

Pedagogies in struggle: postcolonial openings from experiences of Popular Education in Bogotá, Colombia

Pedagogie in lotta: aperture postcoloniali a partire da esperienze di educazione popolare a Bogotá, Colombia

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Abstract

This essay first attempts to provide a brief description of what the Italian postcolonial condition is, by taking into consideration some critical points that should be addressed when thinking about decolonial pedagogy in multicultural contexts, such as colorblindness and the neoliberal management of interculturality. Then it follows some assumptions collected during 4 months of ethnographic collaborative-action research within popular and communitarian movements that provide Popular Education in some marginal areas of the city of Bogotá, Colombia. Finally, drawing on the same experiences I have been involved in, I will propose suggestions for imagining how the Italian understanding of intercultural education can be freed from coloniality. Eventually, the paper proposes the need to carry out a communitarian turn in pedagogy based on three orienting practices: memory as a dialogical and living praxis, territory as a hermeneutic tool and methodology, and politics of love and care. Given this, the paper also seeks to address interculturality as a dialogical methodology through which supporting the argument. Indeed, the postcolonial framework is considered in its resonances with Cultural Studies, Popular Studies, Popular and Critical Education, Black Studies, and The Latin American Decolonial Movement.

Keywords: postcolonialism, popular education, critical interculturalism, communitarian turn, Colombia.

Sommario

Il saggio cerca di fornire una breve descrizione di quella che è la condizione postcoloniale italiana, prendendo in considerazione alcuni punti critici che dovrebbero essere considerati nell'affrontare la questione della decolonizzazione della pedagogia in una società multiculturale, come la *colourblindness* e la gestione neoliberale dell'interculturalità. Seguono poi alcune ipotesi raccolte durante 4 mesi di ricerca-partecipativa con alcuni movimenti popolari e comunitari che forniscono educazione popolare in diverse aree marginali della città di Bogotá, in Colombia. Attingendo dalle stesse esperienze in cui sono stata coinvolta, proporrò alcune aperture critiche per immaginare come la concezione italiana dell'educazione interculturale possa essere liberata dalla colonialità. In particolare, il saggio propone la necessità di attuare una svolta comunitaria nella pedagogia basata su tre pratiche orientative: la memoria come prassi dialogica e viva, il territorio come strumento e metodologia ermeneutica, e le politiche dell'amore e della cura per riportare il senso comunitario nella sfera pubblica. In considerazione di ciò, il paper cerca di utilizzare la dialogicità dell'interculturalità come metodologia critico-teorica: la postcolonialità è considerata nelle sue risonanze con gli Studi Culturali, gli Studi Popolari, l'Educazione Popolare Critica, gli Studi Neri e il Movimento Decoloniale Latino-americano.

Parole chiave: postcolonialismo, educazione popolare, interculturalità critica, turn comunitario, Colombia.

Introduction

In Italy, as in Europe, the need to rework the intercultural discourse in pedagogy by considering a different approach has given rise, since the 1980s, to extensive debates in an attempt to understand which theoretical and methodological tools could respond to the growing cultural pluralism of societies caused by the migration phenomenon. To date, different critiques have been made to the intercultural dimension of Western

pedagogy showing the risks of creating educational programs for foreigners that adopt culturalistic approaches directed to a passive assimilation of the minorities (Portera, 2003). An approach that does not include a political and deconstructive dimension capable of dealing with the material legacies of the colonial past. In fact, in their intercultural proposal, traditional educational institutions do not seem to take into consideration the structural problems of society, but they conceal the politics of marginalization under the form of cultural/linguistic difficulties in order to address the *foreign* student as the ones responsible of the marginal conditions they are experiencing. In fact, the current education system fails to address critically structural dynamics and interiorized structures such as racism, classism, homophobia, and misogyny; rather it seems to reiterate again and again the same power dynamics in the crucial site in which processes of production of self and society take shape.

