

THE DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE THEORY OF CULTURE FROM THE BLACK FEMINIST STUDY OF LÉLIA GONZALEZ

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1178-4018>**Abstract**

This research aims to investigate the criticism of Eurocentric thinking and modernity from the authors Terry Eagleton and Lélia González. In the course of this, the approach of colonial structures of domination that still persist in society will be approached. It is observed that many requirements that characterize this domination come from patriarchy in a capitalist system, whose roles and/or identities are occupied by individuals such as the black population, indigenous peoples and women. Thus, the theories of Terry Eagleton, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Anibal Quijano and more precisely, Lélia González will be discussed, since the perspective of the black woman and her identity constructed in a manipulated way, with direct influence of the patriarchal/capitalist/colonial/modern world-system is the primary point of this study. To this end, we point out, through a theoretical and integrative review, decolonial thinking in the Theory of Culture, promoting the elucidation of the main concepts, ideas and debates proposed by the authors and authors mentioned.

Keywords: Lélia Gonzalez; Terry Eagleton; Colonial/Decolonial; Culture; Inequalities.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to examine the critique of Eurocentric and modern thinking from the theory developed by author Lélia Gonzalez (2020) in her decolonial discussions, in parallel with the study of culture theory addressed by Terry Eagleton (2011). To this end, it will deepen the theme of coloniality/decoloniality, modernity and its influences in society whose social organization of production is the capitalist in its current forms (QUIJANO, 2005). Furthermore, the outlines of how colonial structures of domination are perpetuated to this day will be addressed; how socioeconomic inequality is visible in countries that have been colonized in the past and the roles and identities occupied by subjects such as the black population, indigenous peoples and women are classified and classified as reflexes of these processes.

Currently, one of the most important epistemological approaches that has been developing more and more are decolonial studies, or decolonial thinking. Its importance is due to the fact that these approaches dimension a prolific debate, evidencing and that aims at a rupture of a kind of late coloniality, or that has never been dissolved, and still build bodies and subjectivities experienced by non-European populations. Understanding that "modernity organizes the world ontologically in terms of homogeneous, atomic, separable categories" (LUGONES, 2014, p. 1), it is worth mentioning that these approaches are not only seen as forms of epistemic resistance, but also political. This project, that of decoloniality, "lies in its ability to clarify and systematize what is at stake, historically elucidating the coloniality of power, being and knowledge and helping us to think of strategies to transform reality." (BERNARDINO-COSTA; NELSON MALDONADO-TORRES; GROSGOUEL, 2018, p. 10). From the same point of view, says María Lugones (2014, p. 5):

[...] I understand the dichotomous hierarchy between human and non-human as the central dichotomy of colonial modernity. Beginning with the colonization of the Americas and the Caribbean, a dichotomous, hierarchical distinction between human and non-human was imposed on the colonized ones in the service of Western man. It was accompanied by other hierarchical dichotomous distinctions, including that between men and women. This distinction became the mark of the human being and the mark of civilization. Only civilized people are men or women. The indigenous peoples of the Americas and the enslaved Africans were classified as non-human species – as animals, uncontrollably sexual and wild. The Modern European, bourgeois, colonial man became a subject/agent, able to decide, for public life and government, a being of civilization, heterosexual, Christian, a being of mind and reason. The bourgeois European woman was not understood as her complement, but as someone who reproduced race and capital through her sexual purity, her passivity, and by being tied to the home in the service of the bourgeois White European Man. The imposition of these dichotomous categories was interwoven with the historicity of relationships, including intimate relationships.

Throughout the centuries of coloniality, black women have been excluded from history, from the effective conquest of rights and from full participation in social and political life. This was not due to the absence of action, but because of the concrete influence of the colonialities of power, being and knowing¹ that promoted its erasure. The construction of the identity of black women was historically forged from the patriarchal/capitalist/colonial/modern world-system (GROSFOGUEL, 2008)².

