Ubiquitous Learning

An International Journal

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Decolonial Practices on the Educational Platform CGScholar: Subjectification, Ecology of Knowledges, and the Design of Rhizomatic Multimodal Texts

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Abstract: In the digital turn, when knowledge is considered ubiquitous and learning outside of school is permanent, what knowledge can formal education offer? Despite the presence of the digital infrastructure for more than three decades, educational institutions find themselves unprepared and outdated to resume teaching in digital learning environments during the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This article is a narrative of experience on the CGScholar educational platform during remote teaching for a public university and reflects on the deconstruction of some of the truths of modernity on subjects, language, text, education, and citizenship through the decolonial practices of subjectification, methodology of ecology of knowledges, and rhizomatic multimodal writing. The research on these decolonial gestures on the digital medium does not seek to introduce new truths through the glorification of technology as the only solution to the problems that plague public education but the possibility of transforming, through writing, our knowledge through possible exchanges in an educational platform.

Keywords: CGScholar, Subjectification, Ecology of Knowledges, Collaborative Rhizomatic Writing, Multimodality

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many of the realities experienced around the world since social isolation has become the only effective measure for containing the virus and controlling infections. Hence, the home office and teleworking became the new routine, forcing us to work without schedule, without weekends, and without holidays and marking us as "animal *laborans* that exploits itself—and it does so voluntarily, without external constraints" (Han 2015, 10). Another consequence of the social isolation during the pandemic was the immediate demand for education to adapt to remote teaching using, necessarily, digital infrastructures. However, the overt resistance of the educational system to the use of technology for educational purposes is notorious. Furthermore, the age-old shortcomings of public education have emerged again, this time widening blatantly the gap of social injustices, with private school students taking classes daily while many public-school students have not even had one class in 2020 or 2021 in Brazil.

On the other hand, public higher education institutions held a long period of discussions in order to adapt to the new reality, with public edicts for the provision of equipment and internet data packages for students who did not have access to the technological support necessary for the sudden transformation of education to remote learning. What initially was thought of as emergency education, after research carried out in April 2020 on the evolution of the pandemic, has already been projected to last more than two years due to the unforeseen lockdowns (Gusso et al. 2020).

The suspension of on-site education and the implementation of remote emergency education has led many educators to an accelerated search for technological resources whose incorporation is considered necessary for this work model. However, the main agents of the pedagogical process were not to a certain extent prepared to work online since their courses

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were not planned for this purpose. This has caused a traumatic dimension to this experience, which will need to be reflected upon and taken into account when referring to new pedagogical models. As there is a very high degree of uncertainty in relation to the end of the pandemic, the prognosis is that online approaches will continue to be practiced in the coming years (Gusso et al. 2020). Given this scenario, it is essential to reflect on how we can reinvent our pedagogical processes so that the use of the digital becomes significant and not just decorative. For this purpose, we will share our experience of adapting our English language course in a teacher education degree at a public university to the online format on the CGScholar platform.

It is important to consider that platforms have epistemological assumptions, which influence the experience provided by them. For example, in environments designed to reproduce didactic pedagogy, as occurs in most traditional schools, we have resources for presenting and delivering content to students, followed by assessment procedures (Cope and Kalantzis 2017). However, a new generation of digital environments has been prepared to favor the collaboration and interactivity that are characteristic of the new media (Cope and Kalantzis 2015). Teachers must be open to rethinking their pedagogical practice, reframing the roles traditionally attributed to them and the students, in order to work in these environments. This is because, as research by Lankshear and Knobel (2008) and Knobel and Kalman (2016) reveals, the new literacies practiced in digital environments bring with them a new ethos, being more participatory, collaborative, and distributed than the literacies of the writing society (Monte Mor 2017). As a result, a change in mentality is necessary. This is the most important aspect to take into account when preparing pedagogical proposals for online platforms. Our research contributes to the understanding of pedagogical practices in language education that do not repeat didactic or mimetic tendencies in education but attempt to explore the knowledges the students can potentially bring to the learning processes if given the chance and space to do so. During this research, while the students were getting socialized with knowledges that can turn them into qualified teachers and subjectivities, they were also actively constructing knowledges on the educational platform, expanding the topics discussed in unexpected and surprising ways through online collaboration.

Figure 1: Rare Northern Cardinal, Half Male, Half Female
Source: Folha de S. Paulo 2021

Figure 1 is a picture of a Northern Cardinal and was recently taken in Erie, Pennsylvania, by an observer who has been trying to pinpoint birds for fifty years. The Northern Cardinal, half male and half female, metaphorically represents the existence of opposites in the same body, be it organic or mechanical. Educational platforms, in our perception, need to bring together opposite realities. The contact enabled by technology in spite of the physical distance needs to be accompanied by the approximation of the participants' minds and emotions; it is necessary to supplement the lack of interest in abstract, universal, and neutral knowledge with the engagement with themes that involve

social realities, both situated and global. It is essential to investigate not only what is visible in this learning environment but also what becomes invisible. The lack of a face-to-face, bodily, and sensory interaction needs to be replaced with socialization (Biesta 2020, 89) that promotes the exchange of knowledge, emotions, and experiences among the participating subjects, thus forming the subjectification[2] of each one based on "the democratic principles of participation and self-determination" and not on the control of the teacher.

