



Curriculum as narrative: crossing borders for a decolonized education

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Abstract: We live in a time of global crisis where social isolation is required and necessary. Nevertheless, and paradoxically, it has never been more crucial to show how cross-cultural boundaries can create meaningful educational and curricular experiences. In this article we present the life history of an indigenous teacher living in the Xingu Park in Brazil. His narrative illuminates the discussion of essential notions of pre-configured curriculum, curriculum as narrative, 'tribal learning' and differentiated schooling. In our conclusion we highlight the importance of a school curriculum endeavoring to embrace cross-border missions, enabling meaningful educational experiences from a decolonized perspective.

Keywords: curriculum, pedagogy, decolonization, change theory, critical theory

Resumen: Vivimos en una época de crisis mundial donde el aislamiento social es necesario y necesario. Sin embargo, y paradójicamente, nunca ha sido más crucial mostrar cómo las fronteras transculturales pueden crear experiencias educativas y curriculares significativas. En este artículo presentamos la historia de vida de un maestro indígena que vive en el Parque Xingu en Brasil. Su narrativa ilumina la discusión de las nociones esenciales de currículo preconfigurado, currículo como narrativa, "aprendizaje tribal" y escolarización diferenciada. En nuestra conclusión, destacamos la importancia de un plan de estudios escolar que se esfuerce por acoger misiones transfronterizas, permitiendo experiencias educativas significativas desde una perspectiva descolonizada.

Palabras clave: currículo, pedagogía, descolonización, teoría del cambio, teoría crítica

Résumé : Nous vivons à une époque de crise mondiale où l'isolement social est nécessaire. Néanmoins, et paradoxalement, il n'a jamais été aussi crucial de montrer

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comment les frontières interculturelles peuvent créer des expériences éducatives et curriculaires significatives. Dans cet article, nous présentons l'histoire de la vie d'un enseignant indigène vivant dans le parc Xingu au Brésil. Son récit éclaire la discussion sur les notions essentielles du programme préconfiguré, du programme en tant que récit, de « l'apprentissage tribal » et de la scolarisation différenciée. Dans notre conclusion, nous soulignons l'importance d'un programme scolaire qui s'efforce d'embrasser les missions transfrontalières, permettant des expériences éducatives significatives dans une perspective décolonisée.

Mots clés : curriculum, pédagogie, décolonisation, théorie du changement, théorie critique

Resumo: Vivemos em uma época de crise global em que o isolamento social é obrigatório e necessário. No entanto, e paradoxalmente, nunca foi tão importante mostrar como as fronteiras interculturais podem criar experiências educacionais e curriculares significativas. Neste artigo, apresentamos a história de vida de uma professora indígena que vive no Parque do Xingu no Brasil. Sua narrativa ilumina a discussão de noções essenciais de currículo pré-configurado, currículo como narrativa, 'aprendizagem tribal' e escolaridade diferenciada. Em nossa conclusão, destacamos a importância de um currículo escolar que se esforce para abraçar as missões transfronteiriças, possibilitando experiências educacionais significativas a partir de uma perspectiva descolonializada.

Palavras chave: currículo, pedagogia, descolonização, teoria da mudança, teoria critical

Preliminary remarks

We live in unusual and unimaginable times for most of the world's population. Socially isolated due to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic we are also geographically immobilized, inside our borders, our homes and our walls. Despite this dramatic scenery, never was it so crucial to consider that education must cross borders.

In this way, Goodson and Schostak propose the concept of prefigurative and narrative curricula as an educational process based on solidarity, compassion and collective agreements. It becomes essential now to re-learn how to work together, to share ideas, and work together to create resources that feed all our purposes and not just the purposes of a wealthy ownership class. Children, young people and teachers need to see how social organizations are the building blocks of government - it acts according to the expressed interests of all. In doing all of this we need to re-learn how to have a free and equal voice with others. (I. Goodson and J. Schostak, 2020).

For the purpose of re-learning common ways of social and cultural existence, the experience of crossing borders is meaningful and is vivid with a range of potentialities. In this paper we discuss this sense of crossing borders as a precondition of a decolonized education and how it can result in a decolonized curriculum.

What does border crossing mean in the context of curricular policies?

Crossing borders, in various ways, provides a very informed pedagogical stance on where we have come from and it is a conscious evaluation of who we will become and what that means. However, it raises these questions: what defines our loyalties and understandings of the world? How can we remain faithful to prior loyalty on this journey? How do we maintain a faithfulness to principles that are precious to us? What are the costs and benefits of crossing borders?

