



APPLIED LINGUISTICS, HISTORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY: THE MOVIMENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR TRANSFORMING EPISTEMOLOGIES AND RESEARCH AGENDAS¹

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Abstract: The conversation between Glenda Cristina Valim de Melo, Lina Rosa Berrio Palomo, and Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira addresses how the *Movimento Negro Educador* constitutes a concept, based on the works of Nilma Lino Gomes and her seminal book *O Movimento Negro Educador* (2017), as well as a political category with various ramifications. At first, each researcher addresses how they came in touch with the category and which epistemic ramifications can be currently found in the disciplines of Applied Linguistics, History and Anthropology. Thus, they produce an analysis of their disciplinary fields and their own research agendas. Subsequently, they carry out a discussion on how contemporary issues of decolonization, racism and anti-racism, and the crisis of democracies with the rise of the far right and its reactionary agenda are affected by the *Movimento Negro Educador*. Many are the languages that allow for ways of educating society and individuals for social emancipation.

Keywords: *Movimento Negro Educador*; Racism and anti-racism; Applied Linguistics; History and historiography; Anthropology.

LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA, HISTÓRIA E ANTROPOLOGIA: O MOVIMENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR TRANSFORMANDO AS EPISTEMOLOGIAS E AGENDAS DE PESQUISA

Resumo: O diálogo entre Glenda Cristina Valim de Melo, Lina Rosa Berrio Palomo e Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira aborda como o movimento negro educador constitui-se num conceito, a partir dos trabalhos de Nilma Lino Gomes e de seu livro seminal *O Movimento Negro Educador* (2017), e também uma categoria política com vários desdobramentos. Num primeiro momento, cada pesquisador aborda como tiveram contato com a categoria e a maneira como pode-se discutir desdobramentos epistêmicos nas disciplinas da Linguística Aplicada, História e Antropologia. Assim, produzem uma análise dos campos disciplinares e das próprias agendas de investigação. Posteriormente, orientam uma discussão sobre como as questões contemporâneas da descolonização, do racismo e antirracismo e crise das democracias com a ascensão do conservadorismo e da extrema direita são afetadas pelo movimento negro educador. São várias as linguagens que produzem formas de educar a sociedade e os sujeitos para a emancipação social.

Palavras-Chave: Movimento Negro Educador; Racismo e antirracismo; Linguística Aplicada; História e historiografia; Antropologia.



LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA, HISTORIA Y ANTROPOLOGÍA: EL MOVIMIENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR TRANSFORMANDO LAS EPISTEMOLOGÍAS Y AGENDAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Resumen: El diálogo entre Glenda Cristina Valim de Melo, Lina Rosa Berrio Palomo y Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira aborda como el movimiento negro educador se constituye en un concepto académico central, y también en una categoría política con varios desarrollos; a partir de los trabajos de Nilma Lino Gomes y el libro seminal *El Movimiento Negro Educador* (2017). En este primer momento, cada investigador aborda como tuvieron contacto con esta categoría y como ella permite discutir los desarrollos epistémicos en las disciplinas de la lingüística aplicada, la historia y la antropología. Se realiza así un análisis de los campos disciplinarios y de las propias agendas de investigación. Posteriormente se aborda una discusión sobre cómo las cuestiones contemporáneas de la descolonización, el racismo, el antirracismo y la crisis de las democracias con el ascenso del conservadorismo y la extrema derecha, son interpeladas por el movimiento negro educador. Son varios los lenguajes que producen formas de educar la sociedad y los sujetos, para la emancipación social.

Palabras-clave: Movimiento Negro Educador; Racismo y antirracismo; Lingüística Aplicada; Historia e historiografía; Antropología.

LINGUISTIQUE APPLIQUÉE, HISTOIRE ET ANTHROPOLOGIE: LE MOVIMENTO NEGRO EDUCADOR TRANSFORMANT DES ÉPISTÉMOLOGIES ET DES PROGRAMMES DE RECHERCHE

Résumé: Le dialogue entre Glenda Cristina Valim de Melo, Lina Rosa Berrio Palomo et Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira aborde la manière dont le *movimento negro educador* se constitue en concept, à partir des travaux de Nilma Lino Gomes et son livre fondateur *O Movimento Negro Educador* (2017), mais aussi en catégorie politique aux multiples ramifications. Dans un premier moment, chaque chercheur aborde la manière dont il est entré en contact avec cette catégorie et la façon dont on peut discuter des ramifications épistémiques dans les disciplines de la linguistique appliquée, de l'histoire et de l'anthropologie. Ils produisent ainsi une analyse des domaines disciplinaires et de leurs propres programmes de recherche. Ils orientent ensuite la discussion sur la manière dont les questions contemporaines de la décolonisation, du racisme et de l'antiracisme, ainsi que la crise des démocraties avec la montée du conservatisme et de l'extrême droite, sont affectées par le mouvement noir éducateur. Il existe plusieurs langages qui produisent des formes d'éducation de la société et des individus en vue de l'émancipation sociale.