¹ Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2018, p. 49) points out that "it is only because of the articulation of forms of being, power and knowing that modernity/coloniality could systematically produce colonial logics, practices and ways of being that they appeared, not in a natural way, but as a legitimate part of the objectives of modern Western civilization." Thus, coloniality includes three important elements, which are: the coloniality of power, the coloniality of being and the coloniality of knowledge. That end up involving and shaping the relationships in/with the world of work, nature, sex, gender, knowledge, subjectivity and authority, to the detriment of other forms of existence. First, Aníbal Quijano (2005) points out that the coloniality of power can be understood as the structuring of a capitalist, colonial/modern and Eurocentered global power as a hegemonic world power standard. Having as one of its fundamental axes "the social classification of the world population according to the idea of race, a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and that since then permeates the most important dimensions of world power, including its specific rationality, Eurocentrism." (Ibidem, p. 2) The coloniality of being, on the other hand, involves the introduction of colonial logic in the conceptions and experience of time and space, as well as in subjectivity. The coloniality of being includes the coloniality of vision and other senses, which are means by virtue of which subjects have a sense of self and their world" (MALDONADO-TORRES 2018, p.50) Finally, the coloniality of knowledge are representations about what constitutes valid knowledge or views, locating the knowledge produced in the global North (Europe and North America) as the universal and hegemonic (Ibid., 2018).

² The world system is established as the interregional and transnational division, the result of the "partition" of the world in central, semiperipheral and peripheral countries – on the other hand, nowadays more usual the conceptions of the global North and South. As a concept, the world system was thought "against the analyses that use the category "society", understood as equivalent to the "nation state". Another way of saying the same would be to use the notion of "society-world", that is, that we live in temporalities and spatialities of "global societies", and not of "national societies"." (GROSFOGUEL, 2018, p. 63). Since the sixteenth century, where this cartography of power relations, the modern world-system, has been constituting its origins, eurocentric paradigms as hegemonic principles have been crystallized to the present day. That is, its epistemological, cultural and economic bases. In this context, racism, tied to coloniality and as an element that underlines the modern world-system,

In fact, we will analyze Lélia Gonzalez's work in the light of a decolonial perspective – that is, proposing that her thoughts, key categories and her "proposals align themselves in favor of an epistemology that displaces Europe from the center of the world system on the grounds of the subalternized peoples" (SILVA, 2019, p. 2) – for this, two main topics will be presented: a synthesis of culture theory from the studies of Terry Eagleton; in the second, decolonial thinking, in order to go beyond the Eurocentric reading of colonialism, with analysis and explanation of the Black Ameline feminist studies of Lélia Gonzalez, who as a black woman, Brazilian and descendant of indigenous, formulated proposals for the construction of a feminism from its historical, political and social context.

In addition, it is also added that in a methodological aspect, to perform this work, the qualitative approach was used, with a survey and integrative bibliographic and documentary review (from academic and technical productions, dissertations and theses) in order to elucidate the theme investigated, as well as by data collection in specific sites found in search repositories.

Finally, the work "Por um feminismo afrolatinoamericano" published in 1988 by Lélia Gonzalez, which brings in its digs the intersections of race, class and sex (gender), underlaying the historical gender inequalities that place black women and men in different social dimensions of white women and men.

2 A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE THEORY OF CULTURE FROM TERRY EAGLETON

According to Terry Eagleton in *The Life of Culture* (2011), the word culture in the Latin term *colere* has the meaning of "anything from cultivating and inhabiting, to worshipping and protecting". "Its meaning of "inhabiting" evolved from Latin *colonus* to contemporary "colonialism" (EAGLETON, 2011, p. 10). so that titles such as Culture and colonialism are, again, somewhat tautological." However, as the author points out, "collect also comes, via the Latin *cultus*, in the religious term "cult", just as the very idea of culture comes in the Modern Age to put itself in the place of a fading sense of divinity and transcendence." (Ibidem, p. 10). The definition of culture permeates a human activity of cultivation and harvesting, restricting something material, changing the meaning of the word according to the historical process of society in the aspect of rural existence to urbanity. Thus, as a dialectic used by nature itself that emerges between "what we do to the world and the world makes us", to produce culture transforming nature, Eagleton (2011, p. 15) explains:

Human nature is not exactly the same as a beet plantation, but as a plantation, it needs to be cultivated - so that just as the word "culture" transfers us from natural to spiritual, it also suggests an affinity between them. If we are cultural beings, we are also part of the nature we work for. Indeed, it is part of what characterizes the word "nature" to remind us of the continuity between ourselves and our environment, just as the word "culture" serves to highlight the difference.