It is a mistake to think that this is a one-way street, or that it is only a matter of loss, because it is also in a sense an escape to better things and this should not be denied. So, there are two sides to this formal social mobility. On the one hand someone loses something, on the other hand, without a doubt they want to do this. There is a part of everyone that wants to embrace new realities. So, it would be wrong to consider the trip as harmful. The real question is: how, in a way, are we able to cling to what is learnt in our minds and utilize this whilst working and travelling?

In this context there are two kinds of boundaries at stake here. One of them is the difference between local and cosmopolitan references. Some people travel away from their local environment and develop cosmopolitan knowledge. Becoming cosmopolitan means bringing a different, more stratified view of what it is to be local. Alongside this is the difference between living a life and being able to theorize our life understanding of experiences. Thus, the crossing of boundaries between the local and the cosmopolitan (or the intersections between a life lived experientially and a theorized life) are the primary duties of border crossings that teachers need to think about. Teachers especially, embark on this journey with students because, when considering the nature of school knowledge, they try to encourage students to have a more abstract, decontextualized knowledge.

They ask students to embark on a journey that should involve intellectual boundaries crossings, a basic knowledge rooted in the 'local' and also knowledge that is more generic and theoretical. So, these kinds of trips are precisely the intellectual journeys that the student will be prompted to embark on. In this sense, these intersections of borders inform deeply the pedagogy that each teacher should adopt in order to convey an original sense of the world with a more theoretical, generic, understanding. Furthermore, as Richard Sennett (2008) noted: proving the taste of knowledge is a success if it is possible to test knowledge. This statement is also true because it raises an understanding of the difference between the 'local' experienced life and the 'experienced' life - to start theorizing and understanding how it comes with gains and losses. This issue says a lot about teachers and pedagogy - about the consideration of costs and benefits for students who are making the trip that teachers ask students to make.

It is crucial to consider what teachers ask them to give up as they move or cross borders intellectually because this is a tremendous psychological journey that they undertake, and it is necessary to be sensitive to this. Moving from local knowledge to a cosmopolitan knowledge also comes with costs. It is a tricky trip to ask students to undertake. So, teachers who think this is a thing that is entirely for the good are very much mistaken. They are not aware of the kind of costs that they are asking of students and of the undoubtable benefits that they are offering. It is important to be aware of both the gains and losses - be sensitive to the culture that they are asking students to abandon, leave, extend and transcend.

The big issue with high school teachers is that if the teacher has formal knowledge expertise of the appropriate content how does this knowledge bring excellent benefits? There are also considerable costs because every school subject has specific categories of knowledge. All elements of school subjects come within a social order and often this means the displacement of some for others, within this social order. School subjects, as a category, tend to exist at a higher, abstract, decontextualized and theoretical level. This condition means that people have to give up their previous experiential knowledge before they can thrive educationally. In this context, this kind of category seems to be the most problematic issue that teachers need to think about.

The question is: to what degree do they demand too much of students of a knowledge of the school subject? What do they have to abandon, and how sensitive is the teacher is to change and local knowledge (practical, reasoned, obvious and of immediate use) for a piece of knowledge that is much more esoteric, cosmopolitan, abstract and which may or may not be of some use in this new world they are entering into? So, it is about this shift of categories that teachers have to reflect on mainly when teaching. What types of connections are possible between the 'local' perception that people have of them (the ingrained sense of identity, class, gender) and the more abstract knowledge they are being invited to achieve? A good teacher continually makes connections between the local, concrete, immediate sense that people have of themselves and the specialized knowledge. He/she regularly underpins abstract knowledge with local examples - concrete examples that have a strong resonance for people. In a way, the pedagogy of border crossings helps students to embark on these journeys.

These border crossings and knowledge shift the circumstances of the relationship between teachers and students and the relationship of teachers to their own lives. Being trapped in theoretical knowledge is not just a problem for the student - it is also a problem for the teacher. The importance of working with life histories for

teachers is that it allows the teacher to reflect on the border crossings they too have crossed.

Many teachers went through the same intersections with border crossings from the 'local', (be it providing family tutoring) to becoming professionals. They go to the University and they keep moving through a considerable range of displacements whilst crossing many borders. As they think more about their life histories, the places in which they were imprisoned and have left, they realize which borders they would like to cross over and in doing so reflect on the types of border crossings that the students are also crossing. When teachers are reflective, they come out of the imprisonment of specific knowledge and formal training. They then have both a more general sense of themselves - as a person, as a teacher, and as an expert. (Abraham, 1984). As they begin to see themselves as people with lived experiences, they become happier. They are better teachers because they are more sensitive to the way students are experiencing the world.