An education that, in principle, keeps bodies separated and behind screens needs to recover other aspects that make us human: our naive curiosity that has the potential to become epistemological (Freire 1996), the development of practices of an ecology of knowledges (Jerónimo and Neves 2012) that "are based on the logic of collaboration, sharing and experimentation, instead of the centrality and norm as in the construction of knowledge under the paradigm of modernity" (Duboc 2015, 667), and, finally, democratic participation. Therefore, the digital infrastructure in the pedagogical context can provide this shift in focus—from the teacher and the curriculum to the students and their learning (Biesta 2020), creating communities that construct knowledge in an environment of an ecology of knowledges (Jerónimo and Neves 2012), sharing experiences in a digital medium, and constructing meaning-making together.

Thus, it is necessary to present experiences with the digital that can lead us to new practices, innovative planning, and state-of-the-art research that value the role of teachers and students in the educational process and that are adherent to the properties of the digital and its literacies. In this article, we will articulate the experience of a course offered on the CGScholar digital platform.

The Decolonial Option on the CGScholar Learning Environment

One of the characteristics of digital learning environments is the break away from the conventional notions of time and space that underlie the functioning of educational institutions. The school and the classroom, traditionally disconnected from the family and society, had activities developed in the digital space inside the students' homes during the pandemic. In principle, this 'breaking away' has the potential to democratize student participation in digital learning environments; however, this democratization needs to be carefully constructed, and for that, educational policies are so important.

CGScholar is a cybersocial system, a web artifact that works on a remote server (Cope, Kalantzis, and Magee 2011; Cope and Kalantzis 2022). The environment offers the proposal of user-generated content, incorporating affordances that have become a property of the semantic web. The CGScholar environment incorporates this property, enhancing its dialogical, interactive, participatory, and collaborative possibilities, which seek to bring daily lay practices of using the digital to the area of education (Cope and Kalantzis 2017).

Grounded on this understanding of hybridization and on the theory of ecology of knowledges (Jerónimo and Neves 2012), the platform was designed to enable the pedagogical process through the affordances of the digital, taking into account the knowledge and practices that students bring to the classroom without reducing them to simple information out of context. To conceive CGScholar, Cope, Kalantzis, and Magee (2011) and Cope and Kalantzis (2017) proposed to work on the resources of the semantic web and the new media in a way incorporated into the pedagogical practice. For this, they systematized seven possibilities (affordances) of the digital to guide their pedagogical use (Cope and Kalantzis 2017).[3]

The platform has a layout similar to Facebook, with the main space for publishing content and comments in the center of the page to encourage dialogue. Students can make public profiles and create communities while using the spaces for reading and writing in the environment.

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[2] Subjectification is the process of becoming a subject. It is about ways of being in which the individual is not simply a 'specimen' of a more encompassing order. The subjectification purpose of education would be the result of the other two processes of qualification and socialization.

[3] The seven e-affordances: (1) ubiquitous learning, (2) active knowledge making, (3) multimodal meaning, (4) recursive feedback, (5) collaborative intelligence, (6) metacognition, and (7) differentiated learning (see: https://newlearningonline.com/e-learning).
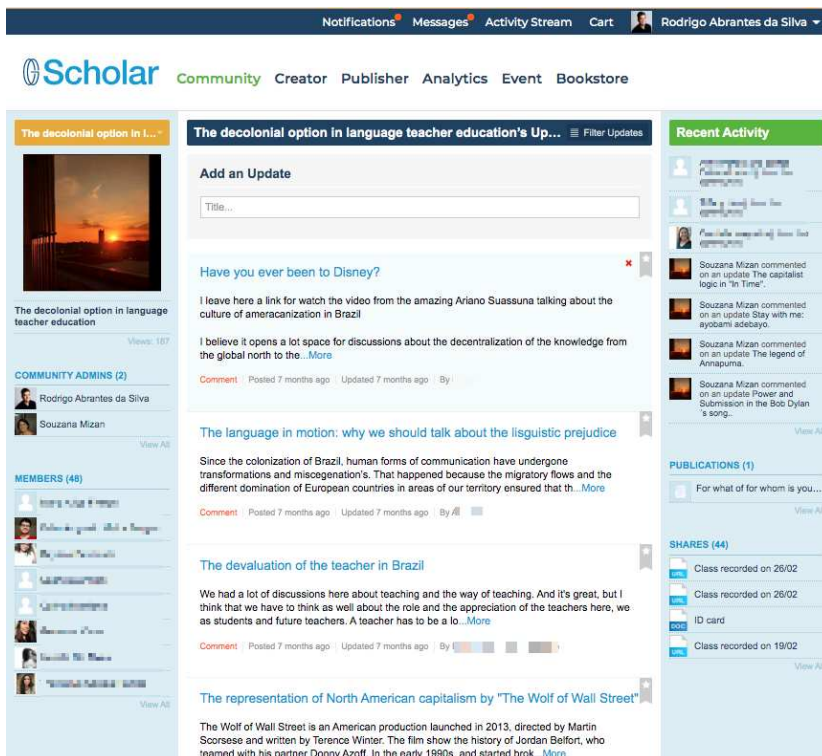
Figure 2: General Picture of the Community: "The Decolonial Option in Language Teacher Education"
Source: CGScholar 2021