In this conception, men, as well as nature itself, are shaped by culture. Eagleton points out: "we

organizes, as a structuring logic, "from within, all relations of domination of modernity, from the international division of labor to the epistemic, sexual, gender, religious hierarchies, together with identities and subjectivities, in such a way that it divides everything between forms and higher beings and other inferior forms and beings" (Ibid., 2018, p. 67).

resemble nature, since, like it, we must be forged, but we differ from it since we can do this to ourselves, thus introducing the world to a degree of self-reflexivity that the rest of nature cannot aspire to" (ibid., p.15). Based on this, it is considered that the "lack of culture in men" is something natural that will be achieved throughout their progress, but their cultivation or the 'idea of culture' is only acquired in the refinement determined by the State through activity in civil society, leading to men in the process of transformation to citizenship. This preparation, according to Eagleton, consists of considering culture as a kind of policy³ according to the defined interests. That is, for the author:

culture is a kind of Christian pedagogy that makes us fit for political citizenship by releasing the ideal or collective hidden from each of us, an ideal that finds its supreme representation in the universal scope of the State (ibid., p.16-17).

Therefore, culture is launched for society, "rescuing from the senses the spirit, snatching from the temporal the immutable, and plucking from diversity unity" (Ibidem, p. 18). As well as, a kind of self-healing against rebellious men so that cultural improvement happens through the universal representation of the State. On this aspect, Eagleton rescues the philosopher Schiller from his Letters, about the education of man to explain the role of culture:

Culture is precisely the mechanism of what will later be called "hegemony", shaping human subjects to the needs of a new type of politically organized society, reshaping them on the basis of docile, moderate, high-principle, peaceful, conciliatory and disinterested agents of this political order (ibid., p. 19).

Eagleton argues that modernity itself represents this approach of culture, when it is part of the discourse of 'Olympic wisdom', 'ideological weapon', 'social criticism' or in the mission of the status quo state acting on the idea of criticism or deconstruction before society to destroy the resistance of citizens. As Raymond Williams (2007) presents, before his investigations on the history of the word "culture", it is said that by tying the rural work of men, the word assumes the meaning of "civility". After the 18th century, it became synonymous with "civilization" for intellectual, spiritual and material progress. That is, "it belonged to the general spirit of the Enlightenment, with its cult of secular and progressive self-development. Civilization was largely a French notion – so, as now, the French were supposed to have a monopoly on being civilized" (EAGLETON, 2011, p. 20). At the turn of the 19th century, in a new semantics⁴, it changes as descriptive and normative, designating a way of life, clarification and refinement. However, "culture" – itself – composes a relationship as a whole in the development of men, linked to social conditions and supported by the State within a political dimension.

In this dimension, 'civilization' "is a term of sociable character, a matter of cordial spirit and pleasant manners, it is something entirely more solemn, spiritual, critical and of high principles, rather than being joyfully at ease with the world" (ibid. p. 22). Thus, it is perceived that culture and civilization mark a conflict that persists in modernity, demonstrating that "civilization" is bourgeois and that is aristocratic. But from the theory of German idealism, the German philosopher Von Herder (1744)

³ In this case, Eagleton (2011, p. 17) recalls: "those who proclaim the need for a period of ethical incubation to prepare men and women for political citizenship are also those who deny colonized peoples the right to self-govern until they are "civilized" enough to exercise it responsibly. They despise the fact that by far the best preparation for political independence is political independence [...]"

⁴ "The term really belongs to the lexicon of a pre-industrial European middle class, rekindling good manners, refinement, politesse, an elegant resourcefulness in relationships" (EAGLETON, 2011, p.21).

claims that the two senses of the word culture are linked to a conflict between Europe and other colonials, as Terry Eagleton explains: It is, for him, to owe the Eurocentrism of a culture as universal civilization to the cries of those 'from all corners of the world' who did not live and perished for the dubious honor of having their posterity made happy for an illusory superior European culture (EAGLETON, 2011, p.24).

Thus, it is believed that the origin of the idea of culture enables the inclination of anti-colonialist discourse by societies said as "exotic"⁵. On the other hand, postmodernity will deal with the notoriety of popular culture of these 'primitive' cultures. This sense of culture⁶ remained in the twentieth century, used to describe the way of life of the "savages" by talking about a "primitive" social order, distancing from the idea of civilized.

