



MOVIMENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND ONGOING TRANSFORMATIONS¹

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Abstract: This collaborative interview features three Latin American researchers involved with the *Movimento Negro Educador*, exploring its influence in various fields such as psychology, language, the arts, and mathematics education in Uruguay, Brazil, and Colombia. The participants delve into their reflections on the *Movimento Negro Educador* as a transformative force in the educational and social fields, highlighting its role in promoting collective Afro-descendant subjectivities that value their cultural, racial, and epistemic identities. This

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perspective illustrates the multifaceted impact of the movement—political, educational, linguistic, cultural, and psychological—and its potential to reshape social imaginaries throughout Latin America. The dialogue reveals shared commitments to the need for the decolonization of bodies, minds, and epistemes and to the creation of inclusive pedagogical practices that work to deconstruct the privileges of whiteness and promote a more egalitarian democracy. Thus, together, the researchers reinforce the potential of the *Movimento Negro Educador* to act as a space for resistance, empowerment, and re-education that promotes the deconstruction of hierarchies, the valorization of non-Eurocentric knowledge, and the construction of a more pluralistic and just society.

Keywords: *Movimento Negro Educador*; Decolonization; Inclusion; Afro-descendant Subjectivities.

MOVIMENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR: DESAFIOS EPISTEMOLÓGICOS E TRANSFORMAÇÕES EM CURSO

Resumo: Esta entrevista colaborativa apresenta três pesquisadoras latino-americanas envolvidas com o Movimento Negro Educador, explorando sua influência em várias áreas como a psicologia, a linguagem, as artes e o ensino de matemática no Uruguai, Brasil e Colômbia. As interlocutoras aprofundam suas reflexões sobre o Movimento Negro Educador como uma força transformadora nos campos educacional e social, destacando seu papel na promoção de subjetividades afrodescendentes coletivas que valorizem suas identidades culturais, raciais e epistêmicas. Tal perspectiva ilustra o impacto multifacetado do movimento — político, educacional, linguístico, cultural e psicológico — e seu potencial para remodelar os imaginários sociais em toda a América Latina. O diálogo revela compromissos compartilhados com a necessidade de descolonização de corpos, mentes e epistemes e com a criação de práticas pedagógicas inclusivas que operem na desconstrução dos privilégios da branquitude e na promoção de uma democracia mais igualitária. Assim, em conjunto, as pesquisadoras reforçam o potencial do Movimento Negro Educador para atuar como um espaço de resistência, empoderamento e reeducação que promove a desconstrução de hierarquias, a valorização de saberes não eurocêntricos e a construção de uma sociedade mais plural e justa.

Palavras-Chave: Movimento Negro Educador; Descolonização; Inclusão; Subjetividades Afrodescendentes.



MOVIMIENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR: DESAFÍOS EPISTEMOLÓGICOS Y TRANSFORMACIONES EN CURSO

Resumen: Esta entrevista colaborativa presenta a tres investigadoras latinoamericanas involucradas en el Movimiento Negro Educador, explorando su influencia en diversas áreas como la psicología, el lenguaje, las artes y la enseñanza de las matemáticas en Uruguay, Brasil y Colombia. Las interlocutoras profundizan en sus reflexiones sobre el Movimiento Negro Educador como fuerza transformadora en los ámbitos educativo y social, destacando su papel en la promoción de subjetividades afrodescendientes colectivas que valorizan sus identidades culturales, raciales y epistémicas. Esta perspectiva ilustra el impacto multifacético del movimiento —político, educativo, lingüístico, cultural y psicológico— y su potencial para remodelar los imaginarios sociales en toda América Latina. El diálogo revela compromisos compartidos con la necesidad de descolonizar los cuerpos, las mentes y las epistemes, y con la creación de prácticas pedagógicas inclusivas que operen en la deconstrucción de los privilegios de la blancura y en la promoción de una democracia más igualitaria. Así, en conjunto, las investigadoras refuerzan el potencial del Movimiento Negro Educador para actuar como un espacio de resistencia, empoderamiento y reeducación que promueve la deconstrucción de jerarquías, la valorización de los conocimientos no eurocéntricos y la construcción de una sociedad más plural y justa.

Palabras-clave: Movimiento Negro Educador; Descolonización; Inclusión; Subjetividades Afrodescendientes.

MOUVEMENT NOIR ÉDUCATEUR: DÉFIS ÉPISTÉMOLOGIQUES ET TRANSFORMATIONS EN COURS

Résumé: Cet entretien collaboratif présente trois chercheuses latino-américaines impliquées dans le Mouvement noir éducateur, explorant son influence dans divers domaines tels que la psychologie, le langage, les arts et l'enseignement des mathématiques en Uruguay, au Brésil et en Colombie. Les interlocutrices approfondissent leurs réflexions sur le Mouvement noir éducateur en tant que force transformatrice dans les domaines éducatif et social, soulignant son rôle dans la promotion des subjectivités collectives afro-descendantes qui valorisent leurs identités culturelles, raciales et épistémiques. Cette perspective illustre l'impact multiforme du mouvement — politique, éducatif, linguistique, culturel et psychologique — et son potentiel pour remodeler les imaginaires sociaux dans toute l'Amérique latine. Le dialogue révèle des engagements communs envers la nécessité de décoloniser les corps, les esprits et les épistémologies, et de créer des pratiques pédagogiques inclusives qui contribuent à déconstruire les privilèges de la



blancheur et à promouvoir une démocratie plus égalitaire. Ainsi, ensemble, les chercheuses renforcent le potentiel du Mouvement noir éducatif à agir comme un espace de résistance, d'autonomisation et de rééducation qui favorise la déconstruction des hiérarchies, la valorisation des savoirs non eurocentriques et la construction d'une société plus pluraliste et plus juste.

