

AMEFRICANITY AS A POLITICAL, EPISTEMIC AND AESTHETIC CATEGORY

AMEFRICANIDADE COMO CATEGORIA POLÍTICA, EPISTÊMICA E ESTÉTICA

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes Amefricanity as a political, epistemic, and aesthetic category based on the work of Lélia Gonzalez. Methodologically, it is a qualitative, theoretical-bibliographic, and interpretative study. The investigation is grounded in the conceptual analysis of Gonzalez's intellectual production, in dialogue with debates on the coloniality of power, the geopolitics of knowledge, racism, whitening, mestizaje, and the myth of racial democracy. Language is highlighted as a field of dispute, especially through the notion of pretuguês, as well as the recognition of artistic, religious, and literary practices as living archives of the diaspora. It is concluded that Amefricanity remains relevant as an analytical key for interpreting inequalities, resistances, and cultural productions in the Global South.

KEYWORDS: Amefricanity. Coloniality of power. Epistemologies of the South. Black feminism. Amefrican aesthetics.

RESUMO: Este artigo analisa a Amefricanidade como categoria política, epistêmica e estética a partir da obra de Lélia Gonzalez. Metodologicamente, trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, teórico-bibliográfica e interpretativa. A investigação fundamenta-se na análise conceitual da produção intelectual de Gonzalez, em diálogo com debates sobre colonialidade do poder, geopolítica do conhecimento, racismo, branqueamento, mestiçagem e mito da democracia racial. Destaca-se a linguagem como campo de disputa, especialmente por meio da noção de pretuguês, bem como o reconhecimento de práticas artísticas, religiosas e literárias como arquivos vivos da diáspora. Conclui-se que a Amefricanidade permanece atual como chave analítica para interpretar desigualdades, resistências e produções culturais no Sul Global.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Amefricanidade. Colonialidade do poder. Epistemologias do Sul. Feminismo negro. Estética amefricana.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza la Amefricanidad como categoría política, epistémica y estética a partir de la obra de Lélia Gonzalez. Metodológicamente, se trata de una investigación cualitativa, teórico-bibliográfica e interpretativa. La investigación se fundamenta en el análisis conceptual de la producción intelectual de Gonzalez, en diálogo con debates sobre colonialidad del poder, geopolítica del conocimiento, racismo, blanqueamiento, mestizaje y mito de la democracia racial. Se destaca el lenguaje como campo de disputa, especialmente por medio de la noción de pretuguês, así como el reconocimiento de prácticas artísticas, religiosas y literarias como archivos vivos de la diáspora. Se concluye que la Amefricanidad permanece vigente como clave analítica para interpretar desigualdades, resistencias y producciones culturales en el Sur Global.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Amefricanidad. Colonialidad del poder. Epistemologías del Sur. Feminismo negro. Estética amefricana.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Amefricanity*, developed by Lélia Gonzalez beginning in the 1980s, constitutes one of the most profound and consistent formulations of Latin American Black thought, both in terms of critiquing Eurocentric epistemologies and in terms of reconfiguring the analytical categories that guide reflections on race, gender, culture, and politics in the Americas (Gonzalez, 1988). In proposing this notion, Gonzalez not only exposes the conceptual limitations of the term *Latin America*, whose semantic framework prioritizes European colonial heritage and systematically erases Black and Indigenous presence, but also shifts the interpretive focus of continental history toward the diasporic and colonial experience shared by people of African descent and Amerindians, the Indigenous peoples native to the Americas.

This is a theoretical and political movement that breaks with the logic of uncritically importing categories produced in the Global North and affirms the need to conceptualize the *Amefrican* reality based on its own historical, linguistic, and cultural processes.