This essay first attempts to provide a brief description of the Italian postcolonial condition, accounting for some critical points that should be considered when thinking about decolonial pedagogy. Then, it focuses on the assumptions collected during 4 months of ethnographic collaborative-action research with/in some popular and communitarian schools that provide Popular Education in different marginal areas of the city of Bogotá, Colombia. Finally, by relying on the experiences of popular education I have been involved with, I will provide suggestions for imagining how Italian education can be decolonized; in this part the paper proposes the necessity to perform a communitarian turn in pedagogy based on 3 orientative concepts: memory, territory, and politics of care. I am aware that an approach that creates resonances between Italy and South America, especially considering the complexities of a country like Colombia, may be too slippery of a ground. Although it could seem inappropriate and unrelated to our contexts, the desire to create a border crossing dialogue with experiences that are so geographically, politically, and historically distant stems from the recognized urgency to include new perspectives in the field of education. At the core of my investigation, indeed, lies this conviction: if an alternative form of education can open the doors to a project of intercultural social justice, to learn and dialogue with those who have been historically considered as the *difference*, it does not only mean recognizing their knowledges and practices at the core of academic interest, but also it entails placing them at the helm of the transformation.

Considering this, the paper tries to address interculturality, not only as the object of the research, but also as the dialogical methodology through which to support the argument. Indeed, the postcolonial framework will be considered in its resonances with Cultural Studies, Popular Studies, Popular and Critical Pedagogies, Black Studies, and Latin-American Decolonial Movement. These interconnected domains of discourses and practices «from elsewhere» (Grossberg, 1994, p. 19) seem essential because they put at the center relevant practices and knowledges that are still not deeply investigated in a deconstructive and critical intercultural approach towards the Western understanding of Education. Accepting this openness, it helps in creating what Mbembe defines «critical cosmopolitan pluriversalism» (2016, p. 37) from the South, a task that implies to unlearn and re-learn the world *otherwise*, in a radical refounding of our ways of thinking that embraces the claim of a way of being, thinking, studying, learning, living the Other (Mignolo, 2007). The infinite border crossings between these experiences and politics interweave the space from which the research intends to take inspiration in order to imagine how education can be decolonized and how it can advance towards new praxis to, by drawing on Freire's pedagogy of conscientization, critically read the world together with the *oppressed* communities in a shared political transformative commitment (Freire, 2002).

1. Postcolonial space-times in Italy

Postcolonial time is that in which colonial experience appears, simultaneously, to be consigned to the past and, precisely due to the modalities with which its «overcoming» comes about, to be installed at the center of contemporary social experience – with the entire burden of domination, but also the capacity for insubordination, that distinguishes this experience (Mezzadra, 2006).

In Italy, the premise that unacknowledged and overlooked forms of oppression, stemming from the colonial past, continue to manifest themselves in the present – in the guise of what Quijano (2000, 2007) defines as «coloniality» – underpins the recognition of the Postcolonial condition. To address the consequent imperative to decolonize education starting from the concept of postcoloniality and interculturality, guided by a critical and materialist approach, the paper takes into consideration the characteristics of contemporary Italian direct and indirect post-colonial conditions – strictly correlated with the omitted colonial past, the contemporaneous migrant fluxes, and the processes of neoliberal globalization (Lombardi-Diop and Romero, 2015, 2016). In particular, addressing interculturality and postcoloniality is important to demonstrate «the coloniality of the current model of European citizenship with respect to migrations» (Mellino, 2012, p. 18), thus bringing back to the surface the discourse on race in order to understand how the mechanisms of coloniality operate on the migratory (*ibidem*). In this sense, the concept of post-raciality, defined by Lombardi-Diop in *Post-colonial Italy* (2012, pp. 175-190), appears relevant, as it indicates the constitutive condition of the Italian postcolonial racist amnesia.