Goodson notes that the boundaries between abstract and concrete knowledge, between the cosmopolitan and local worlds, between classes, between cultures - these are the issues that teachers and students must deal with. Students are living 'on the borders' which is an excellent place to live within because with being 'on the borders' - anything is possible. In a sense, they can go anywhere, and anything can happen. It is a place of great possibilities for human rights, but also, of considerable human risk. Thus, the border is a place where specialization is possible (Goodson, 2007).

In other words, according to Walter Benjamin in *The Storyteller* (2007), crossing borders is also the gathering point for the sedentary craftsman and the foreigner's knowledge and it is an essential condition for developing curriculum as narrative. (Goodson, 2014). According to Benjamin: transmitting an experience is not only repeating a story, but a transmission of knowledge of lived experiences to future generations, and this is something made possible by a narrative curriculum. According to Benjamin, narratives always have a utilitarian dimension (Benjamin, 2007). The narrator can transmit the experience in a useful manner and in a more elaborate dimension. Therefore, the narrative teaches.

With current technologies, old borders are disappearing. We can write together whilst existing in different places (be it in Brazil or England) and can interweave our stories. Every notion of space is changing, and Benjamin would warn us to be aware of this since several of these borders are not related just to external spaces, but to peoples' interior selves. These are secret places where people decide their modes of judgement - where they decide who they are, who they want to be and what their identity projects are.

On the memorial to Benjamin in the small village of Portbou, Spain³, near the frontier with France, there is the following inscription: 'the historical construction concentrates on the memory of those who do not have a name' (Goodson, 2011, p. 49). An emerging question presents itself:

For whom do we produce knowledge? Traditionally, research is made *to* the people - as opposed as being made *with* the people - whom we could call the 'nameless': immigrants,

³ The memorial was created by Israeli artist Dani Karavan. It was inaugurated in 1994 as a homage to Walter Benjamin for the place of his death. More information can be retrieved at <https://walterbenjaminportbou.org/pasajes-karavan/>

homeless, women, children, among others. If we work *with* them in a permanent dialogue, then research can produce a collaborative narrative learning. Moreover, there is a group with an excellent necessity for learning - not the 'nameless' - however, those who commit violence towards the 'nameless'. The powerful are the ones who need to learn the most (Goodson, 2007: 69).

Indeed, the powerful do not need to learn how to operate power - this they already know. However, they need to learn how to exert this power compassionately. It is not possible to conceive of a world where power does not exist - this is part of the human condition. For example, in a situation of collaborative learning, the teacher holds more power in the group. Providing most people with a reasonable life and paying the weaker a decent wage are likely and executable demands which present themselves to the wealthy of the world. It would not be something absurd, to the contrary, it could cost as much as some of the spaceships produced in the United States. In other words, it would be enough to grant universal access to necessary and required food and proper education. In a world of absolute inexpression, callousness, disregard, anti-Christianism, anti-Islamism, could this happen? It has become inadmissible to notice that those who have so much are not prepared to share just a little. Compassion could be a free form of exerting a power which is usually greedy and profoundly implacable.

There are possible relationships between an ethical culture and an aesthetical education which entail these aspirations of social actions. There is a human aesthetic which allows people to get in touch with their emotions, spirits and souls, investing them with goodness. The central issue is to understand the limits set between culture, education, and teaching to the degree that they cannot approach the feelings and emotions. With these considerations, we face the challenge of developing educational and intellectual experiences which permit people to come closer to their emotions and spirits.

Teacher Kaji – Waurá: a storyteller crossing borders

Keeping to the purpose of scrutinizing the challenges and lessons from crossing borders in decolonized curriculum practices, it is vital to understand life stories in their historical and cultural settings if we are to investigate and understand individual and personal meaning-making (Goodson, 2013). As themes emerge from the detail of life history interviews it becomes clear that some life storyteller covers many of the relevant themes, whilst others may only contain evidence of a small number of themes or may cover the themes rapidly. Thematic density is a manner to characterize those life history interviews that either covers a wide range of themes or cover particular themes in profound ways. Having then identified the major themes at work in life narratives and having then begun to employ some of these themes to conceptualize historical character, a new stage of work can arise. The development of detailed personal case studies defines a portrayal of the most thematically dense life histories. The portrayal refines these general thematic analyses and presents them in the form of a detailed individual portrait of a life narrative.

