COUNTERPOINTS ABOUT DECOLONIAL THEORY: IN SEARCH OF WHAT WAS DENIED TO THE BLACK MAN

CONTRAPONTOS ACERCA DA TEORIA DECOLONIAL: EM BUSCA DO QUE FOI NEGADO AO NEGRO

CONTRAPUNTOS SOBRE LA TEORÍA DECOLONIAL: EN BUSCA DE LO QUE FUE NEGADO AL NEGRO

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the contribution of the conceptual category and pedagogical dimension of Black cinema to decolonial theory. The discussion addresses the theoretical foundations of modernity, the process of epistemic colonization, and its implications for the ontology of colonized subjects. Black cinema is understood as oriented toward the positive affirmation of African descendants as a historically minoritized majority, challenging the Euro-heteronormative imagetic hegemony that sustains racial and symbolic hierarchies. The study emphasizes the re-signification of gazes and narratives as central to antiracist practices, positioning Black cinema as both a pedagogical and political space. From a decolonial perspective, the article also highlights hope as a collective practice that emerges from everyday, educational, and community contexts, contributing to processes aimed at disrupting the subalternization of peoples and cultures.

KEYWORDS: Decolonial theory. Black. Black cinema. Historical negation.

RESUMO: O presente artigo analisa a contribuição da categoria conceitual e da dimensão pedagógica do cinema negro para o campo da teoria decolonial. Ao longo do texto, discutem-se os fundamentos teóricos da modernidade, o processo de colonização epistêmica e suas implicações na ontologia dos sujeitos colonizados. Parte-se do entendimento de que a teleologia do cinema negro consiste na afirmação positiva do afrodescendente enquanto maioria historicamente minorizada, em oposição à hegemonia imagética euro-heteronormativa que sustenta hierarquias raciais, culturais e simbólicas. O estudo destaca a ressignificação dos olhares e das narrativas como elemento central de práticas antirracistas, articulando o cinema negro como espaço pedagógico e político. Sob uma perspectiva decolonial, o artigo também enfatiza o esperançar como prática coletiva que emerge em contextos cotidianos, escolares e comunitários, contribuindo para processos de ruptura da subalternização de povos e culturas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Teoria decolonial. Negro. Cinema negro. Negação histórica.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza la contribución de la categoría conceptual y de la dimensión pedagógica del cine negro al debate de la teoría decolonial. A lo largo del texto se presentan los fundamentos teóricos de la modernidad, el proceso de colonización epistémica y sus implicaciones en la ontología de los sujetos colonizados. Se sostiene que la teleología del cine negro reside en la afirmación positiva del afrodescendiente como mayoría históricamente minorizada, en contraposición a la hegemonía imagética euro-heteronormativa que reproduce jerarquías raciales y simbólicas. El estudio destaca la resignificación de las miradas y narrativas como base de prácticas antirracistas, comprendiendo el cine negro como un espacio pedagógico y político. Desde una perspectiva decolonial, también se aborda el esperanzar como práctica colectiva que emerge en contextos cotidianos y educativos, contribuyendo a procesos de ruptura de la subalternización de pueblos y culturas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Teoría decolonial. Negro. Cine negro. Negación histórica.

Introductory Notes on Decoloniality

It is urgent to reflect on the notion of modernity entangled in the process of Black cultural epistemic colonization and on its relationships with the ontology of Afro-descendant subjects who exist as minorities within Ibero-Asian-Afro-Amerindian contexts colonized across multiple spheres.

It is necessary to shed light on how inequalities are constituted in the present time, as well as on struggles and denunciations against racism, with a focus on social justice and reparations for a series of cultural exclusions and appropriations imposed on Black populations who have historically remained (and, in many cases, continue to remain) at the margins of sociopolitical participation as a right to inclusive citizenship. Here, we emphasize identity as a central dimension.

By inclusive citizenship, we understand the possibility of opening spaces for shared work between education and inclusive development, grounded in critical dialogue on issues of discrimination and prejudice. In light of this, Skovsmose (2023, p. 24) asks: "Why are some groups of people more visible in magazines than others? How do such priorities occur? What do such priorities imply for perceptions of Black people?"[2].