Mots-clés: Mouvement Noir Éducateur; Décolonisation; Inclusion; Subjectivités Afro-Descendantes.

INTRODUCTION

The present article presents an informal interview on the topic of the *Movimento Negro Educador*, a concept coined by Nilma Lino Gomes (2017) to designate a series of actions and articulations generated by black activists in Brazil with the explicit goal of confronting racism, particularly since the 20th century. The concept highlights “the transformative nature of this social movement, as well as its educational and re-educational potential in ... society,”⁵ having impacted movements in other Latin American countries. In what follows, three researchers from different fields of knowledge – namely psychology, language, the arts and mathematical education – share their thoughts on the *Movimento Negro Educador* and its ramifications in Uruguay, Brazil and Colombia, underscoring not only its transformative potential in the educational and social fields, but also its role in promoting collective Afro-descendant subjectivities with a strong sense of their cultural, racial, and epistemic identities.

⁵ GOMES, interview, November 27, 2025.



INTERVIEW

BRANCA FALABELLA FABRÍCIO (BFF): We are gathered here, three researchers who are part of the internationalization project entitled: “*Movimento Negro Educador*: Discourses, practices, and knowledges in circulation in Latin America.” It is a rather large group of researchers, involving more than ten people from many different Latin American countries. Today, the three of us come together to talk about our specific research projects and about the relationship that can be established between them and the *Movimento Negro Educador*. We begin by introducing ourselves (...) and then we’ll go over some questions we have prepared as a group to help organize our discussions. Who would like to start?

MARTHA CECÍLIA MOSQUERA URRUTIA (MCMU): Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Martha Cecília Mosquera Urrutia. I’m very honored to be taking part in this project, and also, to be in touch with all of those who have logged on and are also following this opportunity to share knowledge among us. I am a professor in the field of mathematics, at the South Colombian University (USCO), thoroughly invested in the fight for academic egalitarianism, in engaging in work focused on childhood education, and alongside that, I am also a researcher and currently I am the head of the undergraduate program here at the Department of Education.

ANA KARINA MOREIRA GODOY (AKMG): Well, it’s a great pleasure. Thank you Martha. Thank you Branca, for this afternoon we’re spending together. I’m really looking forward to sharing our experiences; we are forever learning and, for me as well, it is a pleasure to be here to share with you. Well, my name is Ana Karina Moreira, and my background is in psychology. I am also a professor with the Department of Psychology at the University of the Republic (UDELAR), in Uruguay. And, above all, as I like to say, I am a long-time militant in



the Afro-Uruguayan movement and a Latin American, an Afro-Latin American. From these points of reference we are also building this journey. I particularly like that designation, the idea of knowledge in circulation. That's how we build. I often say that we don't always communicate too well what the movement creates collectively. So, I see this meeting of ours as serving that purpose, to announce and organize the ideas we generate collectively with others. It's a pleasure for me to be here and share this afternoon with you and with everyone who may be watching.

BFF: For sure, Martha and Ana, it is a pleasure to be here and compare notes with you. I'm Branca Fabricio, I'm with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and my background is in applied linguistics. My studies, up to this point, have always dealt with the issue of the configuring of social identities and the relationship established between this construction of social identities and language. The racial issue, naturally, is featured in these processes. Initially, it was not the central focus of my research work, but gradually, for reasons that I will explain later on when answering the questions, the issue of race became very important. I would even say it became a key issue. Although my focus is more on discursive aspects, a lot has to do with processes of categorizing, grouping, establishing a hierarchy, and attributing value to people and bodies, and that is where the racial issue comes in. When we're answering the questions, I believe we will make clearer what it is, precisely, we study; the points that unite us; and the different views that we can share, contributing to each other's work. So, here is our first question to start off the conversation. What connection would you establish between the *Movimento Negro Educador*, in the perspective inaugurated by Professor Nilma Lino Gomes, and your field of research? Martha, would you like to start?

MCMU: Sure. I believe the *Movimento Negro Educador* is associated, or has to do, with what I am currently researching, in the sense of trying to empower people, acknowledging others, acknowledging ancestral knowledge,



and besides that, a great deal of what I research also has to do with curricular justice, insofar as we manage to incorporate our research findings into school curricula, also in colleges and universities. And not only that. Also in political terms, we have managed to incorporate the knowledge that we're continually producing. For example, here in Colombia, through Law No. 70.993, instituting the discipline of Afro-Colombian studies, through the educational parameters legislation, right? In other words, this knowledge that is produced constitutes knowledge that then gets around, it is not restricted to universities; so others have the chance to access it. It is not just for a select few. For instance, we are currently taking part in a research project at the university; we are in a partnership between our Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Equality and Equity, and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, through which we are training and certifying educational service agents to work with early childhood. So, we are training people who have to do with racial, ethnic and cultural diversity linked to black, Afro-descendant, and *Palenquera*⁶ identities, right? And with early childhood. What do we want to achieve with that? To connect people of all skin colors, people from all backgrounds who care for children, also to promote the understanding of diversity in the classroom environment, and to put it into practice working with children from early childhood onwards. So, it seems to me that this connects perfectly with the *Movimento Negro Educador*, in that this knowledge will maybe reach 100% of the population.

