects for collective wellbeing – for example, *Sumak Kawsay* projects (meaning ‘Good Living’ in Quechua) in Bolivia, Ecuador or Peru (Escobar, 2018) – will help shed light on the intersectional operations of coloniality (racism, sexism, classism, epistemicide, occupation, extraction, subordination and exclusion), and take all of us that much closer to the *pluriverse* of coexistence and interdependence.

Notes

1 Public intellectuals are understood here in the terms proposed by Patricia Hill Collins (2012) or Henry Giroux (1988) as writers, researchers, educators at all levels, cultural workers and mobilisers who reflect in critical ways on social justice and coexistence, thus aiming to influence a broad public through their writings, lectures, debates, teachings, creations and mobilisations. We perceive the knowledge they produce as neither objective nor universally applicable, for it is always subjectively, geographically and socio-culturally situated and embodied – this in keeping with Patricia Hill Collins’ (2012) description of the public intellectual.


5 In keeping with Spivak's (1988, 2004) usage of the term ‘subaltern’ (originally advanced by Gramsci, 1971/1999), it refers here to peoples who are perceived through the (neo)colonial gaze as subordinate or inferior *others*, or as outsiders whose alterity is thus dehumanised to various degrees.

6 The Global South transcends the geographical dimension to include the symbolic realm of subaltern existence under domination, which mostly occurs in the poorer countries of the southern hemisphere, but does also occur in wealthy countries, especially where Indigenous, immigrant and historically minoritised peoples and nations are concerned. For more information see Santos (2014) or Sharp (2009).


10 See Apple et al. (2011), Apple and Buras (2006), Apple and Au (2014), Dei (2011) or Dei and McDermott
(2014).


12 For example, the lands originally allocated by the British Empire to the Palestinian people under UN Resolution 181 of 1947 have since been steadily encroached upon by Israeli settlers protected by the Israeli military.

13 This and all subsequent translations of Spanish or Portuguese citations are by Cathryn Teasley. The original citation reads in Spanish as follows: ‘[…] uno de los elementos constitutivos y específicos del patrón mundial de poder capitalista. Se funda en la imposición de una clasificación racial/étnica de la población del mundo como piedra angular de dicho patrón de poder y opera en cada uno de los planos, ámbitos y dimensiones, materiales y subjetivos, de la existencia cotidiana y a escala social’.

14 See for instance: W. E. B. Du Bois’ The Souls of Black Folk (1903) and Africa in Battle Against Colonialism, Racialism, Imperialism (1960); Amilcar Cabral's (1970) National Liberation and Culture; Chinweizu's (1975) seldom cited The West and the Rest of Us; or Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) Decolonizing the Mind.


16 Other decolonial authors coming from fields beyond that of education would include: Maldonado-Torres (2007), Mohanty (2003), Santos (2014) or wa Thiong'o (1986), among many others.

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18 See Fraser (2010) for an overview of her own work on recognition, redistribution and representation.

19 This is a translation of the following citation published in the Spanish: ‘Al avanzar una “actitud decolonizadora” y un “humanismo decolonizador“ (Maldonado, 2009: 305), Fanon hace de la sociogenia una suerte de pedagogía decolonial […]’

20 The recently elected extreme-right President of Brazil, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, has publically condemned, and is attempting to censor, all of Paulo Freire’s scholarship in Brazil (Otras Voces en Educación, 2018).

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- critical pedagogy
- colonialism
- critical theory
- racism

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