

Catherine Walsh

Pedagogies of the Decolonial: Political-Epistemic Insurgency, Critical Interculturality, and Cultural Studies in the Andes

As a political project, cultural studies finds its roots in particular historical moments, geopolitical contexts, and spaces-places of critical analysis and intervention, often – although not always- with visions and designs of social transformation. While the plurality and diversity of the political within cultural studies has often been a topic of interest, less attention has been directed to how the political intertwines with the epistemic, particularly with relation to social actors and movements. That is to say, with the ways in which social movements construct and affect knowledge and thought, in both political and social arenas and institutions. Thinking with and from this political knowledge and thought –as I propose in the paper- affords new turns, orientations, and projects not only for Cultural Studies but also for the “uni”-versity in general and its typically –and ever increasing--eurocentric posture and canon.

The paper takes as its central focus the political-epistemic insurgency of indigenous and afro-descendent movements in Latin America today, most specifically in the Andean region. Through an analysis of the insurgency that no longer just resists but now disrupts and (re)constructs the social, economic, and political, including at the epistemic level, the paper portends to make evident the displacing and inverting of dominant concepts, practices, and models of society and state, and the configuring of new ones that open decolonial paths and push toward projects of what in the region is referred to as critical interculturality. As I argue, it is these insurgencies that weave new pedagogies of rebellion and construction –pedagogies of the decolonial- aimed at worlds not rooted in and directed by capitalism and the culture of death that is its neoliberal project, but rather in life; pedagogies that transgress, interrupt, create, and construct, enabling new ways of knowing, being, coexistence, and living: el “*sumak kawsay*” or “*buen vivir*”.