

“To Recognize the Narrow Boundaries”

Teachers and Adolescents in bell hooks’ Political Education

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Following a brief analysis of the Italian reception of bell hooks’ works, the paper will examine how the author’s critical reflections could provide potential responses to contemporary challenges in today’s increasingly multicultural and complex secondary school contexts. Building on hooks’ vision of the classroom as a radical space of possibility and of education as the practice of freedom, the militant foundations of her proposal will foreground the ethical and political commitment that engaged pedagogy demands to counter the transmission of a single norm of thought and experience.

Keywords: engaged pedagogy, bell hooks, intersectional studies, critical thinking, intercultural education.

“Riconoscere gli stretti confini”. Insegnanti e adolescenti nell’educazione politica di bell hooks

Dopo una breve analisi della ricezione italiana delle opere di bell hooks, l’articolo esaminerà come le riflessioni critiche dell’autrice possano offrire potenziali risposte alle sfide contemporanee negli odierni contesti scolastici secondari sempre più multiculturali e complessi. Muovendo dalla visione di hooks della classe come spazio radicale di possibilità e dell’educazione come pratica di libertà, le fondamenta militanti della sua proposta metteranno in primo piano l’impegno etico e politico richiesto dalla pedagogia impegnata per contrastare la trasmissione di un’unica norma di pensiero e di esperienza.

Parole chiave: pedagogia impegnata, bell hooks, studi intersezionali, pensiero critico, educazione interculturale.

Education as the practice of freedom is not just about liberatory knowledge, it's about a liberatory practice in the classroom.

(hooks, 1994)

bell hooks and the Italian Reception: Cultural and Educational Implications

Since the Italian publication of the first volume of her trilogy on education, *Insegnare a trasgredire: L'educazione come pratica della libertà* in 2020, along with the publication of *Elogio del margine. Scrivere al buio* in the same year, the voice of bell hooks has started to gain widespread success and recognition also among the Italian public. However, it is worth noticing that her name first entered the Italian cultural landscape in 1998 with the publication of *Elogio del margine: Razza, sesso e mercato culturale* and *Scrivere al buio: Maria Nadotti intervista bell hooks*. As Maria Nadotti observes, the publishing history of bell hooks reveals a gap of almost twenty-five years between the first Italian titles and 2020 (Nadotti, 2023). In light of this, reflecting on the Italian reception of hooks' ideas, Nadotti suggests that the cultural and political success of her philosophy testifies to a renewed interest in intersectionality, critical pedagogy, antiracism and cultural representations. The Italian writer and translator relates this phenomenon to a cultural shift marked by a growing awareness of the nation's evolving identity (*ibidem*). In other words, the success of bell hooks' ideas on social justice, love, intersectionality and critical education seems to reflect the growing diversity of the country as well as the need for a more complex and inclusive framework to address it.

Indeed, her contributions to pedagogy offer original insights into contemporary cultural and educational challenges, particularly in light of the increasing heterogeneity of today's educational contexts (Fiorucci, 2020). This paper will therefore attempt to investigate hooks' engaged pedagogy, demonstrating how it can inspire and guide praxis on issues of contemporary relevance in secondary school contexts. These include the role of education in an increasingly multicultural and complex society, the significance of

adopting an intersectional perspective in processes of inclusion and the valorization of differences, and, central among these, the development of critical thinking – a crucial topic for a school “conceived as a democratic community where hierarchical relationships are replaced by relationships based on free discussion and democratic deliberation” (Baldacci, 2019, p. 235)¹.

A critical analysis of these themes is particularly significant in secondary educational contexts, which, as pointed out by Elena Madrussan, risk becoming self-referential by rigidly adhering to established practices, ultimately losing sight of the contingent realities of the present day. Far from promoting emancipation and change, such an approach results in the perpetuation of existing social structures, thus neglecting both the ethical and intellectual horizon of teaching and the emancipatory, transformative purpose of education and culture (Madrussan, 2022, p. 29). From this perspective, hooks’ engaged pedagogy appears to be a valid response to “concerning phenomena such as the marginalization of culture from the existential horizon of many adolescents, the disaffection with learning and the contrast between school experience and lived life” (*ivi*, p. 27). By bridging theory and embodied experience, or “the will to know with the will to become” (hooks, 1994, p. 19), her vision foregrounds the formative and liberatory function of culture and education as radical spaces of possibility and collective meaning-making.