As Hesse (2011) boldly states in his essay *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: The Post-racial Horizon* this concept represents «the political horizon of racism's depoliticization» (p. 155). It involves the denial of the existence of race in the public and political sphere – schools and universities, for example – and downplays the structural dynamics inherent in the Eurocentric modernist neoliberal order that perpetuates inequalities and injustices. In this way, racial injustices, daily discriminatory practices, hate speeches and structural marginalization seem to vanish, ultimately leading to the normalization of expressions of racism and exploitation. Alexandre Emboaba Da Costa (2016), by focusing on the Americas, recognizes different transnational common attitudes in the actuation of post-racial ideologies and politics. Specifically, given the paper's emphasis on the Italian context, two questions he raises appear highly pertinent, especially when looking at the context of education: colorblindness, as the negation that our society still lies over racial foundation, and the hidden functional integration presented as multiculturalism. This is why, in postcolonial, post-racial and multicultural Italy, it is urgent to imagine new forms to address interculturality.

The construction of Alterity in the socio-historical and political context of Italy has never been an innocuous process, but rather the dawn for generating and legitimizing structural inequalities. These post-colonial dynamics are strictly connected to the concept of identity. By playing a significant role in constructing and maintaining a presumed Italian identity, they permeate and distort popular understandings of immigration and the nature of racism and racialization, thus hiding the multiple forms of oppression and neocolonial legacies that significantly contribute to the reproduction of divisions and antagonisms within the Italian population. The politics of postcoloniality work specifically in the domain of the *popular*, therefore, it is important

to understand the implication of postcolonialism with/in popular studies, thus opening the path towards Popular Education.

Acknowledging that the debate surrounding the diverse meanings attributed to the term *popular* is extensive, this paper, by drawing inspiration from Gramsci's perspective, intends it as the terrain of struggle, where forms of resistance and antagonism are enacted and articulated with/in hegemonic power (1971). As Hall reminds us, «what is essential to the definition of popular culture is the relations which define “popular culture” in a continuing tension (relationship, influence, antagonism) to the dominant culture» (2011, p. 77). This ambivalent tension, the dual practice of struggle and resistance that characterizes the popular culture, appears to echo the similar definition proposed by Mezzadra (2006) regarding post-coloniality: in both cases, the popular and the postcolonial, as epistemological spaces, seem to represent realms of radical potential, where resistance against colonialist legacies persists within the established dominant culture.

2. Transcending the educational: interculturality as an ethical-political project

What is the role of education in/from the complexities of postcoloniality? This question raises important concerns about its function and involvement in shaping hegemonic narratives that seem to support dominant culture's methods and policies to exclude Alterity. If in post-racial and post-colonial Italy, neoliberalist structures govern interpersonal relationships and public spaces by restructuring society «through sexual, racial, and territorial differentiation of humanity» (Düvell, 2004, pp. 30-31), educational institutions, through what De Lissovoy describes as the «hidden curriculum» (2012, pp. 469-470), serve as arenas where power dynamics operate, resulting in «central device of abstract inclusion and concrete exclusion» that legitimizes social disparities (Martin-Barbero, 1991, p. 15). Consequently, we must address intercultural education and its monolithic way of putting into practice passive integration of the Alterity through a reductionist assimilation which does not account for differences. This kind of interculturality, what Yousfi defines as «domestication» (2023, p. 13), while talking about French context, is based on a neutral and flattened view of the Others, functional to merge them with the society with moralist discourses that conceal structural inequalities.

Even if the integration mechanism in Italy can be addressed as hybrid, both assimilationist and pluralist models are generally based on social regulation, control and economic productivity, thus participating in the perpetuation of what can be addressed as a neoliberal management of interculturality. This is essentially a forced integration influenced by coloniality and neoliberalism that operates on the border between *civilization* and *barbarism*, the political laboratory where subjectivities are re/defined according to European identity paradigms. Eventually this same border represents a «third space» of contradictions, where crossing and interweaving can generate alternative perspectives, stemming from the heterogeneity that characterizes it. It embodies a form of *border thinking* that, while it may not heal wounds, can at least facilitate the inclusion of subaltern knowledge and practices into the current society (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2012). What remains unassimilable within these *barbarians* forms the very canvas of subjectivities upon which pedagogies must labor to create intercultural citizens in a multicultural space.