It is at this point that Eagleton draws the attention of postmodernity on the plurality of the concept of culture, stating that "this fusion of descriptive and normative, preserved both in the 'civilization' and in the universalist sense of 'culture' will emerge in our own time under the clothing of cultural relativism" (EAGLETON, 2011, p.26). This relativism is the fruit of the ambiguities of modernity: "As culture as a civilization is strictly discriminative, culture as a way of life is not" (ibid., p.26-27).

In this way, Terry Eagleton argued the need for the escape from the canon, from doctrine, from the colonial. Such an escape, by itself, would already constitute a critical act of discernment, a significant action, loaded with political bias, autonomous and distant from stereotyping related to the old idea of erudite culture. No culture would provide belonging as much as those that portray the reality of life, the place and the community in which it is inserted.

In view of this, there is cultural plurality, even existing, the "culture of the canteens of police stations", the "sexual-psychopathic culture" or the "mafia culture" (Ibidem, p.28), implying in a variety of forms that racial prejudice can acquire in society, since the "civilizing project" of the Americas has stolen and extinguished the social identities of indigenous peoples, blacks and their descendants, through colonization, where they were stereotyped as inferior, subjugated by whites in various aspects in society, thus repeating the Eurocentered culture (EAGLETON, 2011).

However, Terry Eagleton points out that there is some "hope" about the possibility of transforming cultures⁷. Faced with the various crises⁸ about culture and cultural values, "to define the very world of life as a culture is to risk relativizing it. For a person, their own way of life is simply human; are the others who

⁵ "Exoticism will resurface in the 20th century in the primitivist aspects of modernism, a primitivism that goes hand in hand with the growth of modern cultural anthropology" (Ibidem, p.24).

⁶ "But if 'culture' can describe a 'primitive' social order, it can also provide someone with a way to idealize their own. For radical romantics, 'organic' culture could provide a critique of real society; for a thinker like Edmund Burke, he could provide a metaphor for real society and thus protect it from such criticism" (EAGLETON, 2011, p.25).

⁷ "Although culture is a popular word in postmodernism, its most important sources remain pre-modern. As an idea, culture begins to be important in four points of historical crisis: when it becomes the only apparent alternative to a degraded society; when it appears that, without a profound social change, culture in the sense of the arts and the well-being of the arts will no longer be possible; when it provides the terms under which an imperialist power is forced to come to terms with the way of life of those it subjugates" (ibid., p.42).

⁸ "[...] Culture (in the sense of the arts), defines a refined quality of life (culture as civility) whose realization in culture (in the sense of social life) as a whole is the task of political change" (Ibid., p.34).

are ethnic, idiosyncratic, culturally peculiar" (Ibidem, p.43). Even life in postmodernity, culture and social life itself in the world are allied in an aesthetic way of merchandise, through the spectacularization of politics and the consumerism of lifestyle itself. Therefore, Eagleton points out that culture is moving to undo it by studying "primitive" societies and "allowed its myths, rituals, kinship systems and ancestral traditions to think for them" (EAGLETON, 2011, p.48) which brings us closer to a decolonial study, which evaluates and manifests its understandings from the perspective of the colonized, the subjugated and that can be perceived, according to Lélia González's proposal in her studies on black feminism.

3 LÉLIA GONZALEZ AND DECONIALITY

To understand what decoloniality consists of, it is necessary to bring up coloniality and its matrices. From the 16th century on, the formation of Eurocentrism began or, as Coronil (1996) called it, "Westernism", understood as the dominant imaginary of the modern/colonial world that allowed legitimizing imperial domination and exploitation. Based on this, the other (no right religion, no writing, no history, no development, no democracy) was seen as 'backward' towards Europe. On this other is that the "myth of modernity" was exercised, in which modern civilization described itself as the most "developed" (superior) and, therefore, with the moral obligation to "develop the primitives", despite their will (DUSSEL, 2005). Beside this classification system of the peoples of the world, there was also a process of concealment, forgetfulness and silencing of other forms of knowledge of other peoples and societies.