To counter what hooks defines “white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy”² (*ivi*, p. 26) – a system of interlocking forms of oppression resulting in racism, sexism, class exploitation and imperialism – rooted in hierarchical structures and dualistic, exclusionary thinking, it is essential, in her view, to cultivate an embodied, complex and pluralistic form of knowledge. In this regard, integrating mind and body, thought and emotion, intellect and lived experience becomes an act of resistance and transgression that opens up possibilities for emancipation and the development of critical thinking.

As in Paulo Freire, hooks’ theory is praxis-oriented; conceived as the integration of “action and reflection upon the world in order to change it” (*ivi*, p. 14), it is anchored in the ethical dimension of responsibility, which reclaims for the subject the freedom to choose and, consequently, the responsibility to become what one truly is. Her teaching trilogy (hooks, 1994; 2003; 2010)

¹ All translations from Italian are my own.

² The expression often recurs in hooks’ writings as it is the theoretical foundation of her critical analysis. This construct enables her to convey the interconnectedness of different forms of domination that concurrently impact the complexity of human experience.

stems in fact from her commitment to integrating theoretical work with educational practice, emphasizing the intellectual and political responsibility of an engaged pedagogy aimed at fostering learning communities grounded in care, radical openness and social justice.

The creation of such communities represents both the ultimate purpose of transformative pedagogy and a necessary condition for its authentic implementation. From this perspective, a brief analysis of the meaning and the historical and political derivation of hooks' idea of community may prove useful in revealing the militant³ foundation that informs her vision and practice, thus drawing attention to her critical examination of the ethical and political dimensions of multicultural learning contexts. This initial investigation will provide a lens through which to reflect on educational responsibilities in relation to secondary schools, as well as on the cultural and political role of education.

On Radical Openness and Conflict: Reimagining Relationships Within and Beyond the Classroom

In her teaching trilogy, the author offers a critical analysis of the characteristics and conceptual frameworks that shape the learning community, often referred to as “beloved community” or “community of care” – or, rather, as pointed out by Ferrari, hooks provides a critique of what community “should not be if it wants to come to terms with difference and accept conflict as its constitutive character” (Ferrari, 2023, p. 35). This vision, much like hooks' philosophy of education, finds its roots in feminist thought and practice, in the antiracist struggles of the civil rights movement and her experience in segregated schools in the Jim Crow South. In particular, the common theme of these experiences and theories centers on an ethics of love and care, which carries a political significance and is oriented towards awareness, self-recovery and self-actualization as part of a process of decolonization. As

³ As pointed out by Bocci and De Castro, the concept of militancy, “often invoked to denote a way of being in and thinking about pedagogy”, perfectly aligns with bell hooks' life and philosophy. Far from denoting affiliation with specific movements or organizations, it is understood as an authentic engagement with social realities that bridges theory and praxis. It embodies “the ability to inhabit – dialectically but without schism – thought and action” within educational and social contexts (Bocci, De Castro, 2022).

hooks maintains, the core principle of liberatory education is the integration of “the will to know with the will to become” (hooks, 1994, p. 19), a concept she draws from Paulo Freire’s conscientization⁴, while endowing his theory with an embodied dimension of teaching and learning informed by feminist theory and practice.

A major influence and point of reference for her pedagogy comes, in fact, from Women’s Studies courses at university, where the interdependent and dialectical nature of theory and practice, knowledge and experience, was emphasized. “Feminist education for critical consciousness is rooted in the assumption that knowledge and critical thought done in the classroom should inform our habits of being and ways of living outside the classroom” (*ivi*, p. 194). This approach – derived from the second-wave feminist principle that “the personal is political” (Hanisch, 1969) – sought to situate individual women’s experience within a broader system of power relations, engaging in consciousness-raising groups aimed at recognizing and understanding lived experiences of oppression, with the purpose of critically intervening to transform one’s condition, always with a view towards collective liberation. Self-recovery and self-actualization were thus not only individual needs, but necessary collective, and therefore political, acts of resistance to oppression. Consequently, Women’s Studies classes emphasized the profound connection between knowledge, theory and lived experience, making theory a liberatory practice and a means of both personal and social transformation – all the more essential for marginalized groups.