Mots-clés: *Movimento Negro Educador* ; Racisme et antiracisme ; Linguistique appliquée ; Histoire et historiographie ; Anthropologie.

INTRODUCTION

The following interview was developed as part of a research project entitled “*Movimento Negro Educador*⁵: discursos, práticas e saberes em circulação na América Latina” (“*Movimento Negro Educador: discourses, practices and knowledges in circulation in Latin America*”) (2023-2026). Coordinated by Glenda Cristina Valim de Melo, the project was developed with the support of a 2023 grant by the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). Among the many actions envisaged within the project in order to establish a Latin-American research network on language as social practice and on race relations as structuring factors in contemporary debates – both in academia, and more broadly in Latin-American society as a whole – the present encounter is one of a series of six interviews. The researchers involved in the project have been organized into groups and were urged to reflect on the concept of the “*Movimento Negro Educador*” and the links it establishes with their current lines of research.

The present interview brings together Glenda Melo, Samuel Oliveira and Lina Rosa Berrio to discuss work in the fields of Applied Linguistics, History, and Anthropology, focusing on how the concept developed by Nilma Lino Gomes in her seminal book *Movimento Negro Educador* (2017) allows them to reflect on

⁵ The category *Movimento Negro Educador* was created by Nilma Lino Gomes (2017) and aims to understand how black social movements and their communities mobilize the social notion of ‘race’ to advocate for emerging pedagogies—anti-racist forms of both formal and informal education approaches that ultimately transform society, the State, and public policies, promoting different types of knowledge.



their research and on how it is being shaped by this conceptual approach. It is an interdisciplinary dialogue on epistemology in the Humanities, on interdisciplinary analytical developments in language and social practices, and on the implications of decolonizing knowledge from the perspectives inaugurated with the Black diaspora and Afrodescendancies.

Their participations establish and demarcate different social and academic vantage points. Glenda Melo is a professor and researcher at UFRJ's Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Applied Linguistics. She specializes in the articulation between language and discourse-in-society, racial issues and intersectionality. Her participation focuses on the links that can already be established between the field of Applied Linguistics and the *Movimento Negro Educador*, notwithstanding the fact that these collaborations are still in their early days. With a PhD in Language Studies and in Applied Linguistics (AL), Glenda's contributions stress the need to incorporate the perspective proposed by Nilma Lino Gomes into our approach to language.

Samuel Oliveira, on the other hand, approaches the issue from the historian's standpoint. A professor and researcher at CEFET/RJ with the Graduate Program in Ethnic-Racial Relations (PPRER), he is also associated with the Postgraduate Program in Social Memory at UNIRIO. He specializes in the formation of the Brazilian nation state and the establishment of citizenship rights in 20th century Brazil, as well as the Black movement and popular culture in urban settings. His contributions have to do with the ways in which the shaping of the nation state in its inception, and black experiences and identities are informed by the emancipatory debate in the post-abolition of slavery, with special focus placed on impacts on suburban residential areas (shantytowns) and the *favelas* (slums). With a PhD in History, Politics and Cultural Heritage at CPDOC-FGV, his contributions underline the ways in which the *Movimento Negro Educador* impacts historiography and social memory.



Lina Rosa Berrio is a professor and researcher with The Centre for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS), in Mexico, and currently coordinates a Graduate Program in Social Anthropology at the South Pacific regional unit. In her Anthropology work, she focuses primarily on health issues of indigenous and Afro-Mexican populations, particularly concerning reproductive health. With a PhD in Social Anthropology, Lina Rosa Berrio underlines the intersectionality between issues concerning health, gender and racism, as well as the statistical invisibility of populations of African descent in Mexico, and the role of the State in designing and implementing state programs. Her research on indigenous and black midwifery, in particular, stirs up social memories concerning these female caregivers.