The course communities have the potential to become affinity spaces (Gee 2013) in which the participants learn from each other. The community created to teach the "English Language III" course was dubbed "The decolonial option in the education of language teachers" so as to not adhere to modern notions of linear, gradual, and progressive acquisition of language. Seeking to reconnect students with everyday images of campus, the wonderful sunset (Figure 3) that we see every evening from the windows of our classrooms when we study on-site accompanied us on this remote journey.

Figure 3: Sunset at Pimentas
Source: Da Silva and Mizan

During remote teaching, a relaxation of the discipline that face-to-face teaching requires was noted. Students were not required to participate in synchronous classes and could make updates and comments on the platform at any time during the semester, a characteristic that brought the course design closer to the ubiquitous learning proposals of Cope and Kalantzis (2009). Considering the context of the pandemic, it is worth analyzing this measure in relation to the data we have on student access to the digital in Brazil. According to the October 2020 version of the "Portraits of Education" report, among public high school students, only 29 percent accessed the internet through a computer (Lima 2021). In their analysis of higher education during the pandemic, Gusso et al. (2020) reported that many students were unable to have a computer available at the time of the synchronous class since the equipment started to be shared with other family members for work or study. Considering the problems of internet access during the pandemic, the non-compulsory participation in synchronous classes proved to be the right decision. Even if it were not for the question of access, the decision is pedagogically justified since the student's presence is manifested at different times in the digital environment, and their activities on the platform generate an abundance of texts that attest to the learning process. Thus, in relation to the dynamics of online teaching, we perceive that many discussions about course hours and the persistent inflexibility regarding schedules are fruitless as they do not correspond to the pedagogies that digital technology has the potential to develop. This topic is of fundamental importance for both the teacher and the administrator who will make decisions regarding the organization and planning of courses in the coming months and years.

It was established that each student needed to post three updates[4] (alone or in collaboration) and four comments to the peers' updates during the semester to have the course evaluated as completed or, in other words, having a passing grade. The collaborative factor was introduced in order to encourage interaction between peers and the production of shared knowledge by the students.

Qualification, Socialization, and Subjectification in a Decolonial Perspective

The creation of the modern nation-state (Anderson 2006), with its geographic and linguistic boundaries, devised imagined national communities that believe they share one language. Next, the modern state began to adopt language policies to exercise power over the other languages used in the space bounded by the nation's borders. Thus, the issue of national language competence in the borders of the nation has become a political issue that somehow measures fidelity to the nation by measuring fluency in the national language.

Language learning, whether in the mother tongue or in a foreign language, created refined language models (Bagno 2001), which belong to certain social classes and cultures (Pennycook 1994), and these models were used to create grammars and dictionaries and to choose the literary readings brought to the classroom. In the case of foreign language, colonizing languages, such as English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, created fictional centers, such as Kachru's (1985) model of the theory of internal, external, and expanding English circles, which seek to validate the countries that belong to the inner circle and their speakers as 'authentic' users of the language in question. In this way, it is common for English language teachers to hear the question about which English language we teach—British English or American English. We can expand this question posed by the students by challenging common-sense beliefs about the English language and answering that the English language spoken in Britain or the United States of America (USA) is not one but multiple linguistic variations that consider the different speech communities and their cultures living in the nations. In fact, the choice of specific countries as 'authentic' speakers of the English language erases from memory the United Kingdom's (UK) colonization processes in Africa, the Caribbean, India, and North America, excluding black bodies from being considered 'authentic' speakers of the colonizing language.

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[4] Update is the name given to a publication on the platform. These publications can be made on the user's profile page, for peers, or on the pages of the course community. To create the update, the user has a text editor with multimodal affordances (e.g., images, videos, sounds, embedded media).

Refusing to conform to common-sense notions about languages and the deconstruction of linguistic theories based on monolingual perspectives (Chomsky 1965) of ideal speakers/listeners in fictional centers (Kachru 1985) is a decolonial stance. Therefore, we sought to decolonize the language teaching during remote emergency education by approaching it methodologically from Biesta's (2020) model of qualification, socialization, and qualified subjectification as education's main purposes. Educating language teachers not to develop a mimetic approach to language acquisition can be a way of valuing the identities, cultures, and knowledges that students bring to the learning environment, be it physical or digital. Although our great patron of education, Freire (1996), is not considered a decolonial theorist, we can read him as a decolonial thinker and be inspired for the construction of a democratic and participatory virtual learning environment that values the identities of students:

> The ability to learn, not only to adapt but above all to transform reality, to intervene in it, recreating it, speaks of our educability on a different level from that of training other animals or cultivating plants. (Freire 1996, 68–69)

Oriented, thus, by Biesta (2020) and the tripod of the purpose of educational domains that he established, that is, qualification, socialization, and subjectification, we reflect on these purposes in the virtual learning environment of CGScholar. On the one hand, qualification, a *sine qua non* of teaching, in the context of higher education, needs to consider whether it will be a qualification for the labor market, for the academy, or for citizenship:

> This qualification function of education is an important task and provides an important justification for schooling. Whereas some would argue that this is all schools should do, it is not too difficult to see that even the simplest provision of knowledge and skills already provides a certain way of (re)presenting the world and presenting what is considered to be of value. (Biesta 2020, 92)

In this line of thought, we raise the following hypotheses: a foreign language education that trains students for the job market seeks to equip the nation with skilled workers who speak the languages of the inner circle (USA, Great Britain, Australia, etc.). On the other hand, education that seeks to guarantee the next generations of researchers in the academic world is mainly constituted by theories about language developed within the discipline of traditional linguistics (Foucault 1970) together with linguistic training in the foreign language. Last but not least, the qualification for citizenship (Mattos 2011) is a perspective that seeks to qualify students to act and practice their agency within society from a critical stance in relation to our knowledges about language, identity, culture, and power.

The purpose of socialization in education, on the other hand, involves necessary choices about knowledge that we make that create abyssal lines (Santos 2007) that divide "the (re) presentation of cultures, traditions and practices, in a way explicit, but often also implicitly" (Biesta 2020, 92) in those that belong to this side of the abyssal line and those that are located on the other side of the abyssal line, therefore invisible. In a decolonial perspective, the socialization of students in the narratives of silenced identities and cultures must not adopt a neoliberal multicultural stance (Kubota 2014) of uncritical celebration of difference but must practice the methodology of the 'sociology of absences' "in order to get to know and value the inexhaustible social experience that is taking place in today's world. In other words, only in this way will it be possible to avoid the gigantic waste of experience that we suffer today" (Santos 2002, 239).

Finally, the subjectification purpose of education would be the result of the other two processes of qualification and socialization. The knowledge that the students are socialized in inevitably affects and forms their identities and subjectivities in specific ways. These subjectivities interact in the virtual environment without seeking to increase the number of their followers, as in conventional social media, but by exploring possibilities of critically reading certain realities and developing multimodal texts about these realities.

Collaborative Writing, Qualified Subjectifications and the "Reality Check"

Suddenly, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions, considered the main sites of teaching and learning, closed because of the agglomeration of bodies. Schools were forced to do away with the blackboard, the desk, and school uniforms that are "weapons to discipline young people, architecture in the service of pure knowledge transfer, symbols of the authoritarian teacher" (Masschelein and Simons 2017, 38). The disciplinary role of education is lost when we move away from the traditional education classroom architecture and move on to virtual rooms, with bodies hidden behind screens; voices continually cut off by unstable connections, rains, storms, and power outages; and, of course, by the non-mandatory presence in synchronous meetings. The departure from the disciplinary regime and its confinements can lead teachers and students not only to the confinement of screens but to a control and surveillance regime practiced by digital platforms and governments, a new form of capitalism that registers human experience in order to fabricate and offer new, in our case, educational products to be consumed, the so-called Big Other:

> This new architecture is configured as an ubiquitous networked institutional regime that registers, modifies and commodifies the daily experience, from the use of a domestic appliance, to their own bodies, from communication to thought, all with a view to establishing new paths for monetization and profit. (Zuboff 2018, 44)

Jaeger (1965) argues that the purpose of education in the West or Global North was aristocratic and not democratic. Education was there to provide those who were already free—rich men, in most—with the cultural resources to work for their own perfection. Making an analogy with the uses of digital culture during the pandemic for educational purposes, we realize that education in postmodern times has barely detached itself from its aristocratic and undemocratic purpose. Social inequalities, on the one hand, limited the access to equipment and data plans, and, on the other hand, the lack of physical space for studying and the scarcity of access to quality food have exacerbated the aristocratic character of education, in the words of Jaeger (1965). In the hypothesis that we guarantee access to these basic goods, how can we build democratic ideas and freedom in the virtual learning environment and, thus, distance ourselves from an educational system that was designed to be disciplinary and to practice coercion? As Freire (1996) reminds us, education cannot be analogous to the training of animals and the cultivation of plants—even more so in the context of a remote education imposed by a pandemic that proves to be increasingly catastrophic for humanity.