However, “theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end” (hooks, 1994, p. 61). In other words, theory achieves this aim when it is oriented towards self-definition in relation to the other, fostering an understanding of the self-world relationship and our place in the world. Thus, knowledge acquires meaning in terms of both individual and collective freedom and responsibility when a connection between theory and practice, knowledge and existence, is established.

If applied to educational contexts, this awareness calls for a critical and dialectical engagement with the cultural content of education as well as with the community members. Nonetheless, to create the conditions for this to

⁴ On Freire’s influence on hooks’ pedagogy, as well as on her own process of subjectivation and creation of “an identity in resistance” see the chapter “Paulo Freire” (hooks, 1994, pp. 45-58).

occur, a shared and collective vision of the classroom is essential: one that frames it as a space of mutual commitment where every voice is valued and each individual's presence is acknowledged. Far from being a site of social reproduction, school and education, thus conceived, become spaces where alternative ways of being in relation can be imagined, that is, spaces for the construction of subjective and social meanings where everyone can find their voice. In this respect, community does not emerge from a "pseudosentimental idea" of being together in our differences (Brosi, hooks, 2012, p. 78), but rather from practice and mutual commitment – from responsible and intentional acts aimed at "making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute" (hooks, 1994, p. 39).

As Ferrari notes, hooks' concept of community is "both historical and ideal in nature": on the one hand, it is rooted in the feminist, Black communities and in the learning community in segregated schools, on the other, it is "charged with political imagination, where community is not a closed form but a way of being in the world in relation" (Ferrari, 2023, p. 36). Community, therefore, is the result of what she calls "radical openness": that is, "a useful standpoint to approach the world of difference and otherness" (hooks, 2013, p. 148), "the will to explore different perspectives" and "reconsider long-standing beliefs" (hooks, 2003, pp. 48, 110). Drawing also on Martin Luther King Jr.'s definition of the *beloved community* (Brosi, hooks, 2012, p. 76), hooks envisions a community of care committed to imagining and practicing alternative ways of being "together in our difference" (*ivi*, p. 82), transcending forms of domination to create spaces for education as the practice of freedom.

Nevertheless, being together in our difference "requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination" (hooks, 2003, p. 36). Far from a naive and politically neutral vision of the classroom as a heterogeneous community where diverse identities and subjectivities meet harmoniously, hooks underscores the necessity of taking into account students' individual experiences and the relationships that develop within the educational context, as well as the power dynamics, inequalities and privileges that emerge from the varied identities and personal histories. Here, the intersectional perspective adopted in her feminist critique and applied to the teaching practice proves to be an indispensable interpretive key. It enables a deeper understanding of the concreteness and complexity of learners' existential experiences, as

it underlines how subjective experience results from a plurality of differences, such as gender, race, class and background, as well as how our representations of the other influence disciplinary views, relationships and educational practices. Similarly, Davide Zoletto's recent works have demonstrated how an intersectional perspective allows for a more complex pedagogical analysis of the formation of individual and collective subjectivities, with an awareness of the micro- and macro-power relations that inform diversity within educational contexts, determining asymmetries of power and access to cultural resources (Zoletto, 2023a; 2023b). In other words, the idea of community does not stem from an abstract principle of equality but emerges as the result of a shared commitment to radical openness, that is, an intentional process grounded in dialogue, the recognition of the other in their singularity and irreducibility, and the exercise of critical thinking aimed at deconstructing prejudiced knowledge, stereotypes and structures of domination. Hence, the community is defined by and through a collective effort to identify and construct shared values and aspirations⁵. Here, the recognition of the value of each individual voice and contribution to the learning process is fundamental for fostering trust, subjective responsibility and accountability in adopting consistent behavior and actions towards others within the relationship⁶. At the same time, hooks warns against the dangers of overlooking the political implications and potential conflicts inherent in multicultural education. By way of example, her experience of the transition from segregated to integrated schools appears significant. In fact, while the learning communities of the segregated schools in

⁵ "When I enter the classroom at the beginning of the semester the weight is on me to establish that our purpose is to be, for however brief a time, a community of learners *together*. It positions me as a learner. But I'm also not suggesting that I don't have more power. And I'm not trying to say we're all equal here. I'm trying to say that we are all equal here to the extent that we are equally committed to creating a learning context" (hooks, 1994, p. 153).