The interview was held online on June 4, 2025 and sought to underscore the interdisciplinary character of the debate involving the *movimento negro educador* being carried out in Latin America. The material transcribed here has been edited by the three authors, and underwent further proofreading and referencing processes in order to give support to the written text and facilitate comprehension of the discussion that took place.

INTERVIEW

GLENDIA CRISTINA VALIM DE MELO (GCV): What connection would you establish between the *movimento negro educador* in the perspective inaugurated by Nilma Lino Gomes and your field of research?

SAMUEL OLIVEIRA (SO): I first came in touch with the notion of a *movimento negro educador* in 2018, shortly after Nilma Lino Gomes's book was first edited. I remember she came to campus to deliver the keynote speech at the semester's opening ceremony at the Graduate Program in Ethnic-Racial Relations, and to talk about her book, *O Movimento Negro Educador* (2017). She



had completed a postdoc in Portugal, so the book amassed her considerations at the end of that process and the many investigations carried out concerning the relationship between education and the black movement. When I first read Nilma's book, I was amazed. I read it in no time and our students in the Graduate Program in Ethnic-Racial Relations practically devoured it. Several researches started popping up incorporating concepts from the book. I recall one research paper which impressed me particularly, it was Rachel Nascimento's⁶ research, under the supervision of Prof. Roberto Borges⁷, in which she analyzed the Theater of the Oppressed from the perspective of the *movimento negro educador*. From then on we could notice different debates and inroads being made in different areas.

The way I see it, the *movimento negro educador* has promoted what could be characterized as a sort of analytic turn. That would explain why this category is so influential and has been incorporated into so many fields. It highlights the ways in which the black social movement puts in place epistemologies and enables actions promoting social change and educating both individuals and society as a whole. In Cultural Studies debates centered on black intellectuals⁸, there is an underlying understanding that within the diasporic movement, black political culture engaged in political struggles in order to expand citizenship rights and, at the same time, inaugurated its own epistemological toolkit within the Humanities. Nilma proposes a change of direction in the debate, as her concept amounts to more than just a specific

⁶ Rachel Nascimento da Rocha has obtained an M.A. in Ethnic-Racial Relations from CEFET-RJ, with her dissertation *The Color of Oppressed Women: the Feminist Collective Action Group Madalena Anastácia as Movimento Negro Educador* (2019).

⁷ Roberto Carlos da Silva Borges is a Full Professor with the Foreign Languages Applied to International Relations Program at CEFET-RJ and founder of the Graduate Program in Ethnic-Racial Relations (PPRER/CEFET-RJ). Refer specifically to the text he published in *Educação em Revista* (Education in Review), "O Movimento Negro Educador" (2018).

⁸ For a discussion on black intellectuals and epistemologies see HALL (2002), GILROY (2002), MACEDO (2016), COLLINS (2019), SANTANA (2020).



epistemology, it also constitutes a pedagogy, knowledges that shape the black community as a whole and that educate others, thus promoting changes in society on a broader scale. This turn of affairs proposed by Lina's work is all-important for the dissemination of this concept, seen here as inaugurating a different perspective: the fact that it is at once an emerging epistemology promoting emergent knowledges, and an emancipatory pedagogy is made clear.

Within my field of research, this has several implications. I am a historian and my area of expertise is contemporary Brazilian history. In this CNPq project, we have the pleasure of talking to several groups of people from different fields, establishing an interdisciplinary collaboration. I think that's the best thing about the project we're involved in.

I don't know what it is like for Lina, in Mexico. What I can say is that here in Brazil, over the past two decades, there have been changes taking place in public policy, and particularly in the field of education. Starting in 2001 and 2002, the country has moved away from the concept of '*racial democracy*', a notion that denied the existence of racism in Brazilian society, and this reappraisal in conceptualization will be spearheaded by criticism originating within the black movement; the State finally acknowledges that there is indeed racism in Brazil. From then on, affirmative action policies emerged, which were implemented by the PT⁹ administrations. This, in turn, led to a reform of the Brazilian National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação*) which, based on Law No. 10.639, reconfigured the field of disciplines, so that areas of study such as History, among others, no longer looked exclusively at Brazilian society vis-à-vis Europe, but allowed for the country's connection with Africa and the Black diaspora to be studied in

⁹ Translator's Note. The *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) is the main Labor Party in Brazil, having been in government at the federal level for a total of 5 mandates so far, the last one still ongoing, having started in 2023 with President Lula da Silva.



schools. All of this has an impact on public debate. It is a very powerful movement, coming out of both social mobilization and legislation, promoting a change in direction in the entire field. Then there are the racial and social 'quotas' policies (a form of affirmative action) that promote the entry of black and low-income students into the educational system as a whole, and into universities more specifically. Brazilian universities are characterized by whiteness, and when the presence of black students in universities is expanded, it has an impact on the debates and discussions around racial issues in a variety of fields.