A democratic education, in our perception, should call and encourage students to act as subjects free to participate in the qualification and socialization functions of the educational process while forming their subjectifications without the constant disciplinary and coercive function of the ignorant schoolmaster (Rancière 2002):

> It is, therefore, not about the educational production of the subject—in which the subject would be reduced to an object—but is instead about bringing the subject-ness of the child or young person 'into play,' so to speak; helping the child or young person not to forget that they can exist as subject. (Biesta 2020, 95)

Decolonial gestures of qualification and socialization can lead students to subjectifications that make them responsible for their learning, bestowing them with the freedom that modern education has taken away with its disciplinary and homogenizing tendencies. This subjectification process makes students responsible for the initiatives they take (in our course taught on the CGScholar platform, this process was developed through the updates produced by the students), and at the same time, they are subject to the interpretations that others make of these initiatives and the continuation they give to them by commenting on the updates. We thus see the possibility of a subject's freedom

to expose their world, their knowledge, and the meanings they construct, and dialogue about them with other subjects participating in the knowledge network. We noticed that the students actively participated in this network without articulating within it the attitudes and addictions that are now exacerbated in commercial social media, that is the culture of cancellation, fake news, ghosting, and hate speech. The subjects tend to use their freedom of expression and action in a 'qualified' way in the educational platform without reproducing attitudes already consolidated in social media.

We shall therefore expose two examples of how two activities were taken up by the students who used the CGScholar platform to write updates that expanded the meanings of the texts by giving various turns to the screw. The emergence of the realities lived by the students during social isolation and the surfacing of their knowledges can be observed in the activities developed by them and described below. In the first synchronous meeting, after the students had recounted their experiences during the pandemic, it was suggested to read the poem by the black American poet Maya Angelou "Still I Rise." It was a surprise to find out that this same poem had been read with their professor last semester. Nevertheless, the reading took place, and the suggestion of the teacher was to write a poem inspired by "Still I Rise." The activity had a great adherence, and two poems were commented on by various colleagues. Victoria's[5] poem expresses the monotony of reality during the pandemic and the desire to go back to doing ordinary activities, such as taking the subway and seeing the same people every day. Denise's poem works on the feeling of fear during the pandemic and the lack of human contact. As the first interaction on CGScholar, the students behaved similarly to the interactions in the face-to-face modality; they did the requested work individually, but they interacted little with the poems of their classmates, apparently considering that this is a task assigned to the teacher. In a discussion in the next synchronous class about the students' lack of interaction with their classmates' poems, evaluation, as a disciplinary tool rooted in the students' imagination (unfortunately), came to deconstruct the view that comments are the teacher's responsibility only, requiring four comments to the classmates' updates during the course. The formation of collaborative writing groups on the platform was also suggested. An intervention was therefore necessary for the students to assume another position in relation to the course, the teacher, and the peers and to create a disposition to read the texts and interact with the other peers. According to Santos (2019, 69), this interaction demands "that one sees knowing that one is being seen, that one observes knowing that one is being observed, that one understands knowing that one is being the object of others' understanding."
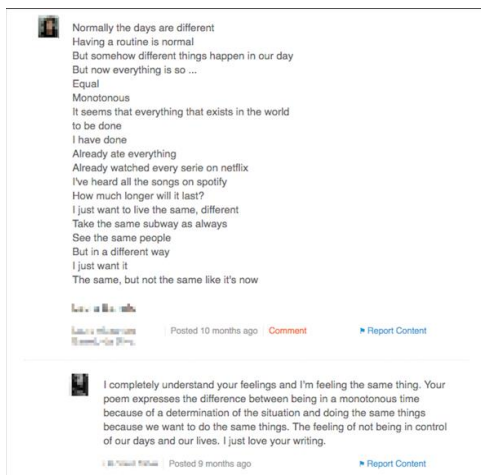

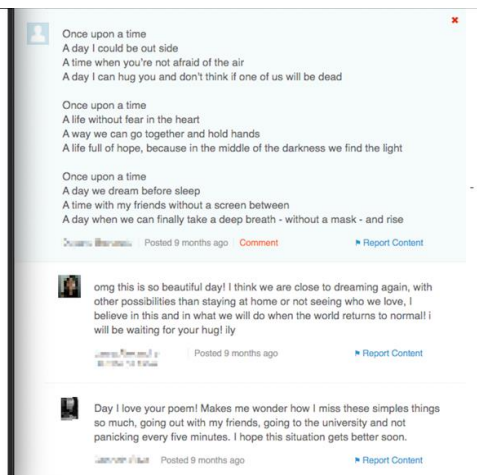Figure 4: Victoria's Poem with Comments   Figure 5: Denise's Poem with Comments

Source: CGScholar 2021

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[5] All the names that appear in this article are fictitious so that the identity of the students can be protected.