BFF: You bet. How about you, Ana Karina?

AKMG: It seems to me that the movement establishes a direct connection with my field of research. Nilma manages to articulate a movement that, had it not been named, would continue to be made invisible. I think it is important to call attention to that. Because once named, it manages to generate a collective identity that goes well beyond the disciplines themselves. I think it

⁶ *Palenqueras* are women vendors known for selling fruit and traditional sweets in the streets of Colombia. A distinctive feature of the country, these women are symbols of Afro-Caribbean resistance and culture.



demarcates a disciplinary field with a transdisciplinary approach. Within this *Movimento Negro Educador*, the political movement is not the same. This raises a much broader question, which I think is interesting to highlight. We definitely cannot address the racial phenomenon unless we do it from a holistic perspective. The *Movimento Negro Educador* thus proposes thinking about racism from a very broad perspective, incorporating the notion of matrices of oppression, that it also introduces. And in my specific strand of research, racial violence is seen to generate trauma and post-traumatic stress from exposure to acts of racial violence. This violence is sometimes experienced directly, within personal and interpersonal relationships, but it is certainly also a structural and structuring characteristic of institutions and of the entire social fabric. To this, we add another dimension, which is what psychology, especially analytical psychology, also called depth psychology, in my view can contribute with the movement, which are the phenomena of the order of the unconscious.

It is an issue I find particularly interesting. For example, if you take internalized racism, you'll see that these are typical phenomena of the order of the unconscious. And this is perhaps the first stage of working with the unconscious, these internalized and perpetuated notions of inferiority. Another dimension would be that of the group's collective unconscious, the group complex acting on the basis of notions of white privilege or of black inferiority. This phenomenon takes advantage of cultural complexes that regulate the subjective life of social groups and collectives, but which remain almost always practically unconscious. It is, for example, the common-sense ideas that weigh on the notions of what it is to live, to be, to exist, and therefore, to belong to a collective category of people which may be smaller or bigger in size.

Within these cultural complexes we find the racial cultural complexes. And forgive me for bringing this up, as it is something we don't usually talk about, but in my line of research I've been particularly concerned with studying the forces underpinning racism, which is something we don't like to admit on a



conscious level. That is why I am so interested in the unconscious forces that support racism. And that is where we come across these racial cultural complexes. They are built on fragments of history, of images and feelings, associated with convictions about the superiority of whites over blacks. Whiteness is something we do not necessarily need to articulate; it is something, as we know, naturalized, accepted as the norm. That is why we must confront this paradigm. Therefore, I believe that the *Movimento Negro Educador* could turn out to be a counter-archetype to whiteness. As I see it, the racial cultural complex is a bipolar phenomenon. So it would be interesting to play with its strength. It seems to me to be extremely promising, as the *Movimento Negro Educador* can be this collective subject that will cancel out whiteness, of that which is not yet articulated, you know? So that was what I wanted to bring, first of all, and also some other things that have to do with the body. Nilma places special emphasis on the body, doesn't she? As a territory that's there to be "(re)conquered" or resignified. It's actually very interesting, how Nilma introduces this aspect of movement, this notion, and this image of this collective subject which allows us to come together and to learn how to do things differently as well. And for us of Afro-descent, it comes at a time when it allows us to educate others, and re-educate ourselves as well.

That's something else I find extremely interesting, among what Nilma has contributed. Because we also need to re-educate ourselves, as a means of accomplishing this, of "reconquering" ourselves, to distinguish ourselves from others, in operational terms. Not separation for the sake of separation, as in creating polarizing differences, but rather, in order to restore our identity. Something else I find interesting is the fact that it is a movement that integrates, that allows for a different way of thinking about non-Afro people, about non-blacks. And allows us to carve out a place in society where one can exist without necessarily being a white privileged person. I mean, giving up white privilege. That seems like a great thing to me, and interesting as well, in a space



that, on its own, functions to promote a real democracy, a democratic integration. This concept of a *Movimento Negro Educador* really seems outstanding; that's why I think it is extremely important to incorporate it, approaching it from an Afro-Latin-American angle. Well, I guess that's what is most important. I really like this concept and I could talk about it for hours on end, drawing a connection with my field of work, which has to do with these unconscious forces that underpin racism. I'll leave it here for now, maybe we can come back to it later.

BFF: I guess I should explain how someone, who in Brazil is legible as white, decides to approach the *Movimento Negro Educador*. My proximity has to do with material I started reading, of decolonial texts, by Grosfogel (2011a) and Quijano (2000), which deal very explicitly with racial issues, as they place racism, and slavery, at the core of decolonial studies. Ranking and valorizing systems and matrices of oppression which structure the coloniality of power, mobilizing a hierarchy of languages, religions, bodies, sexualities, genders, class, and the urgent need to approach through a different lens, other than our Eurocentric epistemic lens, these phenomena and these matrices of oppression. So, I started looking for black authors who could bypass the Eurocentric perspective. They're not hard to find, I came across a wealth of publications; however, they are publications which do not get around much, or that have a limited circulation. So, it's not a question of a lack of academic output. Nilma speaks of a process of effacement, doesn't she? That's how I came across Nilma's texts and became aware of the existence of a *Movimento Negro Educador*, that has been around for quite some time, it's not a recent phenomenon.