The form that interculturality assumes as a neoliberal global tool to regulate the power relations between dominant and subaltern cultures is what Tubino defines as *functional interculturality* (2004). To accommodate the heterogeneity of reality that

cannot be reduced to monolithic and culturalist viewpoints, it is necessary to work towards what the Peruvian professor addresses as *critical interculturality*, the process that seeks to overcome the current social and cultural asymmetries through political commitments, among which decolonial education, in order to found a democratic society composed by intercultural citizens:

Being an intercultural citizen means, first of all, being able to choose one's own culture, that is, choosing to practice the beliefs, practices and customs inherited from the ethos to which I belong, or failing that, deciding to distance myself from them due to evaluative considerations that I consider more plausible. Being an intercultural citizen is therefore exercising the right to build one's own cultural identity, and not limit oneself to reproducing in oneself either the inherited identity or the identity that the larger society forces us to adopt by all means (Tubino, 2004, p. 7).

Addressing the articulation between the popular and the post-colonial as hermeneutic space, it is essential to recognize the urgency of not framing *critical interculturality* as solely related to migration and multiculturalism, but to pose its practices as the foundation for decolonization, thus extending its reach to an ever-wider segment of the population. In fact, as Walsh accordingly notes «decolonization only occurs when everyone – individually and collectively – participates in its knocking down» (2017, p. 36) but it also should be a «construction of and from the people who have suffered a history of submission and subalternity» (2009, p. 9).

In this collective participation, in which interculturality can be addressed as a pedagogy that goes beyond school to include the mechanisms of domination and oppression inherent in coloniality, it becomes crucial to broaden the notion towards the multifaceted perspectives of intersectionality, by contemplating the intricate and diverse factors that shape individuals within their web of relations and contexts. By essentializing cultural identities, national politics tend to hide to the background both injustices and intracultural relations between vulnerable groups, native or not. Thus, the decolonization of interculturality entails the identification of research and intervention policies and practices within the educational sphere, along with an expansion of the field of action, beyond the walls of the school, in the territory.

This collective (de)construction can be powered up by Popular Education and its transformative and emancipatory praxis. Indeed, as Mejía and Awad state (2003, p. 120), one of the central aspects of popular education is its permanent concern to unveil the mechanisms and dispositives of power that operate through knowledge and understanding, with the aim of confronting them with a transformative commitment. I propose that Popular Critical Education and Critical Interculturality as ethical-political projects can be envisioned as interconnected realms of discourses and practices that share a critical approach and perspectives regarding power politics, social control, affective relationships as sites of struggle, the imperative of radical contextualization, and the potential to reimagine the future by starting from the specificities of local contexts and experiences. Furthermore, the two processes mentioned above appear to share a common pedagogical intention: to shape individuals who are motivated to promote social change. This includes, according to Torres Carrillo (2011, p. 69), critical stances towards the existing social system, an ethical and emancipatory political orientation, a commitment to the popular sectors and movements, and a contribution to the development of individuals within these groups by expanding their awareness and subjectivity through participatory, dialogical, and critical methods.

For this reason, what follows is devoted to exploring the projects of popular education in Bogotá. In particular, given the complex praxis and heterogeneous definitions of Popular Education, the research considers the methodologies, knowledges and practices of these communitarian popular movements as decisive for the debate on what interculturality and decoloniality should entail from a popular perspective.