One of the updates that the students created collaboratively had, as a point of departure, the reading of the short story "Genesis and Catastrophe—A True Story" by Roald Dahl. The story is a fictional account of a true historical event: the birth of Adolf Hitler. The text created by the students shows enough familiarity with digital platforms since they use the affordances offered by the CGScholar platform, especially the use of multimodality, according to the systematization of Cope and Kalantzis (2017). This resource appears in the incorporation of the video "My Son Was a Columbine shooter—This is My Story" from TED Talk, which presents Sue Klebold in a speech about the changes brought to her life by the massacre that her son Dylan and his friend Eric Harris caused at Columbine High School in the United States (Figure 6), and a YouTube video, "We Need to Talk About Kevin" (Figure 7), which expands our understandings about motherhood. The work with multimodality was reinforced by the production of two "illustrations," in the words of the students, created from the reading of the story. In one of them, a fetus with Hitler's physical characteristics appears in his mother's belly, and a slogan phrase is used on the left of the poster, on a red background, with the following words: "even the worst killers were once loved by their mommies" (Figure 8). It is worth saying that the phrase was retrieved from the movie "Rosemary's Baby" by one of the students. Perceived as an assemblage, the imagetic text has the characteristics of a movie poster. The other image (Figure 9) brings two representations of Hitler, one as a baby and the other as an adult, with a phrase that reads: "who would have thought?"

The update begins with the resumption of the turning point that happens in the narrative of the tale, with the revelation of the name of the child just born, Adolf Hitler. The writing of the text brings in the tragic figure of the mother of subjects who have marked human history as being monsters. The students reinforce the maternal role of loving and nurturing without knowing that all this affection can turn into violence. The suffering of this mother is experienced through the bearing of guilt for her son's monstrous act. The burden of motherhood and the ability to forgive, as the students say in the paragraph that introduces the video, are constant challenges for the survival of these mother figures. In this manner, students create new nodes of rhizomatic knowledges by expanding in different directions the notions brought by the story.

Figure 6: TED Talk of "My Son Was the Columbine Shooter"
Source: CGScholar 2021

The writing of the update, it seems to us, led the students to an encounter with the reality experienced today in various places around the world, especially in Brazil, with the return of authoritarianism, racism, and neo-fascism. The story created lines of rhizomatic intensity that led the students to "an encounter that allows a 'falling into reality.' This requires, among other things, that education does not remain merely conceptual, but that there is something real at stake; that the world, in its materiality and its sociability, can be encountered" (Biesta 2020, 98). The resumption of the discourse of the 'mother' that organizes Roald Dahl's short story creates lines of intensity that sometimes converge and sometimes deterritorialize the meanings constructed in the short story:

> There are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*. (Deleuze and Guattari 1995, 3–4)

The lines of convergence and flight of the multimodal narrative elaborated by the students create another layer, or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1995), another plateau, with the relevance that the movie "We Need to Talk about Kevin" establishes with the meanings constructed in the students' text. It is also curious to notice that the group that collaborated in the writing of the text identified with the feminine gender creating layers and plateaus that undertake the investigation of the social role of motherhood.

We can see this "motherhood" subject in the movie "We need to talk about Kevin". When a situation such as Columbine and Realengo happens, the authorities and the curious ones try to find a reason to explain why this is happening. The killer's past is searched in order to find possible psychological reasons for such an act, this search happened with Adolf Hitler, Ted Bundy and other horrible famous killers. In the movie, the same thing happened with Kevin, the main character. However, what if that reason does not exist? Why did Adolf kill 15 million Jews? Why did Ted Bundy kill 36 women? Why?

After killing many people from his school, Kevin's past starts to be searched and his mom suffers the guilt that comes from his murders. Eva has never wanted to be a mom, but she had to deal with all the violence that comes from that. Did you know Ted Bundy's family had to change their surnames in order not to be killed by families of the people murdered by him? Have you ever realized that our choices can drastically influence the people around us?

Figure 7: Trailer of the Movie "We Need to Talk About Kevin"
Source: CGScholar 2021

The lines of convergence and escape of this new rhizome bring to the table the social pressure that women suffer to procreate and reveal the control that society exerts on women's bodies and lives. Kevin's mother, a successful professional, did not want to have children but was forced to give

in to the pressure and ended up having to live with the consequences of the deaths her son caused. Kevin is represented in the film as a child in constant dissonance with the affections and attempts at closeness that his mother offers. The students, with their choices of verbal and visual text, highlight another characteristic of the decolonial perspective. Unlike modernity, which considers that everything can be explained through rationality, the short story and the rhizomatic intensities that arise from it work on the theme of the inexplicable in certain aspects of our lives. Moreover, the short story and the students' texts develop a discourse on expressions of human behavior that modernity has placed beyond the abyssal lines: feelings, emotions, premonitions, intuitions, ancestry, and other enemies of modern rationality. Consequently, the knowledges and experiences the students can bring to the learning process are not lost when we teach inspired by a methodology of the "sociology of absences" (Santos 2002) that allows the rhizomatic expansion of topics by putting on the table the students' social experiences, perceptions, and learnings that might have been wasted if the students did not perceive the learning space as a place where their experiences matter.

The rhizomatic multimodal text created by the students consists of verbal, visual, and typographical ways of meaning-making that create a narrative that does not develop linearly by using arguments that seek to deepen our understanding of the topic proposed but kind of develop a "nomadic thinking" (Deleuze and Guattari 1995) that spreads as a rhizome by creating lines of intensity with other topics loosely or tightly related to what was initially proposed. Moreover, the decolonial approach to pedagogy created this free space for thinking that allowed the emergence of what otherwise would have turned to be an absence through the deterritorialization of thinking with its lines of intensity that represent the movement that opens up space for free-thinking.