However, it isn't as debated as it should be, and is not very well known in my field of applied linguistics. My introduction to critical thinking on racial issues and whiteness came in the context of challenging Eurocentric logic. That's how I became interested in the *Movimento Negro Educador*. Regarding



that, what Nilma says is that there is a great wealth of texts being produced, but racism itself keeps them from getting around. In my view, this is impacted by education, which is a field that interests me, and that is connected to language, as my research interests entail linguistic (re-)education. Because as I see it, in order to resignify and promote a change in the direction of more inclusive and more democratic relations in society requires mobilizing a different view of language. Later on we can perhaps go into this in greater detail. I don't know if Martha would like to add something on her relationship with Nilma and the movement.

MCMU: Sure. Hey, I'm listening to the two of you and it's thrilling. Because, in a way, this is an attitude that, as Nilma explains, strengthens us. It is believing that I can, let's say, move ahead with what I'm doing. I always give as example, and I carry with me, the issues raised by Nilma concerning people like us, who work with children. So, let's say that when we mention the *Movimento Negro Educador*, that it seeks to empower education, from early childhood up to old age, in the field of mathematics, there is something very important. Mathematics is a field that discriminates within itself. It just so happens that we are very dependent on colonial issues of which we are not always fully aware. For example, in math lessons, when the teacher demands that the exercise be perfect, that things have to be exactly as the teacher says so, there is a sense of urgency, the problems assigned have to be solved then and there. The number of math problems assigned seems to matter more than their quality, and so on, and so forth. I could name a number of attributes, of questions we observe and work on in this area of education. The same goes for children, when we come across these curricula that are rigid, in other words, the child first learns to count, then learns to add and subtract, and only then learns the multiplication tables. This, ultimately, draws you away from a relevant field for those of us who work with mathematics, which is ethno-mathematics.



Ethno-mathematics seeks to gather ancestral knowledge and attempts to recognize what black people have contributed throughout history in this field. Therefore, this *Movimento Negro Educador* allows us not only to establish a connection between the traditional mathematical knowledge we deal with, and African mathematical thought, but also to perceive in our ancestors and our African roots, how they developed certain mathematical notions that go well beyond, in most cases, these mathematical concepts attributed to European thought.

An important part is when Nilma talks about intersectionality. It is this movement concerning intersectionality that allows me to understand such disparate points of view and understand that, often, this reasoning produced by black people could not reach us in the same manner as European thought, due to the fact that ours were oral traditions. Thus, in a way, everything else is linked to that – from the education of children of different backgrounds, to the training of teachers, to a lack of accountability, and politically speaking, to legitimizing these knowledges. This knowledge is just as valid as Eurocentric knowledge, however, so far, they each occupy a compartmentalized space.

On the other hand, they seem to be incredibly connected. In terms of examples, here in Colombia we have the Raizal people. The Raizal are a people who are little known in our Caribbean cities. These cities also present interesting customs such as, for example, the Sankofa, which is a complete philosophical system in which what has validity is connected to the past, reflecting on the past in order to live the present and build a better future. In this sense, this grants us a power, not just of employing these notions, but it also leads to political power, organizational power, power that is granted, for instance, to families, to the shared family values, to ancestral medicine, you know? They all become part of a wealth of knowledge, and who better than mothers and grandmothers to take on the responsibility of passing down this knowledge from generation to generation? It seems to me that regarding ways



of connecting with the movement, we are able to name many, such as the inclusive institutional policies of guaranteeing university access, that we've seen more recently. Also, in the wake of the *Movimento Negro Educador*, we've managed to point out a few excluding parameters within this institutional policy of inclusion. How does it work? Politics comes up when, for instance, the number of black students graduating from university becomes an issue. Will universities agree to receive two black students per academic program?

At least now in Brazil we find that there are already some universities in which black students make up 50% of all admissions, right? And it's not just a question of making up fifty percent of college admissions, to study this other cultural framework, but also that they're impacting curricular structure. We've only begun to understand how those contents that we, as a people, collectively produced are able to influence curricula. Therefore, the connections that can be established seem multiple to me. The question is: from what angle do we approach them? It seems to me that the *Movimento Negro Educador* yields a power that is still to be reckoned with. And I hope that, in the scope of this research work we're doing, we will be able to position this power that the *Movimento Negro Educador* has, that somehow tries to empower people, as I've said, from early childhood up until old age.