In this sense, *Amefricanity* does not function as a mere cultural identity, but as an analytical category that highlights the continuities of coloniality, the mechanisms of whitening in national narratives, and the ways in which racism structures both the social imagination and the production of knowledge in American societies (Gonzalez, 1988). Lélia Gonzalez coined the term *Amefricanity* in the 1980s as a critical response to the limitations of the colonial and Eurocentric categories that dominated explanations of societies in the Americas. She observed that concepts such as *Latin America* reproduced a narrative that erased the historical, cultural, and political centrality of African and Indigenous populations on the continent (Gonzalez, 1988). *Amefricanity* emerges as a political-cultural category that realigns identity and analytical understanding, placing the experience of the African diaspora and its connections with Indigenous peoples at the center of the social and historical explanation of the Americas. The goal was to create a perspective that would foster solidarity and recognition among Black and Amerindian subjects in the Americas, and not merely within national boundaries, shifting the focus from an identity authorized by the colonizer to one constructed from the experiences of the diaspora and colonial resistance (Gonzalez, 1988).

This formulation has a significant impact on debates in the Global South for several reasons. First, because it proposes an epistemological shift that challenges the hierarchies of knowledge inherited from the Global North, placing at the center of theoretical production those subjects historically marginalized by colonialism, racism, and imperialism. By valuing Afro-descendant and Indigenous knowledge as legitimate sources of knowledge, *Amefricanity*

contributes to the decolonization of knowledge and to the construction of epistemologies that break with the hegemonic categories imported from the imperial center (Gonzalez, 1988).

As a political, epistemic, and cultural category, *Amefricanity* fosters practices of resistance that bring together anti-racist and feminist struggles, as well as struggles for the recognition of historically subalternized identities on the American continent. This interconnection allows us to understand that race, gender, class, culture, and territory do not operate in isolation, but intersect in the production of inequalities and in forms of social resistance. This perspective becomes especially relevant in the Global South, understood not only as a geographic location but as a historical field marked by colonial experience, economic exploitation, the racialization of bodies, and the delegitimization of non-Eurocentric knowledge. In this context, the coloniality of power manifests itself in persistent forms of structural racism, social inequality, cultural erasure, and the production of subordinated subjectivities. By bringing together Black, Indigenous, diasporic, and popular experiences from the Americas, *Amefricanity* offers an analytical lens for understanding the persistence of coloniality in institutions, discourses, and social practices, while also highlighting the possibilities for challenging it through the resistances, memories, languages, and knowledge produced by oppressed populations (Gonzalez, 1988).

In this vein, by questioning the primacy of national narratives and dominant epistemologies, *Amefricanity* inspires theoretical and political projects that seek to reconfigure the Global South as a space for the production of knowledge and emancipatory political practices, challenging the epistemological centrality of the North and promoting more horizontal intellectual and political exchanges among the peoples of the South.

This article discusses *Amefricanity* as a political, epistemic, and aesthetic category, arguing that Gonzalez's proposal operates in an integrated manner across these three dimensions. On the political level, *Amefricanity* constitutes a direct critique of the coloniality of power and of national narratives that systematically erase Black and Indigenous populations, challenging the universality of modern projects of nationhood and citizenship. On the epistemic level, it represents a radical shift in the site of knowledge production, which challenges the academic canon and asserts the legitimacy of knowledge produced by Black women, Indigenous peoples, and historically subalternized subjects, anticipating central debates in Latin American decolonial thought and Black feminism.

On the aesthetic-cultural level, *Amefricanity* allows us to understand linguistic, bodily, religious, and artistic practices as forms of symbolic elaboration of the colonial and diasporic

experience, bringing to light cosmologies and ways of being that have historically been marginalized. Throughout the text, a critical dialogue is established with authors in the fields of decolonial studies, Black feminism, and contemporary works that revisit and update *Amefricanity* as a fundamental analytical framework for thinking about struggles for recognition, the production of knowledge, and a life of fulfillment in the Americas.

