

Phillip D. Th. Knobloch

Decolonial thinking in education

in Western and non-Western contexts



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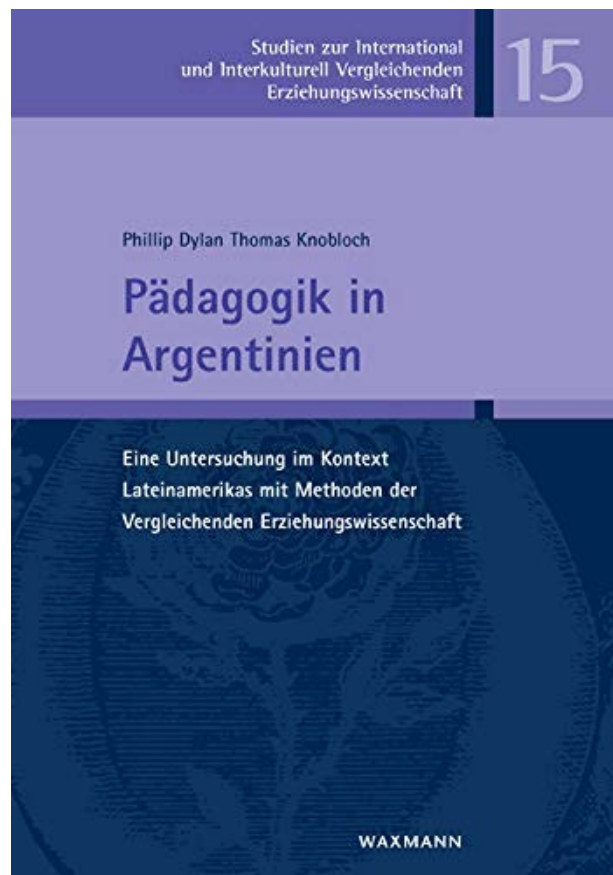
Decolonial thinking in education

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1 Introduction

- What is Latin American pedagogy?
- What is the difference between European and Latin American pedagogy?
- (pedagogy: educational thinking and educational reality)
- Field research in Argentina (2005–2006); results published in: Knobloch 2013



1 Introduction

- What is Latin American pedagogy?
- What is the difference between European and Latin American pedagogy?
- (pedagogy: educational thinking and educational reality)

- Field research in Argentina (2005-2006); results published in: Knobloch 2013
- Conclusion:
 - Latin American pedagogy must take into account European and Latin American contexts
 - European pedagogy ignores non-European contexts (cf. history of education)
 - Latin American pedagogy takes into account (modern) European colonialism and postcolonial constellations

- Reconstruction of educational thinking in LA (cf. Knobloch 2016):
 - Europe/America (since 1494)
 - the colonisers/the colonised (power relation; colonial difference)
 - civilisation/barbarism (D. F. Sarmiento 1845)
 - oppressor/oppressed (Freire 1970)
 - modernity/coloniality (Mignolo 2006; Quijano 2000)

1 Introduction

- Insight: European education has to consider modernity in relation to coloniality as well
 - Decolonial theory (Mignolo; Quijano; and others)
 - Decoloniality
 - Modernity/coloniality
 - Border thinking
 - Delinking from the colonial matrix of power (coloniality)
 - Epistemic decolonisation
 - Modernity begins with coloniality (1492)
- How can European education adapt to (and appropriate) decolonial thinking?
- How does one do justice to the difference between Western and non-Western contexts?
- How can European education delink from Eurocentric epistemology?