⁶ It is worth mentioning here Dusi's analysis of the central role of recognition in identity construction. Understood as "a relational posture" – namely, an intentional way of engaging in relationships aimed at perceiving the other in their singularity and uniqueness – recognition plays a pivotal role in educational processes. Besides the ethical dimension of responsibility to which recognition, as a form of love and justice, calls for, the author highlights its ontological significance. In this sense, the recognition of the other is fundamental for individuals to become who they are; it ontologically constitutes them as alterity: as autonomous and capable subjects. Furthermore, echoing Freire's conscientization, recognition becomes a socio-political demand: a struggle for the liberation of the subject, who reappropriates himself and the world, claiming his rights. (Dusi, 2017).

the Jim Crow South were characterized by an ethics of love and care aimed at affirming healthy self-esteem in students (hooks, 2003, p. 79) – thus “enacting a revolutionary pedagogy of resistance that was profoundly anticolonial” and “political, because it was rooted in antiracist struggle” (hooks, 1994, p. 2) – in desegregated schools “knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle” (*ivi*, p. 3). Moreover, the burden of social integration was placed exclusively on black children, with no critical questioning of the discriminatory assumptions underlying the implemented measures. Consequently, Ferrari points out that “even more than the differentiated entrances for Blacks and whites, what restored racial hierarchy was the way the educational institution denied the embodied antagonism and conflictuality of difference” (Ferrari, 2023, p. 30). In light of this, bell hooks calls for the reconceptualization of conflict as an intrinsic and crucial element of the democratic learning process, as a generative place and means of expressing diversity. As Benasayag reminds us, it is the absence or suppression of conflict that gives rise to the “clash of civilizations”, leading to violent confrontations between closed and rigidly defined identity-based cultures. In contrast, conflict can act as a drive for change and transformation, expressing the complex, plural, dynamic and contradictory nature that characterizes both individuals and society (Madrusan, Ed., 2019, p. 29; Benasayag, Del Rey, 2007). As also observed by Ferrari (Ferrari, 2023), this outlook involves, in turn, a reconsideration of our assumptions about the ideal learning environment, often conceived as a safe, neutral space devoid of conflict (hooks, 1994). Instead, by acknowledging the potential tensions inherent in the coexistence of diverse perspectives, identities and experiences, and by fostering critical exchange and constructive dissent, the focus shifts to issues of reciprocity, along with the mutual as well as individual commitment and responsibility that being part of a community entails. The recognition of diversity and conflict as “key element of formative intervention” (Erbetta, Ed., 2010, p. 10) of education for sociality and critical thinking is therefore particularly relevant in secondary school, which represents an opportunity for adolescents to form subjectivity and confront the historical, social and cultural transformations and complexities of our time.

To re-appropriate conflict as a form of knowledge and relationship in order to redefine the central problem of community – “how to be together in our difference” – implies rethinking the latter not as a solution

but as a problem to which a political answer must be continually given (Ferrari, 2023, p. 37).

Thus, learning and the classroom conceived as communal spaces for dialogue, critical exchange and co-construction of meanings embody a dynamic and often uncomfortable process of negotiation, paradigm shifts and the transgression of hierarchies and entrenched sociocultural boundaries. To this end, practicing radical openness entails recognizing “different ‘cultural codes’”, that is, “to learn to accept different ways of knowing, new epistemologies, in the multicultural setting” (hooks, 1994, p. 41). As hooks suggests, “the engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself” (*ivi*, p. 11), thus highlighting the formative potential of an intentional educational relationship as a transformative site where individuals may evolve within a horizon of possibility through meaningful contact with the other. In these terms, education emerges as the practice of freedom – a radical act that enables social and cultural transgressions: “a movement against and beyond boundaries” (*ivi*, p. 12) that opens existential possibilities for students to transcend the constraints of their sociocultural conditions.

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom (*ivi*, p. 207).