FORMULATIONS OF AMEFRICANITY BASED ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LÉLIA GONZALEZ

Lélia Gonzalez formulates the concept of *Amefricanity* through a dual critical approach that consistently runs through her intellectual work. On the one hand, she develops an immanent critique of the myth of Brazilian racial democracy, highlighting its ideological functions in the naturalization of racial, gender, and class inequalities, as well as in the construction of a conciliatory image of the nation that obscures the structural violence of racism (Gonzalez, 1983). On the other hand, he rejects the universalization of North Atlantic experiences as a theoretical framework for interpreting the social formations of the Global South, challenging the centrality of analytical models that elevate European and U.S. trajectories to the status of an explanatory norm.

In this shift, Gonzalez situates Brazil within a broader map of the colonial relations that structure the Americas, bringing Brazilian Black and Indigenous experiences closer to those of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States, without, however, suppressing their historical, linguistic, and cultural specificities. This theoretical framework makes it possible to understand Brazilian racism not as an exception or anomaly, but as an expression of a shared colonial matrix, traversed by distinct processes of domination, forced miscegenation, silencing, and resistance, articulating race, gender, and class as inseparable dimensions of the Amefrican social experience.

Amefricanity, in this sense, refers to the historical and cultural experience of people of African descent and Amerindians in the Americas as a relational and constantly contested process, marked simultaneously by colonial violence, strategies of resistance, and ongoing practices of reinventing social life (Gonzalez, 1988). Far from functioning as an essentialized or homogeneous identity, the category emphasizes the centrality of the African diaspora in the formation of the continent, the persistence of coloniality as a structure of power, knowledge, and subjectivity, and the political, cultural, and symbolic agency of Black and Indigenous

people in the production of language, religiosity, aesthetics, and forms of collective organization.

By shifting the term Latin America to *América Ladina* or *Amefricanity*, Gonzalez (1988) highlights the racist and patriarchal character inherent in the term Latin itself, historically associated with the white elites who were the heirs of Iberian colonization, and proposes an alternative principle of naming grounded in the subjects who were systematically produced as others within colonial modernity. This is, therefore, a profoundly political and epistemic gesture, for naming the continent from the perspective of its racialized subjects means challenging the regimes of truth that underpin the production of knowledge, reorienting the site of enunciation, and affirming the Global South as a legitimate space for theoretical elaboration, social critique, and political imagination.

Amefricanity and the coloniality of power

The concept of *Amefricanity* is closely linked to later formulations regarding the coloniality of power, as developed by Aníbal Quijano (2000) and further explored by authors such as Walter Dignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018). The coloniality of power refers to the way in which the colonial matrix, founded on racial classification, the expropriation of labor, land, and bodies, and epistemic hierarchization, remains operative beyond the formal end of colonial empires.

By emphasizing the ongoing reality of slavery in its contemporary manifestations, Gonzalez anticipates debates that today cut across studies of coloniality, racialization, and peripheral capitalism. For the author, formal abolition did not signify the dissolution of slaveholding structures, but rather their rearticulation in new institutional, symbolic, and discursive forms, deeply rooted in Brazilian society. Racism, in this context, operates less through the explicit affirmation of racial hierarchy and more through the systematic denial of its existence, sustained by the ideology of miscegenation and the myth of racial democracy.

This process produces a specific form of coloniality that naturalizes the subaltern position of Black and Indigenous people within class structures, the sexual and racial division of labor, the socio-spatial segregation of cities, and the regimes of knowledge validation. By being historically situated as a disposable labor force, hypersexualized bodies, or folklorized expressions of national culture, these subjects are systematically excluded from the status of legitimate producers of knowledge and history. It is within this context that *Amefricanity* emerges as a counter-concept, that is, as a category that not only describes a historical

experience but also intervenes politically in the field of representations, destabilizing the mechanisms that seek to fix Black and Indigenous bodies in ontologically inferior positions and reaffirming their status as historical, political, and epistemic subjects (Gonzalez, 1983).

This counter-hegemonic dimension of *Amefricanity* becomes particularly evident in Gonzalez's (1988) analysis of the Portuguese spoken in Brazil as a deeply Amefricanized language. By highlighting the presence of lexical Africanisms, syntactic structures, rhythms, intonations, and semantic markers derived from African and Indigenous languages, the author shifts the understanding of the language from a normative framework to a historical and political context (Gonzalez, 1988). In this sense, the language is no longer conceived as a pure legacy of European colonization but is instead understood as the product of violent processes of domination, as well as of resistance, recreation, and everyday invention on the part of enslaved and Indigenous peoples.