BFF: I agree, Martha, so I would like to ask the two of you something in relation to language. The texts I have been reading call into question colonial language models, language models committed to a notion of purity, to the idea of boundaries and bounded languages. "So, over here we have the Portuguese language"; "And over there we have the Spanish language." These clearly established boundaries will immediately repudiate any semblance of blending. There is an aversion to blends. I see this in the context of our colonial heritage, as a product of that. The other issue has to do with this process of establishing hierarchies, continuously. Hierarchies of languages, of nations, of bodies, of peoples. All these ranking processes, which are discursively constituted,



become naturalized. All the norms become naturalized and seem to have always been there, not as something that was put in place, as the result of a violent colonial process. These processes of naturalization, of essentialized identities generate a series of 'truths', scientific truths, which go against precisely the historical process you were describing, a historical process of building and reiterating, of sedimenting ideas that weren't always there. There are other ways of thinking. There are different worldviews, as Martha was pointing out. Therefore, I ask myself, what could be done, in the field of education and in the field of psychology, to inaugurate a different stance, one that is not seeking to ontologize, not trying to define natural essences? Another way of imagining human beings, language, prospects of being. How do you see it?

AKMG: I believe the *Movimento Negro Educador* is already generating an openness in language, it is already breaking with convention. From a psychological standpoint, I see this very clearly, already on a conscious level, but I can't help thinking also of the unconscious level. Therefore, I believe that on a conscious level, little by little, written and oral language are transformed as they incorporate new concepts. However, these concepts, when they are named, when they are introduced, I'm not sure, but thinking for example about psychology? Starting with mythology, right? I think about mythological concepts and the archetypal processes of development of the psyche, which have a lot to do with mythology. I think back on the mythology we learn, especially the mythology we learn in university, and by that I mean university, not as a multiverse, as Grosfoguel (2011b) describes. Universities are not universes, but rather, multiverses. This is a challenge that the *Movimento Negro Educador* has actually been facing for a while. In the psychology I practice, known as depth psychology, or analytical psychology, perhaps we can begin to address the African mythologies, and not just the Greco-Roman, or "Judeo-Christian", mythologies to think about the development of individuation processes.



Processes we all undergo, but coming from different places. With reference to language, it seems to me that processes of designating and expressing are featured in the individuation processes, but they can be reappropriated. I believe racism has operated as a strategy of canceling people, precisely in their ontological essence. In its wake there were left human beings without souls. Or lost souls that are left to wander. Racism and whiteness have certainly caused a lot of harm, a lot of suffering of a psychological order. I usually say that, in tandem, whiteness and racism turn us into people who do not fit the mold, these very stereotyped societal positions of being. This causes a lot of mental illness. Such alienation establishes a developmental arrest. One could say that there is a narcissistic wound leading to a fragile Ego, which, in turn, could lead to serious pathologies. Now, back to what you were asking, Branca, I think the challenge is in designating; designating and reappropriating ourselves, in that game of taking the floor to position our discourse, our knowledge, our vernacular, our way of speaking, and our bodies in these spaces. They are already symbols, our bodies are symbols. So, it seems to me, sometimes, that language is multiple, it is highly symbolic. Our bodies in university spaces are already promoting this idea of a multiverse, besides being bodies that talk. The fact that these bodies are in transit through spaces of exclusion comes at a cost. I like to remind people how this issue of racism comes in response to a question, to a cultural complex in which the group psyche is unconsciously mobilized.

I like to say to these bodies, when they are circulating through these spaces: listen to the body. What happens to a black person, when we discuss that? What happens to the body of a black man moving across a white space, a space marked by whiteness? I think the ancestral memory of the pain suffered is remembered at this moment. This body is afraid of what might come to pass.



As to Uruguay, of the “*Tacita del Plata*”⁷, it is one of the whitest places in Latin America. But fortunately we are a concept in progress. We are a living symbol of the fact that we are questioning this essentialist game we play with whiteness. I don’t know if it has become clear, but it is this game I think we need to rethink. Because I always think that languages are multiple, the forms, colors, ways of talking, ways of laughing, ways of carrying out our existence, you know? Not behaving in accordance with the canon is often troubling, as Esther Pineda (2024) tells us when she talks about aesthetic violence. “Have the hips, have the hair, be everything the beauty standard of whiteness demands.” I think there are several languages and the good thing is that we are able to translate them in order to share in the knowledge and the traditional knowledges collectively with society. I would fall tremendously short if I were to think of just one word, I guess ...

BFF: Naturally, so we have to broaden our understanding of language, broaden also the idea of what it is to listen. You yourself brought that. And I am thinking here, what would it be, also, to see? I believe we need to expand all these practices, of listening, of speaking, of seeing.

AKMG: I’ll mention something that I think is fundamental. I have a friend who likes to remind me, when we start discussing this, of the dimension of Afro-descendants⁸. He talks about the dimension of blackness. I really like that idea because it is a dimension, it is more than a perspective, because sometimes academic language refers to “the ethnic-racial perspective”. I myself

⁷ The popular expression “*la Tacita del Plata*” (the little teacup of the Río de la Plata) has been used to refer to Uruguay as a small, well-ordered, and relatively harmonious country within the regional context of Latin America. The name is part of a repertoire of symbolic representations that were consolidated in the national imagination during the 20th century—along with others, such as “*la Suiza de América*” (the Switzerland of the Americas) or “*el paisito*” (the little country)—and that have contributed to constructing a narrative of exceptionalism associated with institutional stability and social cohesion. Authors such as Buriano Castro (2009) and Andrews (2010) argue that these types of national images also operated as part of a discourse of social harmony that tended to render social and racial conflicts in the country’s history invisible.