Knowledge and Learning as Transgression

At the heart of hooks’ teaching trilogy lies a vision of the classroom and learning as radical spaces of possibility that enable a movement beyond, a disruption or dislocation resonating with one of the meanings of the word education, derived from the Latin *educere*. In the sense attributed by Riccardo Massa, it refers to diverting, leading away from conventional routes or into Heidegger’s *Lichtung* (Massa, 1997, p. 26). Similarly, Erbetta’s definition of places of formation as places of crisis (Erbetta, 1994) resonates with hooks’ words on education:

I have sought teachers in all areas of my life who would challenge me beyond what I might select for myself, and in and through that challenge allow me a space of radical openness where I am truly free to choose—able to learn and grow without limits (hooks, 1994, p. 207).

However, the transgression of conventional boundaries and habits of being is often accompanied by fear and exposure to vulnerability. Along these lines hooks recounts her first experience with education as the practice of freedom juxtaposing the words “ecstasy”, “pleasure” and “danger”, “risk”: “to be changed by ideas was pure pleasure. But to learn ideas that ran counter to values and beliefs learned at home was to place oneself at risk, to enter the danger zone” (*ivi*, p. 3). Describing the tension between transgression and normativity, she underlines the discomfort and disorientation that education as the practice of freedom can cause, as well as the formative, emancipatory possibilities it discloses. “Home was the place where I was forced to conform to someone else’s image of who and what I should be. School was the place where I could forget that self and, through ideas, reinvent myself” (*ibidem*).

In this perspective, engaged pedagogy highlights the connection between education, teaching and questions of freedom and emancipation, bringing to the forefront the intellectual, cultural and political commitment they call for to counter the transmission, even implicit, of a single norm of thought and experience. The result is a “mutually illuminating interplay of anti-colonial, critical and feminist pedagogies” (*ivi*, p. 10), enriched by some key concepts of Buddhism, particularly Thích Nhất Hạnh’s engaged Buddhism (*ivi*, pp. 14, 150), from which hooks draws upon for the articulation of a holistic knowledge that sets out to bridge the gap between theory and practice, integrating “the will to know with the will to become” (*ivi*, p. 19) and the commitment to social justice.

As the author explains, “engaged is a great way to talk about liberatory classroom practice. It invites us always to be in the present, to remember that the classroom is never the same” (*ivi*, p. 158). On the one hand, this draws attention to the present moment as a space of meaning and action, countering an instrumental view of learning solely oriented toward the future and concerned with the expendability of degrees and certificates; on the other hand, “hooks’ writings remind us that critical pedagogy is ultimately a *dialectical* practice prompted by the concrete realities that inform the specificity of human experience” (Davidson, Yancy, Eds., 2009, p. 19). In this respect,

a liberatory teaching practice does not remove the bodies from educational settings; rather, it emphasizes the recognition of the emotional presence and wholeness of both students and teachers, taking into account the pedagogical implications this has for both the intersubjective and cultural relation.

Primarily concerned with deconstructing depository education and forms of domination, an underlying idea in hooks' engaged pedagogy is that dismantling the vertical transmission of knowledge requires rethinking both the embodied presence of teachers and students and the concept of the classroom as an aseptic, neutral space. From this perspective, "the traditional notion that only the professor is responsible for classroom dynamics" (hooks, 1994, p. 8) prevents recognition of the collective effort required to sustain a learning community, thereby hindering the dimensions of responsibility and reciprocity (Bertolini, 1988/2021) that characterize education. On the other hand, the removal of bodies in the classroom leads to the erasure of differences; therefore, rethinking "the way power has been traditionally orchestrated in the classroom, denying subjectivity to some groups and according it to others" (hooks, 1994, p. 139), entails a deeper understanding of power relations and dynamics of marginalization or essentialization reproduced in educational contexts. To this end, the theoretical and analytical framework of intersectionality allows for the consideration of both the role played by the simultaneous intersection of race, gender and class in processes of participation and exclusion, and for "interrogating biases in curricula that reinscribe system of domination" (*ivi*, p. 10). Attention to these dynamics is all the more crucial when dealing with heterogeneous learning environments. As hooks herself maintains:

Multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom. It forces us all to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind (*ivi*, p. 44).