By embedding these marks within the very linguistic fabric of Brazilian society, Gonzalez directly challenges the idea of a homogeneous, white, and Europeanized national culture, revealing that what presents itself as universal and neutral is, in fact, permeated by colonial conflicts and power struggles. *Amefricanity*, therefore, not only reorients our understanding of culture and language but also exposes the political nature of symbolic production, asserting that speaking, naming, and giving meaning to the world through Black and Indigenous references constitutes a radical act of resistance against coloniality and an affirmation of other possible rationalities in the Global South.

Amefricanity and the *coloniality of power* are conceptually intertwined because both provide critical lenses for understanding how colonial structures continue to shape societies, knowledge, and subjectivities in the Global South, especially in the Americas.

The *coloniality of power*, a central concept in the decolonial tradition advanced by Aníbal Quijano (2000), describes how the effects of European colonialism did not disappear with the formal independence of the former colonies, but persist as power structures that organize racial, social, economic, and epistemological hierarchies in contemporary societies. According to this perspective, modern social orders continue to entail a racial division of labor, hierarchical classifications that value certain groups and forms of knowledge at the expense of others, and a global economy structured by the international division of labor inherited from 18th- and 19th-century colonialism (Quijano, 2000).

Lélia Gonzalez, in formulating *Amefricanity*, directly engages with this critique of coloniality. Her proposal emerges as a political and epistemic response to the ways in which the

coloniality of power operates to render Black and Indigenous populations in the Americas invisible and marginalize them. By shifting concepts such as Latin America to categories such as *América Ladina*, Gonzalez exposes the coloniality present in the very geographical and cultural designations that naturalize a Eurocentric and white history and erase Black and Amerindian contributions and central roles in the continent's formation. By emphasizing the diasporic experience, cultural resistance, and agency of these subjects, *Amefricanity* calls for a reorientation of the center from which knowledge is articulated, challenging the epistemological hegemony of the Global North and revealing how the coloniality of power continues to produce exclusions and hierarchies.

In this sense, *Amefricanity* not only coincides with the critique of the coloniality of power but articulates it as a counter-concept that highlights the need to recognize other matrices of knowledge and existence outside Eurocentric parameters. While the coloniality of power describes the continuities of colonial forms of domination, including in the realm of knowledge, *Amefricanity* proposes practical and theoretical strategies to destabilize these hierarchies, valuing the cultural, linguistic, and political practices produced by historically subalternized populations and asserting their presence as legitimate producers of theory and culture.

Amefricanity is inseparable from Gonzalez's position as a Black woman, an internal migrant, an intellectual, and an activist. She criticizes the uncritical importation of Euro-North American feminisms that fail to account for the specificities of the experience of Black Latin American women, marked by the intersection of racism, sexism, and class exploitation (Gonzalez, 1988). In doing so, she draws on concepts such as intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), but shifts the geopolitical focus of the discussion.

While intersectionality emerged from the African American legal and political context, *Amefricanity* is rooted in the history of enslavement, colonization, and racial mixing in the Americas, linking the experiences of Black Brazilian women with those of Caribbean, Andean, and Central American women, among others. The "*Amefrican* woman" is, at the same time, an urban domestic worker, a peasant, a slum dweller, a religious leader of African descent, an intellectual, and an artist, embodying multiple ways of engaging in politics and producing knowledge (Collins, 2000; Gonzalez, 1988).

Unlike abstract or supposedly universalizing epistemologies, *Amefricanity* affirms a strictly situated position of enunciation, constituted at the intersection of the coloniality of power, structural racism, and the historical practices of resistance produced in the Atlantic space of the Americas. It is an epistemic perspective that shifts the axis of modern Eurocentric reason

by re-framing knowledge as a relational, historical, and ethically committed practice rooted in collective life. Within this framework, communality emerges as a structuring principle of knowledge, insofar as knowledge ceases to be conceived as the product of isolated individual cognition and comes to be understood as a collective construction, anchored in social memory, shared experience, and community dynamics.