In order to present aspects of Kaji Waurá 's history of life as a teacher, we are going to show his narrative portrayal drawn from an interview he did with his professor at University. Waurá is one of the 14 ethnicities who live in Xingu Park in the northern region of Brazil. His tribe is constituted of around three hundred people who live in the frontier between Amazon forest and savanna, and they are notorious

for the uniqueness of their ceramics, the graphics of their baskets, their feather art and ritual masks. Beyond this, they have a complex and fascinating myth-cosmology, in which the links between animal, things, humans and non-human beings permeate their conception of the world and are crucial for the practices of shamanism.

Kaji speaks Aruaque language and Portuguese as a second language. He was born in 1974. In 2016, he graduated in Pedagogy and then worked at a school located in the village. In his words:

I have started in the educational area because I was worried about the children. I see many children with no classes, just playing around. I have known literacy on teaching them how to read and write. I have gotten apprehensive about them. There were also other teachers in the village, but they did not worry about the children. At the time, it was the year of 1996, I started studying it, right? I have started to study. I have started to think about how to be a teacher, you know. It was my dream for me to be able to transmit knowledge to the children. As we had many stories that the ancients were telling us as a collective, you know. Then I said to myself 'Well, there are a lot of children without classes in the village. There is no literacy for them.' I have gotten anxious about them, you see. Moreover, even so, I went on studying, studying, studying. It was 1997. I did the supplementary schooling until the 8th Grade. Then the 'Tucum Project' ('Program of Indigenous Teacher Training' Mato Grosso State Government) showed up for the indigenous teachers as a possibility of educational training. Furthermore, I got interested in coming back to the village so I could participate in this training for teachers, and work in the community's classroom. It was not the community that indicated me. It was me. It was my interest in being able to work in the classroom, do you see? Because there were many children and the youth is not learning. There isn't that knowledge of literacy, that knowledge from outside, you know. So, I got worried about who is going to be able to work for the community, to help the community to write documents. We must teach the children ourselves. Then I started to participate in training courses. In 2000, I got in on the course of teacher training. I participated until 2004, and then I was hindered because I got sick. I was an in-patient at a hospital in Brasilia for two months, at the CAUB (Agro-Urban Conglomerates of Brasília). I had a water accumulation inside my lungs. It was dire. So, I stayed in the city for two months, and then I recovered myself. Meanwhile, that is why I was not able to finish the course I was doing for teaching. People finished it. It was the year 2004, right? But then I have dropped behind and started to study all over again. I had to study to pursuit knowledge. I took many of these courses, such as 'Environmental Control', 'Financial Capacitation', 'Mechanic'. I took a total of 22 courses. There was a project of teacher training called 'Raiô'. In the language of the Terena people, it means 'the youth'. For the boys, we say 'raiô', you know? There was a project of 'raiô', and I got back in. I went back to finish schooling. So, in 2010, I finished

it. Between 2000 and 2010, I was working in the classroom. I have educated six different classes of students so far, and they are working as a community health agent, at 'ASAM' (Center of Youth Support, an institution of social assistance), or as an environmentalist. They are here working. I took my college entrance examination afterwards, indigenous college entrance exam at the University of Mato Grosso. I was able to get in to study Pedagogy. I finished the graduation after five years of studying Pedagogy, I graduated in 2016, then they put me to teach high school until 2019... Well, now, I am here willing to come back to the classroom to work because there are many things that the ancients are taking away from us. Because the ancients are dying and taking that knowledge away. I consider them as a dictionary, you know? This is my story, my narrative of how I have gotten into this educational field. Because it is my interest, I have liked this work a lot, I like to transmit history, to teach the children. How do I say it? You must to talk to them, so they like your class, the history, this sort of things. You cannot work directly with literacy, to write the words or do the readings right away. You cannot. You must to work with orality first. You must to tell stories... Slowly they get used to it and then you go and show them the letters, the writings, still in block capitals. You cannot overdo it with these children. You have to be very patient with the children, that's what I tell my colleagues.

Interviewer: I want to ask you this: which knowledge does the school teach? Is it the knowledge of the village or the knowledge that comes from the textbook of MEC (Ministry of Education of Brazil) and the city's school? How does this relationship work? What are the pieces of knowledge that are worked in the school: the ones from the Waurá people or the ones the government orders to?