⁸ In Brazil, the term “Afro-descendants” refers to black and brown people.



use it sometimes to explain a point-of-view, but it is much more than that. It is a dimension, isn't it? It is something holistic, broad, and with that we move through all sorts of spaces. It seems really incredible to me, that's why concepts are always, in a way, simplifying complex dimensions.

BFF: Great point. Martha, would you like to add something? I was going to move on to another question, but do you want to comment?

MCMU: I do, there are so many things... For instance, just now, what you said about language, about our bodies talking, and our hair talking. So, alongside these pedagogical practices, we are allowing black people to start living their own lives, and not live their lives *dependent on* something or someone. Otherwise, I'd be here debating racism as a way of vouching for myself, but not as a way of vouching for my race and how impressive it is. So, these questions concerning language are absolutely wonderful; we could spend a long time on this topic. So, regarding what we were discussing a while back, about what kind of connection could be established between the different types of language, the *Movimento Negro Educador* and our line of research, with what I do, I'm still sticking to my math, and within the scope of the *Movimento Negro Educador*, to resistance. This is crucial so we black people can understand what we have achieved all throughout history. And now we are producing knowledge about ourselves. Because, precisely when we talk about that mathematics as a language, or when we refer to that expression, we always regard black people, or the poor, as someone who has less or is less than others. Somehow, the prospect of progress is always dependent on someone else. And it seems to me that there is something that is also very relevant in the pedagogical practice of the *Movimento Negro Educador*.

That it promotes engaging in collective struggles and the exercising of unity. For instance. we practice Ubuntu: that is, I embrace my brother; I embrace my fellow citizen; I embrace my friend. I adopt these practices that empower us all (...) So how can we help one another? We have a movement, I insist on it,



that in the words of Nilma (2017) is here to educate, to somehow help us move ahead. I would also like to go back to something Karina has said, something I think is worth underlining, not because other things were not important, but it seems really important to contemplate the psychological aspect, because structural racism also places us in a position of inferiority, which somehow doesn't allow us to project ourselves as people and be in charge of our own lives. It seems to me that these are the connections we need to establish from the standpoint of our different areas (...) So, I'll leave it at that.

BFF: Look, I think we could try to answer the next question, that is linked to what you were just saying. What language could this movement use, then, to advance this debate with society? Ana has already talked a little about that, about the multiple languages. About using the body, images, music... Would you like to add to that, Ana?

AKMG: Yes, I was captivated by what Martha said. And it reminds me how... there is something about the language of popular sayings, that I really love. I think we should work hard at, pay special attention to common sayings and expressions in the language; for instance, there's one that goes: "*Los negros después de las 12 no piensan*" ("After 12 noon, black people stop thinking"). Or to general comments about the hair, for instance... the number of expressions in the language regarding the hair tied to the paradigm of whiteness, is amazing. They are training us to occupy a place of inferiority. In fact, wouldn't it be great to have a line of work that could be called black psychology, which takes common everyday knowledge and reappropriates it and values orality as a tool for educating the psyche, as psychology, but also as elements that shape thought? That would be really interesting. I think the language of whiteness triggers the master and slave archetype. That is the relationship. We need other languages to reverse that relationship, but concerning this issue of language, specifically, I thought of some fields of language which might help us, such as the judicial-political language Nilma (2017) mentions.



In her text, Nilma talks a lot about legislation and public policy. In Uruguay we have a few such efforts aiming to improve jobs access, education, and a reappraisal of culture and education, of culture in the context of school curricula. However, we have not made much progress. We already have legislation, for example, more than ten years of legislation, but Uruguay still has a long way to go to make some inroads, beyond the discourse of political correctness. I guess on this issue there could be cooperation with other countries, such as Brazil, the frailness of our progress in the matter, and this has a lot to do with coloniality of the psyche, of black people themselves, you know? They are not a minority; they are only a minority in relation to power structures. I think this also weakens us. In order to think about things that we could also access through psychology, we have these elements on the attempt to free the mind of colonial shackles, as Quince Duncan (1988) puts it. So, he thought about it in terms of judicial-political language. In artistic and corporeal language, don't even mention it, it's something that all of us can do. Jung (2014 / 1934-1955) says something like "the unconscious speaks the language of poetry".

I think this is absolutely right. Art is maybe the best language to express archetypical images. I think of these forms of expression such as the arts, cinema, dance, literature. They are living symbols that communicate resilience and challenge racial stereotypes. I think we, in fact, need to target these languages because they are languages that don't require an academic background. For instance, what you were saying, Martha, about the separation, the privilege, well, we are the keepers of that, and so we have to be careful about this place, which is shared, but it is also a place which is often plundered by whiteness. An example of that can be seen in what happens to *candombe*⁹ in

⁹ *Candombe* is an Afro-descendant cultural expression of Uruguay, which has been practiced in Montevideo since the late 18th century by communities of enslaved Africans and their descendants. According to the musicologist Lauro Ayerstarán, it consists of a distinct and autonomous musical manifestation, which cannot be reduced to other Afro-American traditional



Uruguay. Candombe is now Uruguayan, it is no longer Afro-Uruguayan. Which I think is great, it is part of the idiosyncrasy of being a symbol of Uruguay, but it is also of Afro-Uruguayan origin. They take the concept, but they efface the subject. It seems this happens all over the place, doesn't it? Whiteness is so quick to explore the cultural asset commercially. This is very important. As for the language of academic activism, I think we are facing a huge challenge which is: how the knowledge we're building in universities is capable of dismantling 'scientific racism', establishing bridges between theory and praxis, but also insuring that epistemic racism does not come into play again. Only thus will we be able to take charge of ourselves as sources of knowledge. It is important to have teachers and professors, and also politicians, who can advocate for a true democracy, for representativeness as a guiding principle of a real democratic society. It is more than emancipation, it has to do with the fact that we don't need others to represent us, we can speak for ourselves. This, to me, seems equally important.