The terms *decoloniality* and *decoloniality* (descolonialidade) both exhibit a marked polysemy in their uses within the field of educational research. This means that, while differences can be identified at the etymological level, distinctions are also evident at the semantic level.

Thus, in light of Quijano's (1992a) formulation, the concept of decoloniality emerges as an epistemic-ontological negation of the idea of totality that underpins the European modern project. Such a notion of totality does not constitute a neutral description of social reality, but rather a historical operation of power that seeks to universalize a particular experience. From the process of European colonization in the so-called New World, between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, two fundamental axes of the modern/colonial pattern of power were structured: race as the organizing principle of social hierarchies and modernity as the narrative that legitimizes this order. These categories began to operate jointly, producing a worldview in which European ethical, aesthetic, political, and moral standards were naturalized as universal, while other forms of existence and knowledge were subordinated or denied.

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[2] "Why are some groups of people more visible in magazines than others? How do these priorities come about? What do these priorities imply for perceptions of black people?".

This construction sustains a conception of totality deeply marked by an organicist view of society, understood as a homogeneous body endowed with a rational center that governs its peripheral parts. As Quijano (1992a) argues, this perspective was decisive for the consolidation of the idea of social totality, as it enabled society to be conceived as a coherent and functional unity. However, such unity is merely apparent, since the colonial order never fully integrated colonized subjects into this totality. As the author himself emphasizes, European Enlightenment modernity restricted the categories of humanity and society to peoples considered Western, extending them to others only formally and without concrete effects.

Thus, decoloniality not only questions this false universality but also destabilizes the very ontological foundation of a totality constituted through the systematic exclusion of peoples, knowledges, and modes of existence. Through the negation of a historical structure previously constituted to respond primarily to European economic, political, and symbolic standards, a movement of opposition emerges that seeks to reconstruct a historically interdicted image. This is less about restoring a lost identity and more about producing what was never allowed to exist, insofar as it was systematically rendered impossible by Eurocentric hegemony and, in its contemporary iteration, Euro–USA-centric hegemony. Quijano (1992a) characterizes this configuration as the modernity–rationality dyad, understood as a cultural complex that consolidated simultaneously with European colonial domination and was instituted as a universal paradigm of knowledge and of the relationship between humanity and the world. As the author states,

> during the same period in which European colonial domination was being consolidated, the cultural complex known as European modern rationality was constituted, which was established as a universal paradigm of knowledge and of the relationship between humanity and the rest of the world (Quijano, 1992a, p. 14, our translation).

Such universalization operated as the epistemic foundation of a global hierarchy that defined which knowledges, bodies, and existences would be recognized as fully human.

However, according to Quijano himself (1992a), the gesture of negation proposed by decoloniality does not imply abandoning the idea of totality as such, but rather a radical critique of the images and assumptions through which it was constituted within European modernity. The author maintains that confronting coloniality requires the recovery, by colonized subjects, of two central axes: epistemology and ontology, understood as historically expropriated fields.

In this sense, he argues that
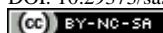
> it is not necessary to reject every idea of totality in order to detach oneself from the ideas and images through which that category was elaborated within European modernity. What must be done is something quite different: to free the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the traps of European modern rationality (Quijano, 1992a, p. 19, our translation).

Decoloniality, therefore, is configured as a process of epistemological, political, and ideological deconstruction of the so-called Colonial Matrix of Power, defined by Mignolo (2014) as the articulated set of mechanisms that control the economy, authority, nature, sexuality, gender, subjectivity, and knowledge. Unlike classical formulations of oppression in Marx or Freire, the coloniality of power refers to a structural device invented as a condition of possibility for modernity itself, inaugurated in the context of European expansion from the fifteenth century onward and sustained by technologies of war, the consolidation of nation-states, and the racialization of difference as the organizing principle of the world order.

