

ENGLISH

International Symposium "Coloniality and Indigeneity in the Americas"

June 4-5, 2026

ENS, 45 rue d'Ulm (Paris)

Organization:

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Scientific argument

"I would like a scream to come out of my throat. I can't do it. [...] I'd scream my own name. So that the past changes forever" (Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, *Nauetakuan, un silence pour un bruit*, Bibliothèque québécoise, 2024).

In an unprecedented historical phenomenon, the American continent has experienced more than 500 years of coloniality of power and the whole of colonialities (Aníbal Quijano, 1999), that is, forms of colonial domination that were founded by the European colonialism of the Americas/ Abya Yala and maintained after the processes of independence/decolonization, becoming a global power matrix that is still in force (Quijano, 1992). Since 1492, the indigenous peoples of the Americas/ have suffered the full force of the violence of European colonization marked by genocide, enslavement, rape, dehumanization and the destruction of their original territories.

Since the 16th century, the category "Indian" and its derivatives "Amerindian", "Indian Americans" and "indigenous" have designated the situation of the colonized, dominated, racialized, exoticized. The categorization of peoples created by European colonists is the substrate on which a process of racialization and the creation of races was built (Quijano, Wallerstein 1992; Grosfoguel 2016). As the Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1972) points out, "Indian" is a supra-ethnic category that says nothing about the groups it understands but rather says about the relationship of subordination. The Indian, as a colonial category, was born when Christopher Columbus invaded the island of Ayiti, renamed Hispaniola to establish the domination of the Catholic Monarchs over the island. Before 1492, Abya Yala was made up of hundreds of very diverse peoples and societies, each with its own social and political identity. The invasion of Abya Yala by the Europeans was soon followed by the colonizing violence and genocide of 90% of the continent's population (Grondin Marcel et al. 2022). Some regions, such as the Caribbean, will struggle to cope with the violence of the colonial shock of the first decades of the invasion of the continent. Indigenous peoples living in Santo Domingo, Cuba, were decimated by a bloody and violent European occupation (Dussel 2012). In Mexico, this becomes systematically marked by the rejection of the other, conceived by the colonist as "the same", destined to be incorporated as something into a dominating totality (Dussel 2012). In the territories where colonization arrived later, it was not until the middle of the 19th century that Indigenous peoples returned to their pre-colonial demographic level. The subalternization of Indigenous peoples did not end with the independence of the 19th century. In fact, except relatively in the case of Haiti, there was no

decolonial revolution in the Americas. The colonists sent home were replaced by their descendants, born on the American continent. In some areas, such as French Guiana, decolonization never happened. And even Haiti, having experienced an apparent decolonization of power, this came at the cost of the new financial and commercial dependencies imposed by the former metropolis and the United States through debt (Dorigny 2005).

This conference aims to explore this painful, forgotten and silenced history. To know the past to better heal it and repair the colonial wound. The objective will also be to make visible the anti-colonial struggles, the political and cultural resistance to coloniality, both past and present. The indigenous creation of new projects and concepts, as in the case of the notion of Abya Yala, Buen and Bien Vivir, ancestral future, and alternative forms to the modern nation-state of social organization, characterized by direct democracy and political autonomy, are likely to foreshadow the realization of the entirely "American" utopia evoked by Quijano (Quijano 2020; Krenak 2025; 2020; Alkmin 2025). Or the highlighting of an ongoing process of production of a new historical meaning embodied by indigenous peoples (Quijano 2014). The conference aims to make these theoretical and practical contributions visible in a trans-American dialogue.

In fact, reflection from an indigenous perspective implies highlighting the trans-American dimension and leaving in the background, as far as possible, the national, colonial and imperial borders that have cut off or even opposed brothers to each other. Moreover, thinking about indigeneity today implies that we consider the subject from a transdisciplinary perspective that crosses different fields such as literature, the arts, history, geography, law, political science, philosophy, anthropology and linguistics; to thinking-feeling in a non-disciplinary way or even beyond the disciplinary (Moraes, Torre 2002; Haber 2011).

Thinking about indigeneity also amounts, as Diana Carolina Flores Rojas/Puka T'ika (Rojas 2025) suggests, to thinking about it in the instability of the concept, as a provisional designation destined to disappear.

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Conference themes

1. The lexicon and ways of naming and transcending “the Indian” across time and territory
2. The Western legal system at the heart of coloniality
3. Forms of acculturation
4. Indigenous women: the first territory of conquest
5. Indigenous resistance to coloniality
6. The revival of indigenous mobilizations in the Americas

Submission guidelines: Proposals for papers should be sent to colonialiteetautochtonie@gmail.com by December 15, 2025. They should include the following information: first and last name, institution, email address, title of the paper, a 250-word abstract, and a brief bio-bibliographical note. The organizing committee will respond by the end of January 2026 at the latest.

Practical details: The languages of communication will be Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese. As our budget is limited, we will not be able to cover travel and accommodation expenses. However, we will provide lunch, coffee breaks, and the gala dinner on the evening of June 5. A publication of the contributions validated by an editorial committee and a recording of the presentations are planned.