In light of this, the key to an educational practice grounded in the awareness of its formative and emancipatory purpose, as well as its cultural-political significance, lies in the commitment to a decentered and anti-dogmatic approach, which entails continuous reflection on one's intersubjective and cultural practices, as well as the motivations and objectives that sustain them. Likewise, Zoletto stresses the contemporary relevance of a "postcolonial re-

flexivity” in educational research within contexts of sociocultural diversity (Zoletto, 2023). This approach draws attention to the ethical and performative aspects of teaching, as remarked by Bianchi:

Teaching and educating are performative acts charged with ethical significance and requiring an awareness of being embedded within a network of representational systems, legacies, traditions and life experiences capable of staging one’s value system and personal and professional references (Bianchi, Ed., 2024, p. 78).

In addition, fostering reflection on the embodied presence of students and teachers in the classroom enhances awareness of the interplay between learning, disciplinary content and overall life experiences. While the dualism of Western metaphysical thought reinforces the separation of mind and body, “encouraging teachers and students to see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors” (hooks, 1994, p. 16) – thus conveying a neutral and objective idea of knowledge – engaged pedagogy highlights the pivotal role of education in shaping students’ personalities and identities. In this respect, an embodied model of knowledge emphasizes the role of lived experience as a critical means of knowing for understanding oneself, the world, and relating to otherness, thereby revealing the relationship between educational experience and that of everyday life and, with it, how theory and practice inform each other. Experience therefore plays an important role in the classroom as it is a form of knowledge that students can articulate, expressing diversity and thus countering a monolithic conception of identity.

With this in mind, culture – conceived as an opportunity for transformation and meaning rather than as a repository of notions or an inescapable condition determining our existence – becomes a space for imagining possible futures, a space for articulating one’s subjectivity and desires by questioning unconscious conditioning and familial upbringing, thereby taking responsibility for one’s own freedom: this is the meaning of theory as “liberatory practice” and “healing place” (*ivi*, pp. 59-75) in hooks’ philosophy. “When students are taught this, they can experience learning as a whole process rather than a restrictive practice that disconnects and alienates them from the world” (hooks, 2003, p. 44). In this regard, hooks’ considerations may also prove to be a useful theoretical framework for developing, as suggested by Massimiliano Tarozzi, an education of embodied subjectivity,

rooted, from a phenomenological-existential point of view, in the awareness of the central role of lived experience in the formation of subjectivity. (Madrussan, Ed., 2019).

Engaged pedagogy thus highlights the need to rethink the paradigms of knowledge transmission, anchoring knowledge and learning to the diverse experiences of adolescents in order to make explicit the liberatory function of theory, understood not only as a tool to make sense of everyday life, but also to intervene to shape the course of one's existence – and, in turn, the surrounding reality. Education, seen this way, rather than a means for social assimilation, becomes the privileged context for the development of critical thinking – “the place where visions of theory and praxis come together” (hooks, 2010, p. 7). Critical thinking, in this context, is not confined to a purely intellectual exercise; instead, it is a key component of a participatory educational project. As Baldacci underlines, in line with hooks' perspective, “a comprehensive formation of citizens must connect critical capacity with education for ethical and social commitment”; otherwise, the risk is the formation of individuals who are technically skilled but politically disengaged – conforming to the market's logic and imperatives – or excessively critical yet disillusioned, and thus passive citizens (Baldacci, 2019, p. 236). Hence, hooks' reflections offer an alternative to the commodification of knowledge and learning in today's knowledge-based globalized economy, putting forward a vision that reclaims education as a transgressive and political act that enables adolescents to understand and, at the same time, to transcend the limits of their existential situation, and with it the limits of identity, the social constructs and hierarchies of power that structure differences, determining which identities and subjectivities have value and are entitled to rights (Giachery, 2016). By questioning these biases, which sustain and perpetuate systems of domination, it is possible to work on deconstructing both the “white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” and the idea of universality of experience, thus restoring value and meaning to diverse life experiences.

We need education that addresses the world's diversity. More than ever before, students need to learn from unbiased perspectives, be they conservative or radical. More than ever before, students and teachers need to fully understand differences of nationality, race, sex, class, and sexuality if we are to create ways of knowing that reinforce education as the practice of freedom (hooks, 2010, p. 110).

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