Another point that deserves emphasis, and which adds to the foregoing discussion, concerns the specific object of decoloniality. This means that, when we turn to the concept of the colonial matrix of power as described by Mignolo (2014), it becomes evident that control exercised by one power group over another constrains sociocultural relations within structures, leading to antagonisms and the production of resignifications.

In this way, in response to the control of the economy by specific agents, such as corporate groups and transnational markets, movements of contestation emerge that seek to challenge the material structures of coloniality. Analogously, in the face of historical control over gender and sexuality, feminist, Black, and LGBTQIAPN+ movements take shape, while in the field of subjectivity and knowledge production, struggles for epistemic decolonization are consolidated. These fronts do not operate in isolation, but rather constitute an articulated set of resistances to the Colonial Matrix of Power described by Aníbal Quijano (1992a). In this context, especially over the past decade, the expression *lugar de fala* (standpoint or positionality of speech) has become recurrent in scientific events and academic publications. This expression refers to the recognition that every utterance is produced from a situated position, traversed by power relations, specific historical conditions, and socially marked experiences. To speak of *lugar de fala*, therefore, is not merely to invoke individual authorization, but to understand that knowledge is inseparable from the social, political, and historical location from which it is enunciated.

In the same vein, Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) deepens the reflection inaugurated by Quijano by proposing the concept of the *coloniality of being*, thereby expanding the scope
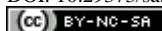
of decoloniality beyond the dimensions of power and knowledge. Engaging in a critical dialogue with Martin Heidegger's ontology, the author argues that coloniality also operates at the level of lived experience, affecting the ontological constitution of colonized subjects. According to Maldonado-Torres (2007), while the coloniality of power concerns modern forms of exploitation and domination and the coloniality of knowledge relates to the role of epistemology in reproducing colonial regimes of thought, the coloniality of being refers to the profound marks left by colonization on existence, language, and the everyday experience of subjects. It thus involves understanding how colonial domination produces dehumanized subjects, ontologically inferiorized, whose very existence is permanently questioned or denied.

With regard to the distinction between the terms *descolonialidade* (decoloniality) and *decolonialidade* (decoloniality), authors such as Miglievich-Ribeiro and Romera (2018) point out that the former tends to be mobilized as a process of suppressing elements deemed exogenous, with the aim of affirming an alleged cultural or epistemic purity. The perspective adopted in this study, however, aligns with Quijano's (1992a) understanding, which employs the term *decoloniality* to indicate a critical, relational, and historical movement of confrontation with coloniality, without the illusion of returning to an uncontaminated original state. From this theoretical choice, four interdependent analytical dimensions can be outlined: the decoloniality of thought, the decoloniality of political-ideological formation, the decoloniality of sociogeographical structure, and ontological decoloniality.

Within this approach, the decoloniality of thought refers not only to the set of cultural values shared by a social group, but also to its epistemology itself, constructed through historical interactions with other groups, often in contexts of conflict and asymmetry. The term *feeling*, within this theoretical framework, does not designate individual emotions, but rather the capacity for recognizing belonging and collective identification. It is this set of values, traditions, and symbolic references that guides what can or cannot be done, said, or socially legitimized. For this reason, themes such as representation, representativeness, multiculturalism, indigenism, and gender necessarily require political and moral debate, as they do not constitute natural or universal givens of the human condition. Rather, they are historical and social productions that organize regimes of visibility, recognition, and belonging, defining specific ways of being, existing, and inhabiting the world. From this perspective, every ideological formulation entails, by coexistence, a political dimension, insofar as systems of values and meanings guide concrete practices of social organization. Thus, the establishment or refusal of political alliances not only structures power relations but also directly intervenes

in the configuration of geographic space, producing centers, margins, borders, and zones of exclusion.

It is within this horizon that ontology presents itself as susceptible to decoloniality. As Aníbal Quijano (1992a) argues, although formal political colonialism has been overcome, the relationship between so-called Western European culture and other cultures remains marked by a logic of colonial domination. Such domination is not limited to an external subordination between cultures, but operates deeply through the colonization of the imagination of dominated subjects, acting upon their interiority and becoming, to a certain extent, integrated into the very constitution of their symbolic references. In this way, coloniality directly affects how subjects perceive themselves and the world, interfering in the construction of meanings, values, and identities.