2 Decolonial thinking in European education

- Increase in references to decolonial theory
- For example:
 - João M. Paraskeva (2022): Curriculum theorycide. Towards non-derivative curriculum theory now!
 - Phillip D. Th. Knobloch (2022): On the concretization of decolonial options in education

“If one looks at the present draft, but also at other, more detailed works by Paraskeva [...] on the topic, one sees that although the central assumptions and catchwords of decolonial theory (such as: Coloniality of power, southern epistemologies, pluriversality, epistemological justice etc.) are repeatedly mentioned, but concrete examples of epistemic decolonization are missing. This does not fundamentally devalue the demand for epistemic decolonization, but it does raise the serious question of what is actually being demanded here. To put it in a nutshell: Do we understand decolonial theory at all? If so, why don't we explain it in clear terms? And if not: Why should we follow its demands (which we do not really understand)?” (Knobloch 2022, p. 173)

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- Two strategies to overcome modern thinking (Mignolo):
 - Border thinking on the border between modernity and coloniality (change of perspectives)
 - Dialog and discussion between all who want to overcome the colonial matrix of power (critique is always location-bound)
- Necessity of translating decolonial theory into the respective (local) context (cf. Knobloch 2019)

3 Attempt of translation:

decolonial thinking in Western discussions about cultural appropriation



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"Those who engage in cultural appropriation are - according to a widespread understanding - guilty of an offence: members of a dominant culture exploit the products of marginalised cultures in order to adorn themselves with them without showing the producers the necessary respect" (Balzer 2022, p. 75).

- Dominant culture/dominated culture
- Modernity/coloniality

In the topic of cultural appropriation, the small things of everyday life [...] intertwine with the larger framework of history and global power relations (capitalism, colonialism, racism) (Distelhorst 2021, p. 28-29).

- Example: Fashion brand "Gudrun Sjödén" (cf. Kramvig / Flemmen 2018)



(Gudrun Sjödén 2013)

3 Attempt of translation:

decolonial thinking in Western discussions about cultural appropriation

"The essential point of the debates consisted in the accusation that the culture of the Sami was being transformed by the criticised fashion line into a stereotype that no longer had anything to do with the actual culture and self-image of the people concerned" (Distelhorst 2021, p. 98).

Two ethics of appropriation:

- Moral criteria (Distelhorst)
- Aesthetic criteria (Balzer)
 - Protest against cultural appropriation is intuitively understandable
 - but: culture lives from cultural appropriation
 - There are no authentic cultures, only hybrid cultures.
 - Distinction between successful and unsuccessful forms of cultural appropriation
 - Unsuccessful forms: Appropriation of alien trauma; evocation of authentic cultures
 - Successful forms: creating something new from different influences
 - Successful critique: counter appropriation



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*Gudrun
Sjödén*

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(Gudrun Sjödén 2016)





(<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26172313>)



(<https://www.zeit.de/sport/2023-03/indigene-bolivien-cholitas-skaters-celia-d-luna>; cf. Spiller 2023)

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decolonial thinking in Western discussions about cultural appropriation

The analysis of fashion items, consumer products and cultural products (in Western and non-Western contexts) can illustrate the ambiguous meaning of the term modernity/coloniality:

- Symbols of coloniality (oppression)
- Symbols of modernity (advanced culture)
- Symbols of modernity/coloniality

It thus becomes clear why decolonial theory warns against unambiguous interpretations (modern thinking) and favours the dialogue of a pluriversality of viewpoints.