According to Grosfoguel and Bernardino-Costa (2016, p.18), throughout the 16th century, the conquest of America and the heyday of the Spanish and Portuguese empires meant not only the creation of a world economy, but the emergence of the first major discourse of the modern world, which invented and, at the same time, subordinated indigenous populations, African peoples, Muslims and Jews. This first great discourse that stereotypes, invents, classifies and subjugates the other is also the first frontier of the nascent modern/colonial world system. From a political-philosophical point of view, this frontier is established by the principle of "blood purity" in the Iberian peninsula – which established classifications and hierarchies between Christians, Moors and Jews – and by the theological debates of the School of Salamanca around the "rights of peoples", which defined the position of indigenous and African on the human scale (DUSSEL, 1994). This first great discourse that imposed the first colonial differences in the modern/colonial world system later undersuccessive transformations, such as 19th-century scientific racism, the invention of the Oriental, the current Islamophobia, among others.

By thinking of coloniality as another face of modernity, it is possible to understand that developmental models, such as capitalism and, currently, neoliberalism, contribute to the perpetuation of this model of coloniality. It is important to highlight that the idea of race was central to this project of colonial modernity, which makes it essential also in the world system, the existence of capitalism, Eurocentrism, patriarchy and Westernism (QUIJANO, 2005).

However, the colonial subjects who are on the borders – physical and imaginary – of modernity were not and are not passive beings. They can either integrate into the global design of the local stories being forged, but they can also reject them. It is in these borders, marked by colonial difference, that the coloniality of power acts, as well as in these borders that the "frontier thinking" can emerge as a decolonial

project. (GROSFOGUEL and BERNARDINO-COSTA, 2016, p.18). Decoloniality envisions a practical action that imposes decolonial thinking as opposition and intervention against the whole system of coloniality, a figure not an exclusively academic category, but a political practice. But it is worth noting that

Here lies an important difference between the decolonial project and the postcolonial theories. These themeize the border or the place as a space that breaks with binarisms, that is, where one perceives the limits of ideas that presuppose pre-established and fixed essences. From the perspective of the decolonial project, borders are not only this space where differences are reinvented, they are also enunciative loci from which knowledge is formulated from the perspectives, worldviews or experiences of subordinate subjects. What is implicit in this statement is a connection between place and thought. (Ibidem, 2016, p.19)

Colonialism is a process of continuation of the colonial project, which will extend to the most diverse areas after the end of the colonial period and authors such as Hannibal Quijano (2005) will call it the "coloniality of power" and "coloniality of knowledge". On this, Castro and Dias (2016, p. 204) place that:

It is possible to go beyond the Eurocentric reading of colonialism as a mere process of exploitation of resources and labor for the development of nascent capitalism. Coloniality as a hidden face of modernity has allowed the consecration of Europe as the "center" of history as opposed to the rest of the world, consecrated as the 'periphery'.

This break with the Eurocentric reading allowed a reinterpretation not only of the experiences lived, but also of the story as it is propagated. For Grosfogel and Bernardino-Costa (2016), the production of a decolonial thought, also understood as a "margin or frontier thinking" generates new probabilities to decoloniality. Therefore, when dealing with decoloniality, it is worth highlighting the work of the Brazilian anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez, as Tolentino (2019, p.75):

Lélia Gonzalez was a black woman of these who moved deeply shaking the structures, creating networks and articulations, taking the initiative, translating, publishing, organizing events, marches, cultural festivals, collectives, in study groups and militancy, manifesting themselves publicly, individually and collectively. I questioned, since the 70s of the century. XX, the ideal of pure and universal rationality, built mainly from the objective model of modern science. This concussion of the structures operated by black Latin American women (or Amefricans, as Lélia Gonzalez would say is identified as a micropolitical social phenomenon that can be observed to happen nowadays, but since once. Be it with Lélia Gonzalez, at the end of the Brazilian military dictatorship initiated by the 1964 coup (which lasted more than two decades); or by the performance of councilwoman and leadership Marielle Franco (murdered for political reasons in 2018).

For Tolentino (2019), Lélia identified racism rooted in culture and society since the premodern stage, with Moorish domination (essentially black) and the entire secular war of the Reconquista. Furthermore, his research evidencing such a rigid and sophisticated social hierarchy in the Iberian peninsula, as in Hispanic-Portuguese America, which dispenses with the social apartation characteristic of Anglo-Saxon colonization: "You have a huge range of classification, and nothing more than a shattere of the identity of subordinate ethnicity. That is, you establish a continuum of color and the 'lighter' you are, the closer you

are to power." (GONZALEZ, 2018, p.373).