K.W.: Well, we work with them both. We learn along with Mathematics, Portuguese, Science, Sociology, Biology, Science, right? And then comes Indigenous Technology, Sustainable Cultural Practice, Agroecology Practice. We work these in the classroom. There is also Native Language. Do you get it? When we work with Cultural Practice, we are going to work with.... We are going to dance, to organize parties... Like it was the classroom. Where are you going to evaluate if the students are learning to dance, you know? That's a piece of knowledge. In Indigenous Technology, we teach them how to do a musical instrument, how to do basketry, arrow... Artisanal buildings... That is an indigenous technology and a subject in which you will learn how to do ceramics, baskets, a little flute which you can play like Taquara (a musical instrument made of bamboo), the big flute which you will use to teach them music. That's what it is Indigenous Technology. It's where we learn to play Taquara that is called Urá. You are going to learn to do basketry. This Indigenous Technology comes along with Mathematics. Everything involves Maths. That's also where you are going to learn to paint with your hand. Hand-painting, you know? You are going to weave with your hand and paint the weaving, you know? It's another kind of knowledge. For instance, the Chemistry we work inside the classroom is the making of salt... Do you get it? We extract salt from the plants to show the students how to get food and how the Aguapé eating works... You extract. I mean, it was extracted from water, then it was dried, burned, filtered, and then you take its soda. Then you throw it into the pot, and it becomes the salt itself. This is Chemistry for us.

Interviewer: Ok. This knowledge, this wisdom, where does it come from?

K.W.: This wisdom... This knowledge comes to our people from the Awetí people. Awetí had had that knowledge, and then the Waurá people went to live at the village with them to learn how to do this.... This salt transformation. That's why now, for example...

Interviewer: So, is this the reason you say the ancients are like dictionaries? Because, actually, the elderly people pass it on to the younger ones, is that right? This is the reason I call the ancients dictionaries. When you do research, you have to consult them. The origin of it. If the Waurá people began with it or if it was the other people. When I worked with the transformation of salt on chemistry, I asked them, you know? I consulted this dictionary of mine, and I said that someone told me it was a Waurá's teaching. But it's not. We learned from other people. In ceramics, it was us. The Waurá people had learned it first, and we have kept on passing it on from generation to generation. Other people learned from us. That is how it goes.

Interviewer: But, Kaji, do you think your school needs the white people's knowledge?

K.W.: Maybe... If we can work with them both, do you see? By both pieces of knowledge, I mean us being able to work with Portuguese, we have to understand it, we have to speak Portuguese, do you get it? Because our communities must be able to write documents. If I am asked to be the interlocutor of a community leadership to do a translation from their language to Portuguese. This is the reason. Only Portuguese is a subject we work a lot with Native Language and Portuguese... Portuguese with Native Language. The moment the children and the youth start to understand and speak a little Portuguese. Then there will be that person who is in the textbook, there are a lot of things about black culture, other people's culture, but there is nothing about us. That's why we work both Sustainable Cultural Practice and Agroecology Practice as Science, you know... We work on how to do plantations, taskforces, to prepare the plantation... fishing... Then there is Indigenous Technology where you to learn, where you will invite the ancient, to go to the classroom and help the teacher to transmit the information to the students. This is what's happening...

Interviewer: And what have you already discovered about the appearance of the Waurá people?

K.W.: I have discovered how we appeared from whom we call Kuwamutõ... Kuwamutõ made a woman... He transformed five women. He took pieces of wood and transformed them into human beings. Then, they were married to the jaguar people. There was a pregnancy of twins, and they were the Sun and the Moon. We are scientists, you know? The Sun and the Moon are scientists... This is what is going to organize someone. That Sun and that Moon transformed many arrows that were transformed into human beings. It's not actually an actual human being yet. Kuwamutõ is from ancient times, you know. This is how the earth appeared. He was there and started to work, work, work until the appearance. It appeared first in his head to be transformed. He did a wooden drawing so he could turn it into his daughter. So, he could offer her to the jaguars to marry one of them. Then she married the jaguar and got pregnant of twins: The Sun and the Moon. Afterwards, the Moon is going to create an arrow by asking her grandfather to do it, by making him put the arrows in the village, putting the arrows around. I don't know how many arrows he did, like a thousand of them. Then he formed a circle with them and prayed. He prayed and transformed them into human beings. All types of human beings: white people, black people, red people, yellow people, brown people, indigenous, white, Americans, Africans. That's what I have discovered. So, our

people came from the 'little mouth arrow'. That's why we're not angry, we're not brave like those other people who were born from another arrow. They are fearless. Like Kayapó or Krenakarore or Kayabi. They are really angry. We call them Indians. In our language, we say 'muteitsi'. We call them 'muteitsi'. We consider them another group of people because they are angry. We, the people from Xingu, call ourselves 'putaká'. Because 'putaká' are not angry. They have similar cultures. We have similar cultures and different languages. I have discovered that there are 14 ethnic groups inside Xingu (Indigenous Park). Because there are language families, like Arawak, (Macro-) Jê, Tupi-Guarani, Karib. I think there are four of them: four language families that were created for us by the Sun and the Moon.