This implies recognizing that the understanding of the subject as *self* is neither autonomous nor isolated, but depends on the political-ideological, sociogeographical, and, above all, cultural conditions in which it is embedded. In this thesis, the term *self* is adopted to designate the ontological aspects that emerge from the collective experience of a given social grouping, conceiving the subject as the result of historical and structural relations. Thus, it is argued that the self is constituted by the social structure while simultaneously reproducing and transforming it, revealing a dialectical relationship in which ontology and social organization are continuously co-implicated.

The Construction of the Idea of Modernity

In 1492, in the midst of the fifteenth century, the Genoese navigator Christopher Columbus, in the service of the Crown of Castile and Aragon, informed the Spanish royal authorities of his arrival in lands hitherto unknown to Europeans, which he designated as the New World. In a letter addressed to Isabella I of Castile, also known as Isabella the Catholic, Columbus provided a detailed description of the geographical, natural, and human characteristics encountered by his fleet, as well as the economic and political possibilities that such territories could offer for the expansion of Iberian power. This narrative inaugurates, at the level of European discourse, a foundational marker of colonial modernity, insofar as it transforms inhabited lands into spaces available for conquest, exploitation, and symbolic appropriation.

A few years later, in 1500, the Portuguese Crown, already engaged in the project of overseas expansion, financed a maritime expedition that officially sought to reach the Indies by an alternative route. As a result of navigational deviations, intentional or otherwise, the fleet commanded by Pedro Álvares Cabral sighted land in the South Atlantic corresponding to what is now recognized as part of the territory of Abya Yala. Far from representing an isolated accident, this encounter is inscribed within the broader movement of the invention of European modernity, as argued by Walsh (2018), and is articulated with the emergence of the idea of race as an organizing principle of the social, political, and economic relations imposed upon the Indigenous peoples of the American continent.

In the face of these new lands, the European political-religious logic began to operate decisively. At the time, the papal throne was occupied by Pope Alexander VI, also known as Rodrigo de Borja, whose actions were deeply intertwined with the geopolitical interests of the Iberian monarchies. Through the bull *Inter Coetera*, promulgated in 1493, the pontiff legitimized, under the mantle of divine authority, the division of the lands located west of the established meridian between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile and Aragon. More than a diplomatic act, this document laid the foundations of a sacralized form of colonization, in which territorial and economic expansion was justified as a civilizing and Christianizing mission.

Within Europe itself, the fifteenth century was marked by profound social, political, and economic transformations. The decline of the feudal system, based on suzerainty and vassalage, gave way to processes of power centralization around political and military leaderships, which would later consolidate into absolutist regimes. At the same time, hunger, poverty, and criminality intensified, while the Church exercised strong control over morality, spirituality, and ontological conceptions, establishing norms of conduct regarded as universal. In this context of crisis and reconfiguration, the economic and social reorganization of European kingdoms became increasingly urgent.

It is within this scenario that the idea of modernity was consolidated, understood as a rupture with the medieval order and as the affirmation of the new as a value. Overseas expansion, associated with the search for new territories for trade, production, and exchange, constituted one of the pillars of this process, giving rise to what came to be known as the modern era. However, as Prado and Pellegrino (2020) note, the appropriation of new territories imposed two central challenges on the Iberian kingdoms: the need for labor and the investment of capital. The former was addressed, according to Aníbal Quijano (1992a), through the invention of the idea of race and its hierarchization, later legitimized by theological discourse. The latter was
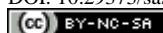
gradually resolved through commercial alliances and disputes among European powers, involving France, England, the Netherlands, and other emerging states.