Lélia Gonzalez's intellectual production developed in a space-time formed by the transformations of the national debate in a context of military dictatorship, the international debate permeated by the denunciations of racism suffered by the African diaspora and the economic and cultural neocolonization of the African continent:

A mark of Lélia Gonzalez's works is her sharp criticism of colonialism and imperialism that gives her entire work a singular importance in the academic field, but also allows an understanding of her work in a perspective that brings her closer to postcolonial or decolonial authors (SANTOS, 2020, p. 54).

Lélia Gonzalez articulates knowledge with the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan, coining the concept of racism as denial, what is affirmed by denying it. According to Tolentino (2019), in denial is that the affirmation of the phenomenon that, consciously, wants to deny, trying to hide, blur, but which is impossible to erase, hatching via the psychoanalytic phenomenon of denial. It is the sophistication of our racism by denial that will propose strategies such as miscegenation, aiming at bleaching (social policy often publicly declared) or, worse, that will defend the myth of Brazilian racial democracy. So:

It is in the so-called Latin America (much more Amerindian-Amefrican than anything else) that this denial becomes largely verifiable. As a very well-structured system of domination, racism in the region demonstrates its effectiveness by conveying notions such as 'integration', 'racial democracy', 'misceage' etc. (GONZALEZ, 2018, p.336).

In the context of language, Lélia Gonzalez created the concept of "pretoguês", evidencing what studies of the colonizer's language want to hide to this day. In addition, the language spoken in Brazil cannot be adequately classified as a Portuguese language such as it is pronounced and written in most countries in which it is officially speaking, whether African, American or European.

[...] what I call 'pretoguês' and which is nothing more than a mark of Africanization in Portuguese spoken in Brazil (...). The tonal and rhythmic character of the African languages brought to the New World, in addition to the absence of certain consonants, such as l or r, for example), point to a little explored aspect of the black influence on the historical-cultural formation of the continent as a whole. (GONZÁLEZ, 1988, p.70)

According to Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui (2008), what is fundamental in the recording and analysis of these interpretations and political and cultural practices is the restitution of speech and the theoretical and political production of subjects who until then were seen as devoid of the condition of speech and the ability to produce political theories and projects. In addition to Fonseca (2021), the great gift that Lélia Gonzalez gave to society with her teachings, were tools to understand where one is in the world, what the place to occupy and the form (starting from resistance to oppression), to rethink our place in the world; and yet, what a world you want to be. Thus, one must ask: how will the new generations that will follow in the footsteps of this (already) long journey begun by the ancestors?

Finally, it is worth emphasizing the need to remain the critical discourse initiated by Lélia and others about the deletion and exclusion of peoples originating in national history, phenomena that are revealed, for example, from the myth of racial democracy, which is:

[...] exposed in Brazil through carnival in its process of inversion, reinforcement and neutralization that produces a maintenance of the status quo present in Brazilian society that is highly hierarchical in its social relations. What Gonzalez will claim is Brazilian neurosis. Believing that we are not racist, we are not prejudiced, because we are all white, there are neither blacks nor indigenous. [...] The denial about the past slave, racist and hierarchical of Brazilian society produces racism as a symptom. The so-called "racism to the Brazilian" would be the denial of our Latinamefricanity that turns against those who are the living witness of it (black and black), while saying not to do so ("Brazilian racial democracy") (OLIVEIRA, 2020, p. 12).

Therefore, it is essential to combat racism with the purpose of extinguishing social inequality and the subaltern position of these peoples in Brazilian society, seeking the legal equity of all, since combating individual racism is necessary, but it is imperative to annihilate institutional racism.

3.1 RACISM AND THE NEED TO (RE) EXISTENCE OF AFRONEGRO LATINOAMERICAN FEMINISM from the perspective of LÉLIA GONZALEZ

There is no way to deal with decoloniality, epistemologies and Amerindian and African experiences in Latin America, without seeking theoretical reference from the author Lélia Gonzalez. The black feminist anthropologist and thinker treats that the concept of "Latin" or "Latinity" can be envisioned as a tool for silencing and resuming the non-European identities that were necessary for the formation of the territory known today as the American continent. Lélia also argues that this Latinity would be a ratification of the inferiorization of the experiences and contributions of Amerindians and Africans (1988).