Interviewer: Ok. And what about school? Do you transmit this story to the youth and the children?

K.W.: Yes. When we work on history, we tell them. I transmit what I have learned, and I even wrote a book, you know? They do the reading. We write in our mother tongue, you know? And the students make drawings, they research with their parents to see if that's what really happened. The next day, they bring much information into the classroom, we discuss it. That is how we tell history, that is how it when we work on history. When we get into history, we are not going to tell the white people's history, we have to approach our history, you know? The history of the lake, the history of the house, the history of the planting, the history of the route, the history of pequi, the history of... How do I say it? Of the tapioca flour, of the manioc... Every plantation has its history... You have to do research, to know it, to narrate it to the students... So, you can write about it... Besides you are narrating it and telling them the history, they will have to research with their parents, with their uncle, with their grandfather. Once, I worked with the history of white people's appearance. We will not tell it right. We will just read it and there is nothing to do with us So you do not have that method through which you will tell what happened... You don't... You do the reading and then what? We get very lost. When you work on the textbook, you don't really know what happened in history. When you work on your history, narrating it to the students, doing the poll's research, with the students also doing research and bring more information if you haven't found out some information, the students will do it and bring that to the classroom. Moreover, you can add it to your narrative so that you will have a full narrative, do you get it?

Interviewer: And what do your people think about the white people in general?

K.W.: My people... Yeah... Now, it has been a while since we started to work in the classroom... My people didn't like that we teach the children in Native Language, you know?

They didn't allow us to teach in Native Language because we are born speaking and learning this language, you know? So, we needed to work directly in Portuguese then they have thought about it. We have worked a lot, we have taken courses, we have had Professors guiding us, bringing information to the communities. We couldn't directly teach the children in Portuguese because, like that, we would lose our Native Language and our culture and then we will lose it all. That's what they have understood now. We need to work on our culture to value our culture. Even so, some parents take their kids away to study Portuguese in the city. My people talk about that with us and we always talk about it. We were always criticized about that in the classroom, but we have been taking these courses and getting training, so we know we cannot directly work with the children in Portuguese. We can value ourselves because we are a differentiated school. They don't fully understand the differentiated school yet, you know? Because they were bragging about, we could only work with Mathematics and Portuguese. We had to talk to the students in

Portuguese, so I said to them once I spoke: 'What you're thinking... All wrong'. Because we are differentiated teachers. We are fighting for ourselves. Because we can hold on to our culture, to our language. That's it. We have to learn about our culture inside the school. And teach the children our history... Our language... All of it. Even so, we go on transmitting the language of Portuguese to the children, to the people in general, so they can understand. However, some fathers didn't obey, the students' fathers didn't obey and took away their children to study in the city... Afterwards, when they come back to the village, they are entirely lost. They don't know how to dance, to sing, to do the planting, to fish, to take a fish with an arrow, they don't know... How to run after the monkey... Do you get it? They have grown up, but they are still like children. Completely lost in the village. So, I tell the man's father 'Do you see the results of what you did to your child? You were always criticizing our work inside the classroom, but you see now your son being the village's fool'. There's not even knowledge in him... They must study our knowledge seriously... They are allowed to study from our knowledge. Because with what he has learned in the city... He speaks Portuguese, he writes well, he understands the rules from outside... So what? He will never get a job in the city. He has come back to our village and it's another world. When you study our reality, you get that traditional knowledge, you know? And you can also go to college, you can research your culture. Nevertheless, as you put your kid with little age in the city... He has lost it all. When this guy went to college, he was lost. He has did not know. What will he tell? What will he narrate? Do you get it? The guy does not even know how to dance, how to fish, how to do the planting, he knows nothing... He has lost it all.

Interviewer: How does the family group work? I mean... Are there many children and young people in school-age whose parents prefer white people's culture, or do they understand now what you said about the importance of valuing your people's culture?