It is precisely between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that the process known as colonization became consolidated. Here, colonization is understood as the systematic movement of invasion, territorial appropriation, and suppression of Indigenous cultures, guided by economic interests and sustained by material and symbolic violence. For this process to be effective, according to Quijano (1992a), three elements are indispensable: subjects subjected by force, a territory to be appropriated, and a clearly defined economic objective. In the Latin American context, these elements manifested themselves in the attempt to subordinate Indigenous peoples to European modes of production and ways of life, in territorial expansion made possible by technological advances and internal expeditions, and in the centrality of capital accumulation as the ultimate aim of the colonial enterprise.

In this regard, it is essential to recognize that the territory corresponding to what is now Brazil was not inhabited by a homogeneous group, but by a multiplicity of Indigenous peoples with diverse social, political, and cultural organizations. Relations among these groups included alliances, disputes, and internal conflicts, which destabilizes oversimplified readings of colonization and reinforces the need to understand Abya Yala as a historically complex and plural space, deeply marked by colonial violence.

If we consider, for example, other regions that make up the vast Southern Cone and the American continent as a whole, Prado and Pellegrino (2014) demonstrate that the process termed conquest did not occur in empty territories or in spaces devoid of social organization. According to the authors, when the Spaniards arrived on the Caribbean island known as Hispaniola on October 12, 1492, it is estimated that the American continent was home to approximately 57.3 million inhabitants. Mesoamerica, corresponding to present-day Mexico, had the highest population density, with around 21.4 million Indigenous inhabitants, followed by the Andean region with approximately 11.5 million, the plains of South America with 8.5 million Indigenous peoples, and, finally, North America, whose population was smaller than that of the Caribbean and Central America.

Based on these data, it becomes unavoidable to assert that the Americas were never, at any point, discovered. There can be no discovery when dealing with territories widely inhabited and socially, politically, and culturally organized by millions of subjects. How can the narrative of discovery be sustained in the face of civilizations with millennia of history, whose cosmologies, relationships with nature, and modes of production diverged radically from white

European rationality? Such questions go beyond a terminological critique and reveal the profoundly ideological character of the colonial narrative.

In this sense, extra-European colonization must be understood as a political-ideological movement that operated primarily at the level of the *epistēmē*, producing a forced reorganization of the knowledges, memories, and modes of existence of colonized peoples. As it crystallized into a lasting regime of power, this process not only legitimized the material and symbolic violence exercised against Indigenous peoples, but also redrew the geography of the continents according to colonial interests, erasing histories, borders, and rationalities that did not conform to the European modern project.

In the face of this socio-anthropological movement—marked above all by the distinctive forms of organization, spirituality, and relationship with nature of Indigenous peoples—the representatives of the Catholic Church were invested, within colonial discourse, with the role of agents of salvation. This attribution is not neutral, for all salvation presupposes a danger previously constructed. In this case, Indigenous peoples came to be conceived as subjects to be saved from themselves, from their cosmologies, ways of life, and forms of existence. Colonial soteriological logic operated through a split between body and soul: while the soul was to be guided toward the Christian divine realm, the body was reduced to a labor force available to sustain missionary settlements and the colonial project as a whole.

Thus, colonization was not limited to territorial possession and the systematic exploitation of labor, but also imposed a moral and spiritual obligation on Indigenous peoples—namely, religious conversion and the incorporation of European cultural values. At this point, a second structuring dimension of the colonial process becomes evident: the invention of the modern concept of humanity. This concept was not constituted as universal, but as a device of exclusion, in which only certain subjects, bearers of a Christian and European rationality, were recognized as fully human, while others were positioned at inferior degrees of existence.

Therefore, beyond the invention of modernity inaugurated by the violent encounter with new lands and the imposition of a European ontological dominance, a new morality of Christian matrix was consolidated from the sixteenth century onward. This morality is grounded in a hierarchized ethnic segmentation that associates humanity, rationality, and salvation with European whiteness, producing enduring effects that span centuries and remain operative in contemporary social, cultural, and symbolic structures.