3. Experiencing Popular Education: some personal notes on methodologies and definitions

I vividly recall the moment when I grasped the essence of participatory-action research, epistemic thinking, *senti-pensar*, popular education, and interculturality. All of it can be encapsulated in this image: I was at the Indigenous Intercultural University of Cauca at the end of June 2023, and a group of people in a circle beneath the Tulpa were exchanging thoughts about territory, passing a ball of yarn from hand to hand. The ball of yarn, the thoughts, continued to circulate among them, while the thread wove interconnected patterns, held by the hands of those engaged in dialogue. This holding, this infinite weaving, passing, rolling up, unrolling gave all its concrete and material meaning to the word *comprender*. Mutual understanding, taking care of each other's being, thinking, and feeling, through an interactive dialogue in which the parties support each other to elevate thoughts, by creating social reality, in a never-ending process.

Entering this process of collective weaving that characterized most of the popular and communitarian social movements I participate in, has been for me an experience of continuous deconstruction and constant learning, made up of political practices of education, care, and friendship. Inevitably, the methodology constitutes itself as participatory action-research with a direct engagement with the subject of investigation based on the horizontal and inter-subjective relationships that underlies the dialogical nature of the practice¹. The daily participation to understanding how urban popular communitarian movements incorporate the potential for translating their politics into pedagogical practices, in the pursuit of radical social change, has become an ongoing pedagogical process itself: the commitment to transforming reality, which I have been sharing with these movements, has indeed led to personal transformation. Thus, it is possible to address my methodology as *reflexive*, a way of doing sociology that distances itself «from the dominant rationality, which places objectivity, the contrast and separation between the subject of knowledge and the object of investigation, as central categories» (Torres Carrillo, 2019, p. 83).

To date, the field investigation has focused on four processes of popular education in vulnerable areas of the city of Bogotá (the city is divided into six socio-economic strata, the first being the lowest and the sixth the highest, so it is easy to recognize the practices of marginalization). Popular pedagogies do not exist as isolated, objective facts; instead, they are integrated into the intricate and at times contradictory landscape of cultural politics. This complexity can vary significantly from one project to another, especially within the heterogeneous and wide context of Bogotá. The first project from which I'm learning is the Casa Cultural Comunitaria La Perseverancia, situated in the homonymous first working-class neighborhood of the capital. This communitarian initiative, driven by cultural projects, artistic workshops, sport activities, and educational support, actively fosters daily assistance to children and adolescents in the locality. Two other projects, then, are located in the Suba district: the Guardianes del Río Popular School, which employs an eco-political pedagogy to engage with the Villa Cindy children and community and the Centro de Educación Popular Chipacuy, a space for various community projects and activities that offers accompaniment towards the

Icfe examination and support in preparing for university entrance tests, through critical and alternative methodologies. Finally, there's the Tunjuelo Popular Collective which, as Chipacuy, offers scholastic guidance to high school students in the Altos de Cazuca neighborhood. It's important to notice that the projects I identified as the subjects of the investigation are not clearly and univocally definable. Many times, in Colombia, the word used to define these projects is *proceso*. A simple word which, however, contains within it the indeterminacy and continuous evolution of the action. A *proceso* is something that is always in movement, a continuous rearticulation of factors that feeds on past practices, present elaborations, and that advances towards a future aim.

Popular Education has been configured since the seventies of the last century, inspired by the ideas of Paulo Freire, in close relationship with popular movements and social movements. It assumes that the educational act is never neutral. It is an ethico-political project of resistance and critical thinking that recognizes the struggles of the historically vulnerable communities with the intent to transform the society *from below*. As Torres Carrillo notes «social movements are a consequence and reaction to the conflicts generated by the expansion of the logic of modern capitalist domination over the past centuries, while simultaneously playing a pivotal role in the construction of democratic societies» that use «strategies of nonconformity, resistance, and opposition» around what interweave «new solidarities, aspirations, and utopias» to offer alternatives to the traditional order (2002, p. 10). Thus, the popular subjectivities are put at the center of social change. For this reason and considering their transformative commitment and their radical contextualization in daily communitarian life, as well as the concern with reading the relation of power domination and structural discrimination over main social issues that are not focused exclusively on education, the paper addresses them as communitarian and social movements of Popular Education.