Finally, digital language comes to mind, to incorporate something very up-to-date. I think networks today can be officially declared to be sort of spaces of collective catharsis. They have democratized speech, its circulation, and amplified the power of speech. This digital language seems important. Nowadays, the number of Afro-descendants producing content on the web seems incredible. So many young people are taking part, sharing their discourse, practices and knowledge. Social media platforms, when you look at it, are incredibly educational, truly. I love seeing so many young people, and others who are perhaps not so young, in teaching roles, with a different

cultural manifestations. Ayerstarán established that *candombe* evolved from private ritual practices into public street *comparsas* (musical troupe or group, central to street celebrations), with the earliest registered *candombe* performances dating to 1832. His research has consolidated *candombe* as an open, community practice, of profound value as a cultural heritage manifestation. In 2009, it was first included in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



professional trajectory from the one I had. Well, they are digital natives and they generate a lot of support, which is a different sort of course of action, but they too are part of the *Movimento Negro Educador*. They are doing some outstanding work of expanding collective consciousness to foster real democratic values.

MCMU: Yes, it's all very interesting, it is, actually. Let's just say that it gets you thinking, doesn't it? There are many rough edges any which way you look at it. I mean, if you look at it from the perspective of the speaker, where he is writing from, where he lives his life, right? You notice maybe he's not exactly literate but he's got his own way of communicating, of understanding and benefiting from inclusion, at least over the territory where they live. Do we still have any more questions to answer?

AKMG: This issue of ethno-education, this question of restoring, of the emptiness, once again, of how racism has left us hollowed, how it infantilized us. Grada Kilomba talks a little about this, about an infantilized psyche, as if we couldn't survive without white civilization. Ethno-education builds us a way back home. That's what seems amazing to me and universities should be much more open to this line of work.

MCMU: I agree. And well, back to the practicalities of pedagogy, somehow it seems to me that we, as professors, have this chance to promote inclusion, to follow students closely, to use our voice, you know? So, it seems there is a lot to be done, to be produced, then ...

BFF: We are coming to the end of our interview, this is our last question. How is the *Movimento Negro Educador* tied to contemporary contexts? Let's do a fast round, just to close it off. What would the key issue be, for each of you? I was thinking, well ... something that really bothers me in contemporary contexts is hate speech in general. Racial slurs and violent shows of racism are quite common displays of hate speech. So, as I see it, the *Movimento Negro Educador*



establishes a direct dialogue with this phenomenon, which requires thoughtful consideration and re-education. What would each one of you like to highlight, or call attention to, in contemporary contexts?

MCMU: Yes, well, it seems to me, like you said, how to counterbalance this whole political issue of hate, and I also think that's where you take a stand, because, sometimes, for instance, when they're in school, children, if left to their own devices, children are very open in their relationships, they're busy living their own lives, right? Until the day comes when they suffer a major blow on the part of the system, right, which starts ranking them. So, somehow it seems to me that this is linked to the discourses, to these contemporary issues, in my opinion, and as Karina was saying just now, that it is this great critical mass of black people, this movement, that by studying, observing and positioning discourses, that is what will somehow allow for things to change. Take, for instance, the fact that some years ago nobody would ever think about Obama becoming president of the United States. Here in Colombia, although it has been really hard for Francia Márquez¹⁰, very hard indeed, this has also helped to raise awareness, because when people start seeing this woman, who is a leader, who is the vice-president, so then other groups start treating her as such, and this generates a movement in which there are mixed-race people who, all of a sudden, are on the other side of the divide, who are also demanding respect. This whole awareness process seems crucial to me. In this context we're going through at present, about which we are taking a stand, these discourses serve to establish this link. I'd like to mention this, I'm not sure it amounts to much, but it does get me thinking.

BFF: Sure. What about you, Ana?

¹⁰ Francia Elena Márquez Mina (Suárez, Cauca, 1 December 1981) is an Afro-Colombian lawyer, social leader and activist. Internationally renowned for her defense of the territory in Cauca, she was a recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2018. She was a leader in the fight for environmental, ethnic-racial and gender justice. In 2022 she became the first Afro-descendant woman to become vice-president of Colombia, representing the social movement *Soy Porque Somos* (I am because we are).



AKMG: Yes, well I would say it's about the costs, I ponder on it a lot, because the suffering that affects people, I think has a cumulative effect. It's a long-term process trying to revert genocide, and the epistemicide that whiteness brought about.

BFF: Linguicide as well, right?