3 Attempt of translation:

decolonial thinking in Western discussions about cultural appropriation

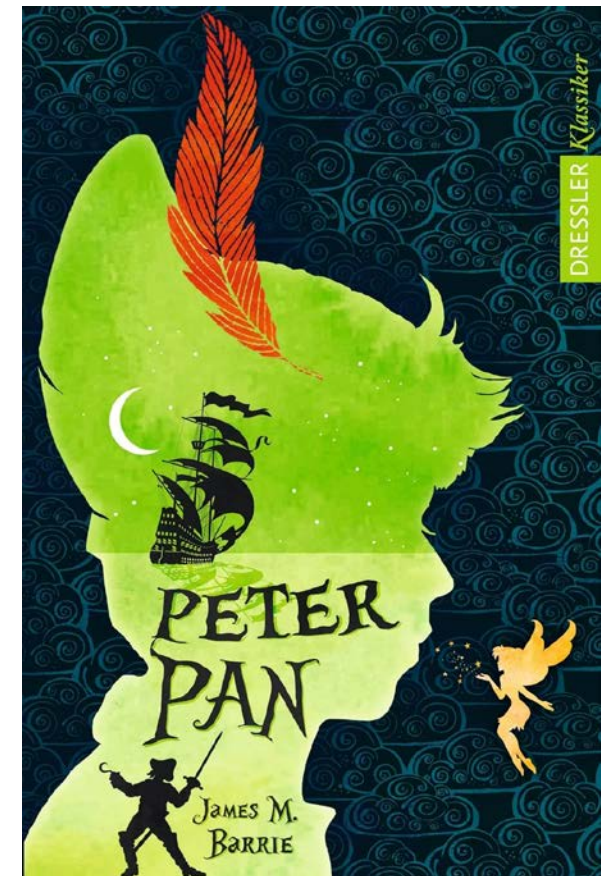
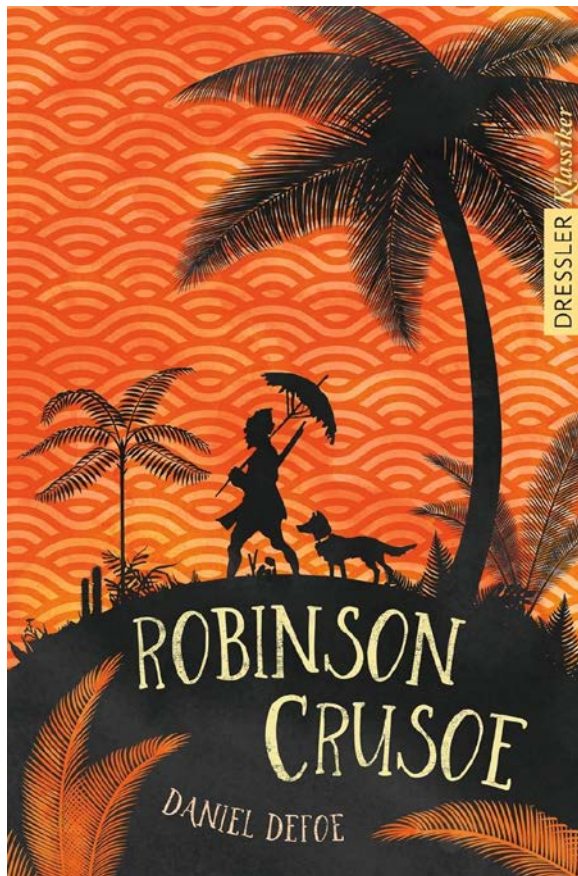


4 Decolonial thinking in education in Western contexts

- Thinking about the relation between modernity and coloniality
- Reflecting about the ambiguous meaning of modernity/coloniality
- Studying decolonial theory
- Cultural appropriation of decolonial theory:
 - Unsuccessful forms: appropriation of alien traumata; claiming authenticity; universal truth claim; simplistic interpretation; repeating keywords and phrases without understanding; lack of reference to the local context (cf. problematic discussions about identity politics)
 - Successful forms: creative; creating something new from different global and local influences; open to dialog; non-totalitarian; ambiguous interpretation of cultural meanings; development of an own standpoint – open to discussion; self-critical; respecting moral and aesthetic criteria

4 Decolonial thinking in education in Western contexts

- Thinking about the tracks of modernity/coloniality in modern/colonial Western Culture
- Rethinking the Western tradition of “modern” educational thinking in the context of modernity/coloniality (classics: Herder, Humboldt, Fichte etc.)



5 Conclusion

- There is much to argue that modernity begins with modern European colonialism and the conquest of the Americas.
- But this means a fundamental rethinking of the traditional Western understanding of modernity.
- However, this challenge should be taken up by all those who are interested in decolonial forms of education.





(<https://www.behance.net/gallery/105548969/Cholita-Magritte/modules/605862085>) ([https://artsdot.com/ADC/Art-ImgScreen-4.nsf/O/A-8XYU67/\\$FILE/Rene-magritte-the-son-of-man.jpg](https://artsdot.com/ADC/Art-ImgScreen-4.nsf/O/A-8XYU67/$FILE/Rene-magritte-the-son-of-man.jpg))



(C) ArtsDot.com - Rene Magritte - The Son of Man

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