K.W.: Now, they understand the importance of valuing our culture. Because when we first started to work in the classroom... The year was 90 or 97 or 2000... The parents wanted us to teach their children in Portuguese, speaking directly in Portuguese. Then we couldn't teach literacy in our language, in Native Language, we couldn't talk in Native Language inside the classroom... We could work speaking only Portuguese to the children... That's wrong of them... Now they have understood that we can work our culture inside the classroom in the school, you know? We can tell stories, we can party, we can learn to sing. Lately, we had a project of recovery to sing and stuff. We had five graduated students. One of them did a concert publicly. He did at the community, you know? He sang... Everybody saw him. Well, he is a singer, right? Now, the community has understood it. That if we work on our reality if we teach the children our reality after they finish High School in the village, they can write. They can go to college outside the village because we don't have a university inside the village. They can participate in the city's University. Because then they won't get lost. They already have knowledge from their people. That's the way... The one who left, the ones who were taken away while they were still kids, to go to the city at the age of 10, they have lost it all. They don't speak our language very well, they don't know how to work, they don't know how to dance, they have learned to drink cachaça. All of these, do you get it? It is where they learn how to steal. They get involved with drugs. It all happens, you know? The one who obeyed our lessons inside the community He has already practiced it. He has known our reality. Now, the community has realized, they have recognized that our school is a differentiated school. That we can work from our reality. We cannot work so much with the outside reality, because technology has come inside the village and it is changing the community's life. There are many motorbikes, cars, cellphones, the

internet is inside the village... That's also a problem for the youth. Because the young ones don't practise Indigenous Technology anymore to make basket, arrow, bow, because of this technology that has come inside now. It interferes in everything in our tradition like these dances, this funk dance called 'bailão', or forró... That's not acceptable inside the community. Not yet. From now on, the youth... Yeah... I see it like that. I think like that. That's the way I see it. But, 20 or 30 years from now, the elder ancients will be gone. They are leaving us and leaving the youth.

Tribal learning and curriculum as narrative

What Kaji is saying in his interview is that the oral culture of the Waurá people is present in the stories that the ancients tell. These ancient Waurá he says are: "are dying and taking that knowledge away. I consider them as a dictionary." What he means is that the whole transmission of the culture depends on this oral passing on of knowledge. There are of course other aspects to passing on the culture of the tribe and he talks about tribal learning in the form of the Waurá as bodypainting, their kind of ceramics and how they practice basketry. These all activity-based patterns of tribal learning which are so important in the transmission of the culture.

But the crucial border-crossing which he is concerned to help his people with is the border-crossing from these oral, orally transmitted stories to the written colonial culture. This as we have said is a perilous journey for anyone to undertake. And he talks about this quite clearly - that the only way you can help the children of the Waurá to cross this border is by beginning with oral transmission. He says: "You must talk to them, so they like your class, the history, this sort of thing. You cannot work directly with literacy, to write the words or do the readings right away. You cannot. You must work with orality first. You must tell stories".

This is as clear a statement as you can get of the need for a 'narrative curriculum'. It is also a clear statement of how the intersection between the indigenous culture and the written colonial culture works. So, there is a persistent need to 'oralise' the curriculum as a way of facilitating this border crossing. And the border crossing goes not as a one-way exit route, but a constant crossing backwards and forwards across the border. This has to be stressed - this is not a one-way exit route. This is a reciprocal passing across borders - backwards and forwards in a kind of spiral way. The Waurá people will not cease to 'oralise' ever in their lives and they will approach the colonial curriculum only through these oral routes. So, if you will - the decolonializing takes place in this constant reiteration around the border, passing backwards and forwards into the written culture and back again for sustenance in the oral culture. That way this remains a tribally sensitive journey into knowledge and not one that leads to evacuation and colonization.

As well as the retention of the tribal oral culture in all mediation of written curriculum there is the associated need to define decolonial education in the form of the tribal practices of the people hence Kaji talks about indigenous technology, sustainable cultural practice, agro-agricultural practices. He talks about Waurá indigenous technology - they teach them how to: play a musical instrument, how to do basketry, how to design arrows and how to design artisanal buildings. That is an indigenous technology that celebrates the culture. They learn how to play the Taquara, the little flute. So, if you are to present a decolonial curriculum it is partly the retention of the form of the oral culture and partly a promotion of content and practices of that culture. This would represent a considerable step forward in the definition of a decolonial practice.

‘Tribal learning’ is the indigenous ways of knowing that is passed on often in story form, among the members of a class tribe. There are plenty of instances of how we learnt things from our parents in their storytelling, rather than in their reading and writing, which they were not practiced in. But ‘tribal learning’ goes beyond parental conversations - it is part of the way of knowing and way of living that we learnt from our friends on the street or in the village. ‘Tribal learning’ is how we come to know about the world before we encounter the forces of socialization represented by, in a sense, the school and culture generally. So, you can see a clash between ‘tribal learning’ which tells us who we are and who we have been, and what our ancestral past has been and what our future is, and the forces of socialization represented by the school and dominant-ridden culture.