In the field of History, besides this aspect of the connection with the African continent and the Black diaspora, there is a fundamental debate being had about how the history of the formation of Brazilian society is impacted by the racial question. In this regard, I will present three emblematic issues that arise within my field and that are brought on by the admission of black students into universities and by affirmative action policies that affect the educational system as a whole, as well as research and professors' teaching activities. This image of a mostly white student body in universities has not been completely changed, but it is undergoing transformation somewhat, and some issues are in fact changing. In my opinion, this is the *movimento negro educador* coming to bear fruit.

The first aspect to consider in historiography concerns the fact that this issue of race permeates a broad range of discourses: on class, nation, gender, modernity, the building of nation states, and the establishment of citizenship rights. So, this is the first thing that impacts the various areas of the discipline in different ways. The second is that we now have a history and a historiography grounded in the complexity of black communities and black experiences, marked both by exclusion and upward social mobility. These black communities are spread across different territories. So, there is a heterogeneity to the black



experience that now also begins to impact historiography. Finally, the last issue, which I think is fantastic, from the vantage point of those who look at contemporary history: the history of the 20th century used to be told as if the Abolition (of slavery) had put an end to the issue of racism in the country and had all but effaced black history in Brazil, and this was, in a racist fashion, a form of equating the black experience to the issue of slavery. Nowadays, there is a discussion concerning the post-Abolition period and the various processes towards achieving complete emancipation. What comes after Abolition? And this gives us a clearer understanding of the significance of our country's slave-based past and how it has impacted various social experiences throughout colonialism, through the imperialist movements, but also in the formation of the State¹⁰. This shift that has occurred in recent decades is completely linked to these policies instigated by the *movimento negro educador*.

GCVM: Samuel, I was wondering, listening to you talk about the impact on historiography, I was asking myself how this process was incorporated into the area of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics¹¹. When I think about the *movimento negro educador*, I can see that it is educating the field of linguistic studies; however, this field does not fully realize that it is being educated by this movement.

This started when researchers began to incorporate the issue of race into the field of Linguistics in the late 1980s and early 1990s¹². More recently, other concepts of language have emerged that regard it, at least to some extent,

¹⁰ Concerning the post-Abolition debate in the historiography of Brazil and Latin America see MATTOS (2013); RIOS and MATTOS (2004, 2005); ANDREWS (1998, 2020); DOMINGUES (2002, 2018); NASCIMENTO (2015); GOMES and CUNHA (2007).

¹¹ Applied Linguistics is a multi/inter/transdisciplinary field of knowledge that studies language-in-society.

¹² Concerning these developments, Marilda Cavalcanti brings indigenous issues to AL studies. Luiz Paulo da Moita Lopes, in turn, addressed black issues in the late 1990s. Aparecida de Jesus Ferreira investigated the theme in her doctoral thesis in the early 2000s.



as a social practice, that is, they do not view it as separate from society or from this issue of race. This approach to education from a transformative perspective, which Nilma presents us with, enables applied linguists to realize that language and race are not separate, isolated. If we think carefully about it, this has been increasingly debated since 1996, and now there is a greater presence of researchers in the field looking for black authors, researching linguistic theories that have been formulated and worked on by black researchers¹³.

Affirmative action policies and 'quota' policies within universities have sparked a debate about the relationship between the conceptualizations of language and exclusion from social debates, issues that are as relevant and as important as those raised by the *movimento negro educador*. Students have challenged this exclusion and have lead us to reflect on which black authors have been incorporated to debate topics such as discourse and language, and to address racial issues. So, this movement of affirmative action policies within universities, we are contributing to it. I think it is the black movement teaching us, instigating us, shaking up the whole Eurocentric, American, or Anglo-Saxon epistemology. It offers as alternative what is produced, for example, in Latin America, what is produced in Africa, or the work of black researchers here in Brazil as well.

This involves white researchers as well who, within the field of Applied Linguistics, are trying to reflect on the present moment, reflect on the racial issue, but perhaps not reflecting so much on this black *epistemicide* that exists within the field. I think this is still being instigated by the *movimento negro educador* itself, which is proposing these reflections.