It is important to note that the black experience on the African continent is quite distinct from the black and Amerindian experiences on the American continent, primarily in relevance to colonialism. In this continent, blacks and Amerindians lived with perfidious situations, such as: "[...] slavery, genocide, the occupation and expulsion of native territories and the exploitation of ways very different from those experienced by African indigenous peoples" (AGUIAR, 2021, p. 08).

The identity in the New World was marked by the influence of blacks, however the study of African-American culture is mitigated, with Lélia Gonzalez one of the few researchers who observed that African-American culture is different from African culture, even though there is a connection between them. It is noteworthy that the mutual influence between black, indigenous and European cultures was the result of a process on the American continent, called "transculturation" (AGUIAR, 2021, p. 08).

In order to bring the theme to an epistemology that was appropriate and included the experiences and contributions, Lélia Gonzalez considered the category "amefricanity". To this end, the author argues that "América, as an ethnogeographic reference system, is a creation of ours and our ancestors in the continent in which we live, inspired by African models" (GONZALEZ, 1988a, p.77). That is, the political and cultural formation present in the American continent is a product of the predominance of black and indigenous peoples, which translates a unique cultural identity.

For Lélia Gonzalez, it is essential that Brazilian society, with the majority, the black population, realize this, take possession and recognize, not only of its inconsistencies and internal contradictions, but mainly of the racial inequality that characterizes it. It is known that black and indigenous influence has its

constant payment, coming from institutional⁹, structural¹⁰ racism and ratified by discourses of racial equality.

Furthermore, the author points out that the struggles for freedom, social and political rights existed in America, however, departing from the black struggles, the basis of the first demands of the feminist movement and the LGBTQIAP+ movement in the 20th century. It is important to note that, until the 1970s, social rights movements did not incorporate racial problems into their claims, which for Lélia should be termed "racism by omission", as well as a portrait of American countries at the time, denying racism and its deep roots in the modern social model.

From the anthropologist's perspective, in order for the perennial picture of inequalities to be reversed, she proposes a model of knowledge that accesses a new political and society formatting. Thus, this movement would seek to remake the relations whose bases were inherited in colonialism and its ideological production, a place in which capitalist neoliberalism has its epistemological roots and the permanence of power. So to speak, the political-cultural construction proposed by Gonzalez would be related to transpose the colonialist logic of geopolitical division practiced and would encompass the oppressed categories, moving away from the committing of racism and sexism resulting from colonialist, neocolonial and Eurocentric views.

Lélia Gonzalez (1988) observes in this view that blacks and indigenous peoples must take for themselves and belong to a new category, assuming the cultural and political category of amefricanity. It is reiterated that this category is in opposition to Latinity, mainly because it is characterized as a Eurocentric, stereotyped epistemology that should be replaced by the thought produced in the South-South:

Amefricanity will then be part of this active process of epistemological resignification. The creation of this category will enable a new look at the peoples of the Americas, understanding black and Amerindian influences as active interferences to the colonization process of the Americas, which **'incorporates a historical process of intense cultural dynamics (adaptation, resistance, reinterpretation and creation of new forms), which is Afrocentered'** (GONZALEZ, 1988a, p. 76) (our griffin).

Thus, amefricanity would be this unique and unique culture, departing from these relations established in the American continent. Lélia Gonzalez states that cultural processes are observed from decoloniality, with a look at culture in a non-Eurocentric aspect, since the black and indigenous experiences were the ones that originated today the so-called Latin culture; which should be rejected and replaced by the "ameficaladine" culture (GONZALEZ, 1988a).

Lélia Gonzalez argues that cultural experiences in the Americas are unique, so contributions would be considered materialistic, based on concrete phenomena, differentiating from intrinsic idealism in postcolonial analyses. Therefore, the category "Amefricanas" belonging to anthropological theory focused

⁹ As Silvio Almeida (2019, p. 21-23) explains, racism from an institutional perspective "is not limited to individual behaviors, but is treated as a result of the functioning of institutions, which start to act in a dynamic that confers, even indirectly, disadvantages and privileges based on race. [...] the institutional conception of racism treats power as a central element of the rational relationship. Indeed, racism is domination. [...] In the case of institutional racism, the domain takes place with the establishment of discriminatory parameters based on race, which serve to maintain the hegemony of the rational group in power.

¹⁰ The same author explains that "in summary: racism is a result of the social structure itself, that is, in the "normal" way in which political, economic, legal and even family relations are constituted, not being a social pathology or an institutional disarray. Racism is structural. (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 30).

on Latin America would appear, in a cultural production that effectively considers a decolonial anthropology.