To comprehend these intricate interconnections, practices, and meanings of popular education within the communitarian movement, it has proven necessary to engage and *comprender* these realities *from within* (de la Cadena, 2017). This does not mean that I understand them completely, but rather that I experience my perspective as always incomplete, and at the same time, thanks to its constitutive incompleteness, always ready to open itself up and rearticulate with realities. By following what Zemelman defines as «epistemic thinking» or «mobile understanding» (Zemelman, 1987, 1992), that I also enact as the continuous thinking and practicing with the communities, the research is strictly related to the movements of these social realities, which are continually evolving, elusive, and nearly impossible to fully represent. While trying to avoid essentialist discourses that diminish the revolutionary potential of their political agency and the radical contextualization in the terrain where they act, I became interested in experiencing the manner in which these movements, through their practices, create situated pedagogies not only to provide education and care, but also to critically understand reality in order to transform it.

4. Towards possible intercultural openings: what I have learned from the terrain (of struggle)

Pedagogy and education, like various other scientific and social disciplines, have always existed within the confines of the colonial Eurocentric system, and still do. Understanding the intrinsic connection between education and coloniality, as well as recognizing intercultural and popular education as the bridge for a decolonial social justice, is a fundamental step towards reshaping pedagogical practices in contemporary post-colonial Italy. This is part of the decolonial reconfiguration of society, a process

that can happen only through the awareness of the impact of colonialism and its still present modernist imaginaries related to racism, patriarchy and capitalism (Mignolo, 2014).

To create resonances and a dialogue between these realities and the Italian context I will address three main areas for the application of a postcolonial critique which can be articulated with/in Popular Education: the necessity of reformulation of the memory from subaltern positions, the redefinition of the educational canon and methodologies through the recognition of dissonant theories and practices and the importance of rebuild a sense of community.

Memory as a dialogical and living praxis

In the project of building a democratic and intercultural society, we must remain vigilant in the constant re-elaboration and deconstruction of the decolonial past towards renewed present and future perspectives capable of addressing the present forms of *coloniality*. In the case of Chipacuy Popular Education Center, for example, the way to address the violent history of the country is critical and aimed to unveil the systemic injustices of the State towards vulnerable communities and social movements. This approach unveils a set of narratives that, when analyzed through critical thinking processes, produced a theoretical corpus and a politically and ethically engaged rearticulation that emphasized the importance of not only preserving the memory, but making it a permanent educational practice. In this, the classroom becomes a space where different narratives from subalterns can meet and engage in dialogue towards a reconstruction of common meaning that also encompasses the often-unnoticed micro-stories and resistances of popular communities and social movements. It could be argued that a collective recovery of memory takes place, while simultaneously questioning functionalist hegemony.

Collective, interpersonal, intercultural, and intergenerational dialogue is thus necessary for the development of a critical methodology that incorporates alternative forms of knowledge, thus decolonizing the official traditional representations of disciplinary canons. In this, memory becomes a living praxis; an ongoing process in which students are not merely seen as individuals to be educated, by practicing what Freire defines as «banking education» (2002, pp. 57-67) but as political subjects with whom to critically read and transform reality. They are what Torres Carrillo defines as «condenser of history, the outcome of social development and memories of the past, and once again, as actors of the present and carriers of possible futures» (2019, p. 16). This entails working on the past aspects and deconstructing them through dialogical and cultural negotiation practices where the canonical history is challenged by the life experiences of the participants.

Intercultural methodologies from the terrain

Popular education, by adopting a radical contextualization, provides a post-colonial approach in the necessary articulation with territory and daily lives of students, families, and the neighborhood they live in. Territory is here the terrain of struggle that has two functions: on one hand, it becomes the hermeneutic tool through which to invent pedagogies to critical address reality, thus acting as catalyst in the creation of alternative pedagogies; on the other hand, it is the same space at which alternative pedagogies are directing their transformative commitment. Also, it is the space where the relation

between students and environment opens the interculturality towards the Nature, in order to respond to its exploitation and damage for neoliberal profits.