The Rhizomatic Web of Knowledges on CGScholar and its Ecologies

Santos (Jerónimo and Neves 2012), the Portuguese sociologist, is read in the context of this article as a decolonial thinker since his self-characterization as a "rearguard intellectual," or, in other words, as someone who researches the epistemologies of the Global South, seeking to develop a methodology he calls ecology of knowledges, seems to us to be a decolonial gesture. He points out that "The ecology of knowledges in itself compels a mestizo narrative. It compels some hybridity in the ways of narrating scientific work itself" (Jerónimo and Neves 2012, 690).

The different language modalities used in the platform can be imagined as rhizomes that require the construction of meaning in the format of a web of significance mobilizing the students to interact with the realities glimpsed at in the knowledge shared in the classes. The short story "Genesis and Catastrophe—A True Story" was shared with the students with the purpose of bringing literary language into the language class because we believe that this dichotomization of language and literature in school and university curricula creates hierarchizations, giving excessive value to literary and cultured language. However, the goal is not only to resist these classifications but also to instigate the imagination and creativity of the students.

This activity, which is part of the face-to-face classes and makes the students perform oral presentations by retelling and commenting on the literary narratives, had a completely different function in the virtual environment of CGScholar. In the face-to-face class, linearity is created between the reading of the story and the oral presentation of the students, while in the updates, the theme gains supplements (Derrida 1978) or grafts (Ricoeur 1978) that seem to expand the original topic in an unpredictable, rhizomatic, critical, subjectifying, and creative way. Rhizome presents:

> Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order. The linguistic tree on the Chomsky model still begins at a point S and proceeds by dichotomy. On the contrary, not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding...that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status. (Deleuze and Guattari 1995, 7)

In their text design, the students admit that Dahl's short story gave them a lot to think about, and they made many connections that can be interpreted as the lines of intensity in the rhizome metaphor. For Deleuze and Guattari (1995), the dimensions of the plateau grow according to the number of connections made on it. In this way, the lines of intensity led the students to create two illustrations that can also be seen as "connections between semiotic chains" (Deleuze and Guattari 1995, 7). The first illustration shows a pregnant woman with Hitler in her belly on the right side. The choice of colors is significant because the mother's body is painted in black, and on the left side, there is a sentence taken, according to the authors, from the movie "Rosemary's Baby." This sentence has a red background and the word "killers" in the sentence "Even the worst killers have been loved by their mommies" uses a decorative and prominent font and typography. The lines of intensity that expand the plateau of the text in a rhizomatic way relate to language in a decentralizing way creating new dimensions and other registers (Deleuze and Guattari 1995).
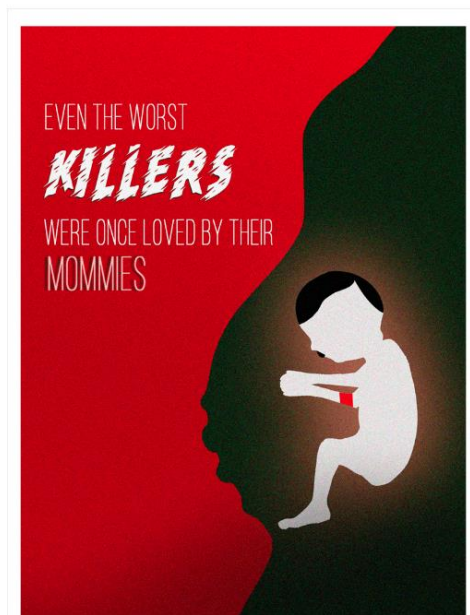

Figure 8: Illustrative Poster of Hitler in His Mother's Belly Produced by the Students
Source: CGScholar 2021

The other "illustration" returns to the theme of the unknown and the unknowable.[6] While the first illustration understands that Hitler was already contained in the embryo, the second depicts him as a cute and sweet baby who no one would imagine would turn into the Hitler whose fury humanity experienced. In the case of the illustration, it represents Hitler in an atypical way as a sad and melancholic old man, unlike the depictions that show him as a commander engaged in some kind of racial cleansing crusade.

It is important to note the potential of a digital platform to generate a rhizomatic form of knowledge. Nevertheless, the rhizomatic structure is not a property inherent on the internet platforms in spite of its having a reticular structure. Thus, it is not only the adoption of a technology that will generate the elaboration of rhizomatic knowledge.

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[6] See: "Reflections on the Unknown and the Unknowable: Crisis and Change;" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX20Z5i3hr4&t=2569s; accessed April 8, 2021.