This conception implies recognizing orality, tradition, and testimony as legitimate forms of epistemological validation, challenging the restrictive criteria of scientificity inherited from Western modernity. Linked to this dimension, ancestry assumes ontological and epistemological status, not limited to a symbolic or cultural reference, but functioning as the foundation of historical continuity, ethical guidance, and the transmission of knowledge. By recognizing ancestors as epistemic subjects, *Amefricanity* breaks with modern temporal linearity and establishes a spiral-like temporality, in which past, present, and future dynamically interpenetrate, shaping specific ways of understanding the world, history, and the very production of knowledge. In this same movement, corporeality asserts itself as a central epistemic category, since the Black body, historically subalternized and violated, becomes a legitimate site for the inscription of knowledge, memory, and resistance, highlighting that knowing involves feeling, living, and experiencing the world through bodily, affective, and territorial marks.

Another crucial category is orality, understood not as the absence or insufficiency of writing, but as a rationality in its own right, endowed with internal complexity, logical coherence, and explanatory power. In the field of *Amefricanity*, orality organizes narratives, transmits values, systematizes knowledge, and produces theory, even though it has been repeatedly delegitimized by Western academic canons. Associated with it, spirituality emerges as an inseparable dimension of knowledge, rejecting the modern separation between materiality and transcendence, between ethics and cosmology, and between reason and emotion. This integration underpins the category of relationality, according to which knowledge is constituted in the relationships between subjects, communities, nature, territory, and the spiritual world, shifting the colonial logic of domination toward an ethics of care, reciprocity, and collective responsibility. Finally, epistemological resistance expresses the historical capacity of *Amefrican* knowledge systems to survive, reinvent themselves, and offer critique in the face of the epistemicide perpetrated by colonialism and its contemporary continuations.

In this sense, *Amefricanity* establishes itself as a critical-transformative epistemic field, guided not by mere inclusion in the dominant canon, but rather by a profound reconfiguration

of the very criteria of validity for knowledge, in dialogue with proposals for cognitive justice such as those formulated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) and committed to the construction of an ecology of knowledge rooted in Amefrican experiences.

This perspective inspires and is taken up by later Brazilian authors, such as Sueli Carneiro (2005), who discusses epistemicide and the systematic marginalization of Black knowledge in the university, and Djamila Ribeiro (2017), in developing the notion of place of speech. In all these cases, there is a common thread: shifting the center of theoretical production to subjects historically relegated to silence, thereby challenging the universality of white and Eurocentric perspectives.

AMEFRICANITY AS AN EPISTEMIC CATEGORY

Understanding *Amefricanity* as an epistemic category implies recognizing it as a radical shift in the mode of production, validation, and circulation of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences. Formulated by Lélia Gonzalez (1988), this category is not limited to naming a historical or identity-based experience, but operates as a critical principle that challenges the Eurocentric foundations of modern epistemology. By highlighting that hegemonic knowledge has historically been produced from a white, male, and colonial perspective, *Amefricanity* proposes a reorientation of the site of enunciation, placing the historical, cultural, and political experiences of Afro-descendant and Indigenous subjects in the Americas at the center (Gonzalez, 1988).

In this sense, the category functions as an immanent critique of the claim to universality made by theories produced in the Global North, revealing their situated nature and their limitations in interpreting realities marked by coloniality, the African diaspora, and indigenous genocide. *Amefricanity*, therefore, establishes an epistemology that treats the Global South not as an object of study, but as a legitimate site of theoretical production, challenging the canon and broadening the horizons of critical thought.