The Memory of Slavery as Culturally Materialized in Exhibitions and Museums

In the search for what has been denied and usurped, attention is drawn to the transatlantic routes that carry the memory of slavery, through a multidisciplinary approach that brings together history, anthropology, and cultural studies. Through this analysis, the aim is to understand how these routes constitute living testimonies of a past marked by violence and oppression, and how they can be mobilized to promote social justice and historical reconciliation.

The transatlantic routes of slavery represent a dark legacy in human history, one that profoundly shaped the formation of societies and cultures on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The slave trade, which extended over more than three centuries, left a lasting impact not only on the lives of those who were subjugated, but also on the collective identities of the nations involved.

The transatlantic routes that carry the memory of slavery are tangible testimonies of a tragic and undeniable past. Through the study and critical examination of these routes, it becomes possible to confront the wounds of history and to pursue social justice and historical reconciliation. The preservation of the memory of slavery through museums, memorials, and historical sites plays a central role in this process.

In this context, it is necessary to recall Eurocentric racist appropriation and to engage in a critical reflection on the presence of artifacts of Asian, Amerindian, and African origin in European and United States museums.

The memory of slavery has been culturally materialized, in different national and institutional contexts, through museums, exhibitions, and sites of memory that seek to render visible a past historically marked by violence, expropriation, and the dehumanization of Black populations. At the international level, institutions such as the International Slavery Museum explicitly assume the task of narrating the transatlantic trade in enslaved people, articulating objects, documents, and narratives that connect slavery to the contemporary legacies of structural racism.

Similarly, The Legacy Museum proposes a continuous historical reading by linking slavery to lynching, racial segregation, and mass incarceration, demonstrating that racial violence does not constitute a deviation from the modern project, but rather one of its structural continuities. On the African continent, spaces such as the House of Slaves and the Badagry Heritage Museum function as deeply symbolic sites of memory, where the materiality of

captivity—such as shackles, cells, and embarkation routes—confronts visitors with the concrete experience of forced diaspora and with the collective trauma inscribed in the territory.

In the Brazilian context, the memory of slavery has also been progressively incorporated into museological policies and into temporary and permanent exhibitions, albeit in an uneven and contested manner. The exhibition *Beyond Slavery*, held at the National Historical Museum in cooperation with the Smithsonian, constitutes a relevant example by shifting the exclusive focus on suffering to include narratives of resistance, agency, and Black cultural production. Initiatives such as the Inventory of Places of Memory of Slavery and the History of Enslaved Africans in Brazil further expand this movement by recognizing urban sites, ports, cemeteries, quilombos, and trajectories that structured the slave-based economy, thereby inscribing slavery into the everyday geography of cities.

Taken together, these examples reveal that the musealization of slavery is not a neutral act of preserving the past, but rather a field of symbolic dispute in which decisions are made regarding who narrates, from which frameworks, and with what ethical and political implications. When such exhibitions succeed in breaking with the Eurocentric logic of decontextualized display and incorporate the voice, memory, and authorship of the descendants of enslaved peoples, they become powerful pedagogical instruments for confronting coloniality, contributing to the reconfiguration of policies of memory, recognition, and historical justice.

(In)conclusive Notes

It is not possible to ignore the constitutive contradiction present in numerous European and United States museums, whose collections include artifacts of Asian, Amerindian, and African origin acquired, to a large extent, through practices of colonial exploitation and domination. These artifacts are often exhibited in a decontextualized manner, dissociated from their histories, cosmologies, and symbolic systems, resulting in a violation of the dignity of Ibero-Asian-Afro-Amerindian peoples and in the denial of their existence as historical subjects. Such practices not only empty these cultural productions of meaning, but also reinforce a racist Eurocentric logic that perpetuates power asymmetries and silences the communities of origin.

This museological appropriation exposes the persistent absence of representativeness and voice of marginalized populations within institutional spaces of cultural legitimation. By disregarding the ethical, historical, and political contexts involved in the acquisition of these
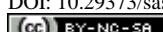
artifacts, museums contribute to the maintenance of symbolic hierarchies sustained by stereotypes and prejudice, naturalizing coloniality as a universal narrative. This is, therefore, a process that goes beyond the material possession of objects and directly affects the production of knowledge, memory, and official history.