AKMG: Exactly. Linguicide. Actually, I really like Grosfoguel (2011a) on this issue, so it was very appropriate of you to bring him up, as it really helps me to get a grip on coloniality. First, there's the issue of colonialism and, after that, of coloniality. And as we've grown accustomed, as we are really in the grip of coloniality, so much so that today ... it's been so hard to unravel it, even if it's a battle of brother against brother, right? How did this issue come up? So, sometimes I think Francia Márquez is a symbol, precisely because, at a high personal cost to her, to her family, she is helping, despite all she is probably having to withstand, right? From this very personal context, which we sometimes see ourselves in, as in these positions, in this question that we can also notice in the movement, how a Beatriz Ramírez¹¹, an Alicia Esquivel¹², will

¹¹ Beatriz Ramírez Abella (Montevideo, 1956) is a feminist, a political activist and a key figure within the Afro-Uruguayan movement. Cofounder of *Mundo Afro* (Afro World), she has been a deputy alderwoman, the head of the Department of Afro-descendant Women at INMUJERES; an advisor at Municipality B, and she is currently an advisor to the Secretary of the Presidency for Human Rights. She was also the Director of INMUJERES and vice-president of the Inter-American Commission for Women (2013-2015). She was a recipient of a MEC Nelson Mandela Award, and was declared an Honorary Citizen of Montevideo. She is also a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother.

¹² Alicia Ángela Esquivel Rodríguez (Montevideo, 1949) is a pediatric doctor and a homeopathic doctor, with a master's degree in public policies and gender studies. A historic figurehead in the Afro-descendant and feminist movements in Uruguay, she was engaged from a very early age in the *Mundo Afro* (Afro World) movement, and has presided in the past and is currently presiding UAFRO, and cofounded the Afro-Uruguayan Women's Political Dialogue. She presided the Department of Afro-descendant Women at MIDES (2010-014), and coordinated the Gender Thematic Unit of the *Frente Amplia* and is at present participating in the joint presidency of the Afro-descendant Anti-racist National Commission. She also takes part in the academic committee of the Diploma on Afro-descendancy and Public Policies at UDELAR (University of the Republic in Uruguay). She is also a mother and grandmother.



give rise to an Ana Karina, and an Ana Karina gives rise to others, and we move other steps up the ladder. I believe this awareness, that you occupy a certain place and have a certain responsibility, this, on the one hand, helps you keep up the fight, Martha, but on the other hand, it helps to have this in mind, that I really believe the *Movimento Negro Educador* can be an agent for social change, and from the vantage point of psychology, I like to sort of think of it as a collective healer. Even making use of that notion of the psychotherapist somehow as a wounded healer, I do believe that is what the *Movimento Negro Educador* is, a wounded healer.

Wounds that never heal completely, but willing to heal a little each day, making it a process of collective transformation. It seems these processes are essential not only for personal and collective individuation processes, but also for social justice. So we are in progress. I believe, Branca, this is the responsibility placed on our shoulders at this historical juncture. That is sort of how it is. Whiteness has a tendency to annihilate everything that appears to be standing in its way, that in its imaginary conception seems to pose a threat. I believe the *Movimento Negro Educador* is a force for unity, perhaps for this reason, that it is right at the bottom rung of the ladder, regarding hierarchies, so it is able to show empathy with all other struggles, it is an invitation to stand with others. I think this is a strategy we employ, inwardly, but also outwardly, to generate an amplified emancipatory field. How to establish a dialogue with others, not because we see ourselves in any way as saviors of others, but because we're all in this together.

BFF: Certainly.

AKMG: We're on the same journey, and this is something that, well, it's a daily challenge.



BFF: If, before closing our conversation, we had to summarize the gist of what we talked about, in just three words, what words would you choose? Three words.

MCMU: Karina, you go first.

AKMG: I would say: collective, articulated and soulful, because here we are, Uruguay, Brazil and Colombia, building bridges so we can cross over collectively on an emancipatory path. This is my main takeaway from our conversation.

MCMU: Well, I would say empowered, I'd say committed, and I'd also like to say educating.

AKMG: How marvelous! I agree.

BFF: I would say: listening, learning, but mostly listening and learning and being very humble, with a lot of empathy. I think we managed to cover it all on our conversation, the three of us, right? So, let's leave it here. Thank you all for following us. And thanks to you two, girls, for this great opportunity to share your thoughts with us.

AKMG: Thank you, and I hope many people are able to share and comment as well.

MCMU: I hope so too. So, thanks to all those who were following our discussion. Thank you so much to all those who logged on. We are indeed all part of this *Movimento Negro Educador*. It's important for everyone to see themselves as leaders and, as Karina was just saying, that each one concentrate on opening new paths, on following in the tracks of others because, even when traveling alone, one still leaves tracks, but also follows in the tracks of others.

AKMG: Exactly.



CONCLUSION

The conversation sought to delve into the multifaceted impact of the *Movimento Negro Educador* – political, educational, linguistic, cultural, and psychological – throughout Latin America, highlighting its potential to reshape social imaginaries. The dialogue reveals a series of shared principles, among which, a commitment to the urgency of decolonizing bodies, minds and epistemes; developing and promoting inclusive pedagogical practices; and dismantling the privileges of whiteness. In association, these actions would lead to a more egalitarian and democratic society. Thus, the researchers stress the potential of the *Movimento Negro Educador* to act as a space for resistance and re-education, that promotes the deconstruction of hierarchical systems, the valorization of non-Eurocentric knowledge, and the construction of a more pluralistic and just society.

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