As an epistemic category, *Amefricanity* also makes explicit that knowledge is inseparable from the power relations and symbolic struggles that structure society. By valuing the cultural, linguistic, religious, and aesthetic practices produced by historically subalternized populations, Gonzalez (1988) demonstrates that these fields are not merely cultural expressions but genuine systems for producing meaning and interpreting the world. This perspective anticipates debates that would later be systematized by the epistemologies of the Global South

and by decolonial thought, by asserting that race, gender, and coloniality are not peripheral issues, but rather structural axes of knowledge production.

Amefricanity, therefore, transforms the very status of knowledge by asserting that Black and Indigenous narratives, memories, languages, and cosmologies be recognized as legitimate forms of social theory. This is an epistemological intervention that destabilizes historical hierarchies of knowledge, re-inscribes racialized subjects as producers of knowledge, and contributes to the construction of a plural, situated, and critical rationality capable of confronting the persistent effects of coloniality in the academic and social spheres (Gonzalez, 1988).

Adopting *Amefricanity* as an epistemic category implies questioning the very canon of the humanities and social sciences. Gonzalez (1988) denounces the way in which Brazilian and Latin American academia reproduces patterns of coloniality by privileging theories produced in Europe and the United States, relegating Black and Indigenous authors to objects of study rather than producers of theory. The concept of *Amefricanity* proposes a reversal: reading the world from the margins, viewing the Americas through the lens of its Black and Indigenous peoples.

This ties in with the decolonial critique of the ‘geopolitics of knowledge,’ which shows how Western modernity constructed a division between centers of enunciation (Europe, then the United States) and peripheries conceived as sources of data, not of theory (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). *Amefricanity*, in this context, is a strategy for placing Black Americas on the map of theory, producing concepts, narratives, and images that do not fit into established categories.

In this sense, thinking about school, the city, the state, work, the family, or political culture from the perspective of *Amefricanity* requires reconfiguring categories such as ‘citizenship’, ‘modernity’, ‘nation’, and ‘development’. Rather than conceiving of the historical trajectory as a path from backwardness to (European) progress, *Amefricanity* allows us to perceive other temporalities, community practices, and forms of social organization that fall outside the bourgeois liberal model (Quijano, 2000; Santos, 2007).

Another central aspect of Gonzalez’s proposal is its aesthetic dimension. Gonzalez (1988) draws attention to the way in which the body, language, religion, and art constitute privileged spaces for the expression of *Amefricanity*. Black and Indigenous culture, often reduced to folklore or ‘popular tradition’ is, in fact, a field for the development of a counter-aesthetic that challenges the Western white ideal of beauty, rationality, and order (Gonzalez, 1988).

Lélia Gonzalez's very use of language constitutes a theoretical and political gesture that materializes, on the level of writing, the Amefrican aesthetic she herself advocates. The incorporation of terms such as *pretuguês*, the semantic and critical wordplay with *América Ladina*, and the choice of an essayistic style infused with humor, irony, and conceptual rigor deliberately blur the boundaries between academic essays, intellectual activism, and theoretical production. This stylistic choice is not incidental but a constitutive part of her epistemological proposal, as it destabilizes standard language as the exclusive regime of knowledge's legitimacy and affirms language as a territory of political and symbolic contestation.

Gonzalez mobilizes language as a space for insurgency, exposing the traces of coloniality inscribed in Brazilian Portuguese while simultaneously revealing the creative potentials stemming from African and Indigenous roots. In dialogue with Frantz Fanon (2008), the author explains how the Black body is produced as a primary target of symbolic violence, but also as a site of subjective construction, resistance, and reinvention, in which language, memory, and experience are inextricably intertwined (Gonzalez, 1983).

In the aesthetic-cultural realm, *Amefricanity* manifests as a living archive of the diaspora's memories, weaving together experiences of pain, survival, creation, and joy that span music, literature, the visual arts, and African-rooted religions. This aesthetic horizon rejects modern dichotomies between body and spirit, reason and emotion, nature and culture, proposing cosmologies in which the sensible, the symbolic, and the political are constitutively intertwined (Hall, 2003).

CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF AMEFRICANITY

Contemporary updates to *Amefricanity* highlight the vitality of the concept formulated by Lélia Gonzalez and its ability to engage with current issues in the Global South. Far from remaining confined to the intellectual context of the 1980s, *Amefricanity* has been revisited as an analytical key to understanding new forms of racialization, the production of subjectivities, and epistemic disputes in contexts marked by the intensification of neoliberalism, the platformization of social life, and the transnational circulation of Black narratives.

Recent research demonstrates how this category enables an analysis of the emergence of Black voices in digital media, understanding these spaces as territories of symbolic contestation, memory, and the production of situated knowledge (Rodrigues; Josiowicz, 2025).

This interpretation can be expanded upon through the work of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), particularly when the author critiques discourses of decolonization that remain trapped within the academic and institutional logic of colonialism itself. For Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), decolonization cannot be reduced to a theoretical statement, as it requires concrete practices capable of breaking with the reproduction of colonial hierarchies. Her notion of *ch'ixi* contributes to a conception of identities and forms of knowledge marked by the coexistence of differences, tensions, and contradictions that do not dissolve into a harmonizing synthesis. This perspective resonates with Gonzalez's because both reject the purity of identity and the abstract universality of modern-colonial thought, affirming forms of existence produced on the margins of coloniality.

On the epistemic and aesthetic levels, Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) also contributes by proposing the *sociology of the image* as a decolonizing practice of knowledge. The image, visual memory, gestures, textiles, bodies, and the material traces of history come to be understood as living archives of resistance. This formulation allows for a deeper exploration of the aesthetic dimension of *Amefricanity*, since, according to Gonzalez (1988), language, the body, music, orality, religiosity, and popular cultures also function as modes of knowledge and contestation of the colonial order (Cardoso, 2014).

Célia Xakriabá's (2018) contribution broadens this debate by asserting that territory is the foundation of indigenous knowledge production. In *O barro, o genipapo e o giz no fazer epistemológico* (Xakriabá, 2018), the author demonstrates that Indigenous education cannot be understood solely through the lens of formal schooling, as it is organized around memory, oral tradition, community, the body, and the relationship with the land. This perspective engages directly with *Amefricanity*, as it highlights that indigenous peoples are not objects of study in colonial history, but rather active agents who produce theory, pedagogy, and politics. The body-territory, in this sense, becomes a central category for understanding epistemologies that do not separate knowledge, ancestry, nature, and collective struggle.

Sandra Benítez (2015, 2020), in turn, explores this connection in greater depth by situating Guaraní education within the realm of language, spirituality, and their own way of life. In discussing *nhe'ẽ*, *teko*, and traditional Guaraní education, Benítez (2015, 2020) shows that a person's development is not limited to schooling but involves dreams, orality, memory, territory, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. His critique of the colonial school system aligns with Gonzalez's critique of the white norm of language and culture, especially when one considers that the linguistic and spiritual erasure of Indigenous peoples is part of the same

colonial process that marginalized Black populations in the Americas. Thus, the Guaraní word, just like *pretuguês* in Gonzalez's work, can be understood as a field of political, epistemic, and aesthetic contestation.

In Lélia Gonzalez (1988), she denounces the racial and cultural coloniality of Latin America. In Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), she finds resonance in the critique of merely discursive decolonization and in the valorization of contradictory forms of existence, such as the *ch'ixi*. In Célia Xakriabá (2018), the concept gains territorial and Indigenous depth by affirming the body-territory as an epistemological matrix. In Sandra Benítez (2015, 2020), it is further developed through the centrality of *nhe'ẽ*, *teko*, and Guaraní orality as the foundations of a non-colonial education. Thus, these authors enable us to understand *Amefricanity* as a political category, in that it confronts racism and coloniality; as an epistemological category, in that it legitimizes Black, Indigenous, and territorial knowledge; and as an aesthetic category, in that it recognizes the body, language, image, orality, and memory as forms of creation, thought, and resistance.