Within this critical horizon, Black cinema emerges as a privileged field for confronting this logic of Eurocentric appropriation. By positioning Afro-descendants and other minorities as subjects of the narrative rather than objects of representation, Black cinema enables the construction of counter-hegemonic images in which communities themselves elaborate and contest their cultural representations. Its pedagogical dimension lies precisely in the positive affirmation of Afro-descendants as authors of cinematic reality and, more broadly, in the valorization of the image of Ibero-Asian-Afro-Amerindian subjects in the face of the exclusionary power of Euro-heteronormativity, which fragments and hierarchizes the epistemic traits of Iberianity, Asiaticity, Africanness, and Amerindianity. In this way, Black cinema not only deconstructs stereotypes but also contributes to the ethical and political reconfiguration of regimes of visibility and recognition.

As Nunes, Souza, and Santos (2022) argue, racial issues play a fundamental role in understanding these processes. On this basis, it becomes unavoidable to reflect on the variables that involve Afro-descendants, their identities, and their historically neglected trajectories.

The lack of representativeness and voice of marginalized communities is also a defining feature of racist Eurocentric appropriation in museums. Artifacts of Asian, Amerindian, and African origin are frequently exhibited without the presence of representatives from their communities of origin and without providing these communities with the opportunity to express how their cultures are being presented and represented in museums worldwide. This dynamic is mirrored in cinema and the audiovisual field more broadly through the persistent production of Eurocentric domination, grounded in stereotypes of the inferiority of Ibero-Asian-Afro-Amerindian peoples and serving the myth of white Euro-Western superiority.

As these final considerations are reached, it is essential that the reader understands that the central issue discussed here is not limited to a retrospective exercise in historical analysis, but directly affects contemporary modes of meaning-making, recognition, and social legitimacy. When it is stated that Black people were denied full humanity, this points to a structural process in which modernity established a measure of the human anchored in whiteness, relegating Black subjects to ontologically inferior positions. This denial was not confined to the material exploitation of bodies, but operated more deeply by shaping the
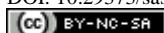
imaginary, language, knowledge production, and the cultural institutions responsible for organizing social memory. Thus, Black people were historically deprived of full subject status, repeatedly positioned as objects of labor, tutelage, exoticization, or silence.

In this sense, what was denied to Black people includes the right to authorship of themselves and of the world—that is, the possibility of producing legitimate narratives about their own existence, experiences, and ways of understanding reality. The coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, as discussed throughout this article, structured regimes of visibility that determined who could appear, speak, and be recognized as producers of culture, science, and history. This dynamic remains operative in spaces such as museums, archives, and audiovisual media, where Black objects, images, and memories are often displayed in decontextualized ways, without the effective participation of communities of origin and without ethical problematization of their appropriation. It is, therefore, a form of denial that goes beyond the symbolic level and is translated into concrete institutional practices of silencing and exclusion.

It is within this horizon that Black cinema is affirmed in this study as a privileged field for confronting coloniality. By shifting Afro-descendants and other historically marginalized subjects from the position of objects of representation to that of narrative subjects, Black cinema inaugurates counter-hegemonic ways of producing images and meanings. Its pedagogical dimension lies in the positive affirmation of Afro-descendants as authors of cinematic reality and, more broadly, in the contestation of the regimes of visibility that structure the social imaginary. Thus, more than an aesthetic or identity-based resource, Black cinema constitutes a political and formative practice capable of challenging the modern morality that separated body and soul, justified domination as salvation, and naturalized racial hierarchization.

Finally, these considerations reaffirm that decoloniality, as mobilized in this article, does not end as an analytical category, but projects itself as an ethical, epistemological, and pedagogical task. Seeking what was denied to Black people entails claiming humanity, ontology, and epistemology, while also reconfiguring memory policies, educational practices, and criteria of cultural legitimation. This is a process that requires a critical revision of established narratives and the recognition that modern history was organized in ways that authorized certain voices while silencing others.

Where do we go from here?

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