This is important for education because very often, particularly in understanding 'the pedagogy of the oppressed' - to quote Freire the class between indigenous, ‘tribal learning’ and school learning is the central dilemma that teachers face (I. Goodson and R. Deakin Crick, 2009).

The future that we have been positing for this lifelong clash between tribal learning and societal socialization is 'narrative learning'. Teachers stand as an independent mediator between tribal learning and school learning. Furthermore, if they are successful, the teacher will see to mediate by building a narrative which takes the learner to another place, and that is 'narrative learning' and the inheritance of 'narrative capital'. It is very different from the regular symbolic interchange that goes on in school, which is a straight one-way transmission from the dominant culture represented by the school subject and the teacher into the child without any mediation or acknowledge of any ‘tribal learning’ that the child already has.

Finally, it is important to realize that border crossing is a two-way process. It is not just a question of continually crossing the border towards written and abstract knowledge, but also a question of how to hold on to the important patterns of knowing and learning which are indigenous to the learner. The danger about border crossings as envisaged in Western schools is that they envisage the border crossing as a one-way process towards the promised uplands of written culture and abstract knowledge. This sacrifices a whole way of knowing and learning which is already extant. We must be on our guard to ensure that border crossings take as much of the indigenous knowledge with them on their journey as is possible without cutting themselves off from other more decontextualized and abstract concepts. Border crossings are essential and the disembedding process they represent is itself a great learning enterprise, but far too little emphasis has been put on how students hold on to the knowledge that they come to the learning enterprise and the school with. This should be one of our focusses if we are to provide an antidote to the colonized curriculum.

Conclusions

The reason we put so much emphasis on narrative curriculum is because it sits at the intersection of perhaps the most major border crossing of all with regard to how disenfranchised groups approach the unfamiliar world of schooling and curriculum. This is because most tribal groups or disenfranchised groups, whether they be: indigenous peoples or working-class constituencies or other groups that have been subjugated to oppression (such as women and gay minorities). All have a common sense of oral culture as a major way of transmitting their values. So, in their initial instantiation all of these groups learn through talking and through talking with each other particularly. This shared discourse, this oral culture, is in a sense their primal

way of knowing. This is why school is such a perilous border-crossing. Because it insists that instead of students learning by talking, they must learn by reading. So, the crucial border crossing is the border crossing from oral culture to written culture.

In autobiographical terms many of us from disenfranchised groups experience this perilous journey as acutely painful. It seems a form of betrayal to the ways of knowing that we have appreciated in our home and community. In my own case (see Goodson, 2005) this border crossing proved almost too much to bear. I could not read till I was eight years old and continued to learn about the world through the stories that my parents, family and friends told me. It is still, even now, the richest source of learning that I have. So, to cross the border from oral to written culture was asking so much of me. It seemed like it was asking me to betray my whole tribe in favor of a different way of knowing. What the narrative curriculum seeks to do is re-heal this primal wound between oral and written culture. We must accept that the dominant interest groups have predicated and instrumentalized a written curriculum which is abstract and de-contextualized. But it is also, we must concede, a route to cosmopolitan ways of knowing, to successful credentialing and to access to wider societies. This is the complex conundrum of border crossings from oral to written. In the next section we talk, and I emphasize talk, with someone who is well-versed in 'tribal learning'. It is not coincidental that all of our work is on the life stories of teachers and students. It is once again the modality that seeks to put back the relationship between the oral and written and to profoundly elucidate narrative ways of knowing. This we argue is the crucial precondition for successful learning for disenfranchised groups.

As well as sponsoring the oral side of tribal learning it is important to define a range of activity-based curriculum areas which teach the indigenous culture in a formal way. Hence, we have seen Waurá indigenous technology and agro-economic studies, among others, will facilitate the teaching of the culture in its more formal sense.

So, in terms of presenting a way forward for de-colonial educational practices we are arguing that, as Kaji says so articulately in his interview, there are two particular avenues of exploration. One is to make sure that wherever possible the curriculum is 'oralised' - it is presented in the forms of recognized storylines and story-telling practices. So that is the form that decolonial education might take. The content that decolonial education might take is to scrutinize and elaborate the various aspects of the indigenous culture, whether they be: technological, musical, agricultural or economic. This way, both content and form will come together to define a more decolonized strategy.

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