Figure 9: Poster Produced by the Students
Source: CGScholar 2021

The cartography of the rhizome is transformed with the comments to the updates that create freely even more intensities that relate to the initiative of the update. Thus, the regime of signs involved in the elaboration of the rhizome activates the construction of senses that stimulate the formation of new connections through lines of intensity. One of the comments, among the many that this update generated, creates a plateau that, on the one hand, repeats the pattern of the relationship of a female figure with a "monster" but, on the other hand, introduces another node—the love between brothers. The student narrates an episode of a documentary police series about John Wayne Gacy, a serial killer known as the Killer Clown, convicted in the 1980s of murdering at least thirty-three teenagers. The episode, which the student brings up in her narrative (Figure 10), focused on the killer's sister and her feelings about the monstrosities her brother had committed. On the last day before his death sentence was carried out, she visited him in prison; she still could not look into his eyes and see him as a serial killer even though he had confessed his crimes to her. When she left the prison building, there was a crowd outside shouting horrible things at her, as if she had committed the crimes herself. She said, "I love John as my brother, not my serial killer brother." The student closes the narrative of the comment with the sentence: "Which I think fits perfectly into our discussion," thus reaffirming the lines of intensity that loosely connect this node to the rest of the rhizome:
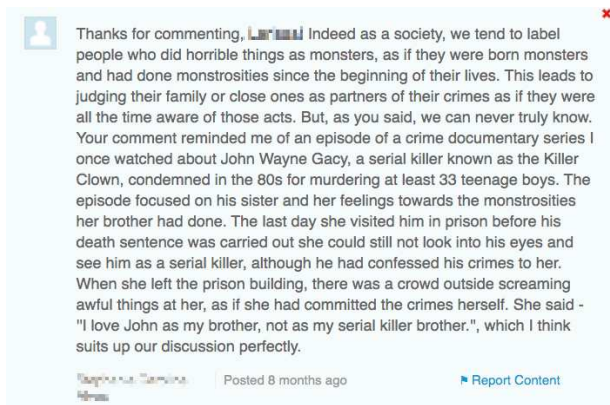
Figure 10: Comment on Update
Source: CGScholar 2021

(In)concluding Words: Building Networks of Shared Knowledge

In this article, we try to show—in a theoretical and practical way—some decolonial practices developed on the CGScholar platform that led some of the students to a subjectification within a context of "qualified freedom" (Biesta 2020). These subjects have the potential to develop, within the educational context that allows this qualified freedom, an existence that attempts to move away from modern principles of individualism and entrepreneurship to exist by establishing "an 'intimacy' between the curricular knowledge fundamental to students and the social experience they have as individuals" (Freire 1996, 30).

> This is never an existence just with and for ourselves, but always an existence in and with the world. An existence with human beings and other living creatures and "in" a physical environment that is not a simple backdrop, a context in which we act, but rather a complex network through which we act; a network, moreover, that sustains and nurtures us. (Biesta 2020, 95–96)

The students' productions were published, read, and discussed in the CGScholar community, a process that turned the students into co-authors of the course in the sense of Cope and Kalantzis (2017). This is only possible when the teacher's focus is not the transmission of content but the articulation of interactions, analysis of the students' productions, and interlocution.

It is interesting to note that the digital allows the emergence of a decolonial pedagogy by breaking with the disciplinary agencies of traditional education. Our research contributes to the literature on the affordances of educational platforms as well as on the development of pedagogical practices in language education that do not repeat traditional approaches in education but attempt to explore the knowledges the students can potentially bring to the learning processes since the simple adoption of technology does not guarantee a change in the social practice of learning. For this, it is fundamental that teachers and students resignify their identities and deconstruct representations that are socially and traditionally attributed to them.

Undoubtedly, in these first experiences in this virtual environment, not all students actively participated in the platform throughout the semester. Two students, for example, accessed CGScholar for the first time during the last week of the course to post individual updates. Moreover, the comments posted by these two students only praised the posts of their classmates without adding other knowledge or perspectives. We understand that this type of participation, just for the record, is a residue of the expected behavior in the traditional classroom, where the student's point of view only counts when it confirms or reinforces a teacher's knowledge, or in

the case of comments on classmates' updates, the knowledge initiated by classmates. This residue of modern learning processes limits the possibility of subjectification of students and of 'qualified' freedom to assume the responsibility of becoming subjects through active participation in the knowledge constructed by the community. Again, to change this pattern, it is necessary to work with students on the assumptions that underlie these positions while keeping in mind the constant valorization of the diversity of points of view. Students need to be encouraged to express their different views. They need to recognize that their point of view will contribute to the enrichment of the work of their peers.

It was also noted that students who are still learning to express themselves in English had support in the group with which they collaborated despite sometimes taking on smaller parts within the podcasts, for example. Anyway, it is not only in the digital environment that students have the opportunity to collaborate. In face-to-face teaching, students form groups and give shared oral presentations about short stories they read and language issues they research through YouTube videos. The novelty was the multimodal collaborative writing of the updates that, along with the comments, created rhizomes that expanded our knowledge through their socialization on the platform. Finally, we are not telling a success story with a happy ending here but a narrative of the pedagogical risks we took in the sudden change to remote learning during the pandemic, with the loosening of the disciplinary function of education and the formation of 'qualified' subjectifications that are able to develop with responsibility their freedom to speak and act.

Acknowledgment

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