It should be noted that the themes of racism, class and sexism for the understanding of the work of Lélia González ("Afronegro LatinoAmerican Feminism") that interact with each other. According to her, the vision in patriarchal society of the three characters should be observed without the payments of the negativity present in society and the internal contradictions of amefricanadino feminism. The highlight of the racial dimension of women in Latin America is noted by Lélia Gonzalez in the form of denunciation, in which there is the exclusion of black sands and indigenous peoples within the feminist movement; therefore the need for (re) existence of black women and men, indigenous, that is, of the "Amefricans" after their exclusion over so many centuries (GONZALEZ, 1988a):

What we really find when reading the texts and feminist practice are formal references that denote a kind of forgetfulness of the racial issue. [...] both sexism and racism start from biological differences to establish themselves as ideologies of domination. The answer, in our opinion, lies in what some social scientists characterize as racism by omission and whose roots, we say, lie in a Eurocentric and neocolonial worldview (GONZALEZ, 2020, p. 141)

To this end, Lélia points out that black alienation in the feminist movement also begins in the psychic constitution of the child, which, primarily, when nominated by the adult in the third person ("child"), already demonstrates its exclusion. Therefore, "the child", in the process of learning herself in the world, does not recognize himself as a subject, which occurs in the same way with women. It is at this moment that society, by imposing women being and remaining in a lower place, there is the suppression of their humanity, there is a prohibition of the right to be subject of one's own discourse, history and existence.

In the purpose of reflecting on racism in Brazil, Lélia is asked "out of denial", relying on the false idea of miscegenation that coexists harmoniously with "cultural neurosis" (the identification of the dominated with the dominated), and it is at this moment that Gonzalez states that the effectiveness of ideological discourse enhances and perpetuates the reproduction of racist practices both by those who receive benefits (o/a homem/mulher branco/a), the injured (or black man/woman).

Thus, Lélia Gonzalez's work cannot fail to deal with "amefricinity", since, through this, the author places Brazil with an example of the identity of these Amerindian peoples compared to others in Latin American countries. Therefore, the conclusion that is reached is that there is a need for us to resist and have a careful look at social dynamics, so that we resign all the criticism and pejorivity to the nicknames and qualifications we receive from the colonizer, of the Euro-centered influence.

Just as "Latinity", "Latin", are used to stereotype, we must appropriate our own culture, since we are the result of the miscegenation of indigenous, African and Amerindian peoples. Lélia Gonzalez proposes something completely different: the appropriation of what was taken from us or seen as tiny, minor, that is, that we should be proud and take power from our own history, making a new look at the reason and western episteme, which once excluded the effective participation of blacks in the political, cultural and economic system.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From these brief notes and discussions, we realize that the theoretical contributions of Terry Eagleton and Lélia Gonzalez approach at various points with the debates held by decolonial authors and authors. The central point of respect for the place of enunciation for the theoretical formulation, the denunciation of the Eurocentric character of hegemonic knowledge and the importance of the race component in the formulations, were present both in the decolonial perspective and in the arguments of Lélia Gonzalez.

The most careful study of Lélia Gonzalez's work has the potential to destabilize settled certainties about the experience of colonial domination, signaling that attention should be paid to polyphony in the production of knowledge. The author, writing about the black movement in Brazil, processes of identity of the black people, the history of African and Afro-Brazilian culture and the oppression of black women, instrumentalizes a critique that dialogues with a decolonial thought (FONSECA, 2021).

What is fundamental in the recording and analysis of these interpretations and political and cultural practices is the restitution of speech and the theoretical and political production of subjects who until then have been seen as devoid of the condition of speech and the ability to produce political theories and projects, it is necessary to recover the stories and tell them, pluralizing the ears and educating listening to welcome them.

Thus, the history of Brazil is based on two main pillars: extermination (of the peoples originating in these lands, of nature in search of quantifiable wealth in money, of the territory of planting food, ceded space for monoculture that does not feed) and the trafficking of people. However, in a decolonial contemporaneity, we want to (re) exist in a very different way, with haughtiness, pride and autonomously, without erasing or promoting the forgetfulness of our ancestry.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Luciano da Silva Façanha and other authors would like to thank the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - thanks to CAPES (Finace code 001).

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