The Popular School Guardianes del Río (Guardians of the River) in Villa Cindy has specifically an eco-pedagogical political wager based on the importance of raising awareness among children about the structural injustices of neoliberal society towards nature, Venezuelan migrants, and bogotan marginalized communities. This wager was born from the specificities of the neighborhood, located on the banks of the river Bogotá. This approach is crucial as most of the students at the schools are children of Venezuelan immigrants who work as informal waste collectors and recyclers, victims of discrimination and stigmatization. The school addresses social and racial discriminations using an empowering approach based on artistic practices, playful situations, readings and writing. The aim is to empower children towards a re-evaluation of their material situations: this makes them conscious of the significance of their parents' role in preserving nature and cleaning up the city, thus safeguarding the river and the entire planet. Also, by addressing the importance of intercultural dialogue between Colombian and Venezuelan, for example working on the linguistic commonalities and difference, the educators manage to address the difference as a constitutive characteristic of human being.

The students who take part in the project learn to articulate their personal and family lives, their conditions of vulnerability with important structural social issues. By being involved as political subjects, they take part actively in the creation of resistance and antagonism from the margin. They learn to address problems and find solutions, by communicating not only with each other, but also with and for the territory. Interculturality therefore becomes a relationship towards a common feeling and action to address structural problems in a political way. Moreover, considering that most of the students are not going to live permanently in Bogotá, this unique approach is even more important: children develop a methodology of learning realities that can be replicable elsewhere.

Communitarian turn of mutual love and care

The need for alternatives to intercultural traditional education arises from the instrumentalization of the educational system by the State in the construction of monocultural and homogeneous identities that reflect the national one. In this process of homogenization, neoliberalism plays a key role with the assumption of individualism and merit as the sole foundation of success. In this process, not only are subaltern collective identities and community-inspired processes excluded, but individuals are led to close themselves off. If state educational policies based on neoliberal, individualistic, and functional approaches are not to addressing the constitutive heterogeneity of multiculturalism, it becomes increasingly important every day to reclaim the political, affective, and historical sense of community and collective action. It is therefore necessary to make a communitarian turn in pedagogy to break with the traditional model, including practices of coexistence based on love and mutual recognition at its core.

I have often had to confront what it means to engage politically, to enact transformative politics for social change. I have recognized how, in popular processes, love and care are political practices. At the Casa Cultural Comunitaria la Perseverancia, as in other processes, what distinguishes the space is the articulation with the community and the sense of love and care for the young participants and their families.

The extreme trust that is created in the relationship with educators, who become friends and brothers/sisters, the mutual help for the taskings, the affection and hugs, collective birthdays, cuddles and words of love, trips, and *huellas comunitarias* make those who attend the space feel a sense of belonging. And from belonging comes the desire to build close relationships in which the community becomes a praxis, and not simply a space to inhabit: the individual, starting from a sense of inclusion and kinship, emancipate him/herself and, at the same time, becomes responsible for empowering and transform the entire community. To embrace education as an ethical-political project, it is necessary to rediscover the deeper sense of what Brosi and hooks define, during their dialogue, as the «beloved community» (2012, pp. 76-86): the radical opening of the self to difference, listening to others, understanding without judgment, and working on conflicts resolution through interculturality. In this way educational space expands beyond the walls of the classroom, towards a new political landscape that reinvent the same education on the basis of a territorialized sociopraxis, situated and contextualized from the vulnerable realities, which can help to visualize the structural politics of exclusions, inequalities and violence and address them in alternative critical ways.

Notes

¹ I also like to briefly make a consideration regarding my engagement. When I first applied for this contribution, I proposed I would have done in-deep interviews with educators, students, and families and that I would have include autobiographical perspectives of participants. Four months did not seem like enough time to start practicing the interview tool which I believe, without current and important involvement, can reproduce extractivist and non-restorative techniques of private experiences and intimate thinking.

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