In decolonial studies, we emphasize the importance of recognizing the pioneering nature of the thought of Lélia Gonzalez and other Black Latin American intellectuals, who are often marginalized in accounts of the genesis of the critique of coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). By placing *Amefricanity* back at the center of the debate, we emphasize that decoloniality is not merely an Andean or Caribbean conceptual project, but a constellation of interventions produced in various parts of the Global South.

BY WAY OF AN (IN)CONCLUSION

Where are we headed? Confronting coloniality cannot be limited to criticism and denunciation, but must translate into concrete actions that reshape the way history is told (Santos, 2024).

Inspired by the concept of *Amefricanity* developed by Lélia Gonzalez, this reflection sought to demonstrate the power of this category as it functions, in an integrated manner, as a critique of the coloniality of power, as an epistemic tool for shifting the site of enunciation, and as an aesthetic and political horizon for interpreting Black and Indigenous experiences in the Americas. By proposing the term *América Ladina* based on the historical experience of racialized peoples, Gonzalez destabilizes narratives that naturalize whiteness as the universal subject of history and culture, exposing the mechanisms through which racism and patriarchy structure both national projects and regimes of knowledge production.

In this shift, Amefrican subjects cease to be viewed as objects of analysis or cultural folklore and come to be recognized as protagonists in the production of language, critical thought, and political practices, reaffirming the centrality of the African diaspora and Indigenous cosmologies in the constitution of the continent.

Amefricanity, therefore, is not merely an identity marker, but rather constitutes an ethical, political, and intellectual call to rethink the ways in which we teach, conduct research, narrate the past, occupy urban space, organize collective life, and envision possible futures. In a context marked by the resurgence of racism, the intensification of colonial violence in its contemporary forms, and the systematic precariousness of life in the Americas, revisiting the thought of Lélia Gonzalez means renewing her radical commitment to intellectual production that is ethically dedicated to transforming the historical structures that persist in denying full humanity to Black and Indigenous people.

Such a revival is not limited to an exercise in theoretical exegesis or posthumous recognition, but constitutes a political and epistemic gesture that repositions the critique of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy at the center of contemporary reflection. By establishing *Amefricanity* as both an analytical category and a political project, Gonzalez shifts the traditional frameworks of social thought by highlighting that colonial domination operates not only on the economic or institutional level, but also within the regime of production of knowledge, affect, and subjectivities, demanding responses that articulate theory, historical experience, and an ethical commitment to life.

Recognizing the relevance of Lélia Gonzalez today also means acknowledging that the theoretical and political responses to the crises of the present will not emerge exclusively from the hegemonic centers of enunciation—historically associated with Eurocentric rationality—but from the multiple Amefrican territories of speech, memory, and creation. These territories, despite being repeatedly silenced, subalternized, or appropriated, continue to produce rich, critical, and situated knowledge capable of reorienting social thought and expanding the political imagination in the Global South. By affirming the centrality of these experiences, *Amefricanity* claims not only the right to a voice, but also the recognition of other grammars of knowledge, other temporalities, and other ways of producing meaning, which challenge the naturalization of colonial violence and open up concrete possibilities for reinventing the commons, justice, and the very idea of humanity.

Reflecting on the Global South, its diverse histories, languages, and cultures, and the existence of great diversity, contrasts with the perception of a single history. By valuing and

recognizing LOCAL and ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE that continues to be produced and transmitted even in a context of oppression, community actions strengthen a population's distinct identity in parallel to the colonizing narrative, and anonymity, at times, is the greatest weapon of resistance. By considering local knowledge, we gain an analytical perspective that allows us to understand race, gender, class, culture, and territory from a different angle. Without establishing hierarchies or superimposing one concept over another, but rather by acknowledging their various interconnections, these perspectives offer powerful critiques of coloniality and all forms of oppression experienced by Black and Indigenous populations. Thinking from the perspective of *Latin Amefrica* means opposing the colonizing, racist, patriarchal, and elitist impositions produced by a white elite; thus, *Amefricanity* establishes itself as another way of thinking, as it names in order to signify and confront.

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