¹³ In Applied Linguistics, researchers such as Aparecida de Jesus Ferreira, Ione Jovino, Ana Lúcia Silva Souza, Kassandra Muniz, among others, bring race into the debate on ethnic-racial issues.



I first came across the concept of a '*movimento negro educador*' at a lecture I attended in which Nilma spoke about the black movement, and shortly afterwards I sought out her book. This is how she puts it: the *movimento negro educador* informs society, it informs academia, and it informs us. The movement calls into question Eurocentric scientific and academic perspectives in order to bring about other possibilities for the production of knowledge. How about you, Lina? What is it like in Mexico?

LINA ROSA BERRIO PALOMO (LRBP): It's fascinating to listen to the two of you talking and I was thinking that, in fact, our approach to the *movimento negro educador* is a thoroughly situated one, from our vantage point, as Samuel put it. In my case, I came in touch with Nilma's work while specializing in Afro-Latin-American studies and Caribbean studies at Clacso, where Nilma's work was closely associated with many other considerations and questions, ranging from Afrofeminism and Black feminism, to questions concerning the production of knowledge.

Something I thought was particularly interesting has to do with the fact that the black movement is a category that makes perfect sense in places such as Brazil, Colombia, and other countries where it was a hugely important identity labeling category of political statement. In the case of Mexico, things are a little different, precisely because of the country's racial composition.

So, I would like to highlight the contributions of the *movimento negro educador* in at least three areas. The first contribution is epistemic, because it forces us to reflect on the production of knowledge in general and how this has been dealt with in each of our disciplines on the basis of rendering invisible a wealth of knowledge, a huge number of black thinkers and researchers. In other words, the *movimento negro educador* leads us to call into question intellectual hierarchies and to highlight the need to reflect on something that I believe to be fundamental, and that we have worked hard on with several colleagues, which is



this task of recovering, for example, the genealogies of feminist anthropologies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In that sense, what was the canon we were taught when we studied Anthropology, and how is it that black anthropologists are almost completely absent from this canon? And if there are black anthropologists being referenced, these will mainly be authors from the United States and, more recently, some from Brazil. So, there is a great need to rethink the establishment of the discipline itself in light of these concealments, and these effacements, that are clearly tainted by a degree of epistemic racism.

The second contribution, I believe, is to provide historical context, and to situate the role of the black movement in the processes of democratization, particularly in Brazil, even though I think our own realities are mirrored here as well, and to throw light on what is this context that is undergoing transformations, in a process of social change, but also with the chance to bring to our social movements what this racial perspective means, not as something distanced from our reality, but as something that is completely linked to the struggles for social change, or in this case, struggles for greater democratization and emancipation. No discussion of these processes can go ahead without considering, precisely, these racial dimensions.

So, I think there is also a third contribution that is very important... that, from the standpoint of Anthropology, is precisely linked to a whole series of historical debates and questions concerning when the discipline was first established, a discipline that, in fact, emerged within the framework of colonial logic. That is how it was first constituted. And so, in that sense, I think it helps to look at things from other perspectives or to question that logic, and that has particularly helped me in my own work in the field of health.

GCVM: What links can be established between the *movimento negro educador* and your current line of research?



LRBP: I am currently working on issues of health, sexual and reproductive health, with indigenous and Afro-Mexican women, focusing on what, in part, we would now call epistemic justice, considering the huge number of traditional healers who do not fall under the strict definitions of Western logic which, in this case, would be biomedical logic, which homogenizes, regulates, and determines which treatments are considered valid and which are not. In this sense, much of the knowledge of midwives, of traditional healers, and of the common people themselves is erased or made invisible. We know that the first form of health care is, in fact, self-care. It is the knowledge that people carry with them before they seek a specialized practitioner, but in this hierarchy of knowledges, with the valorizing of biomedical knowledge over others, this popular knowledge concerning health issues is not recognized as such.

Therefore, for me, it's been an invaluable opportunity to be able to get in touch with other theorists and activist academics who engage with political issues, and who, from backgrounds other than medical anthropology, support this distinct '*lugar de fala*'¹⁴, this locus of enunciation, these knowledges that are actually there in what we do, and that are part of life itself. And, on the other hand, because it also helps, from this perspective, to question a biomedical model that, in addition to its Eurocentric and androcentric character, sees itself, in structural terms, as mainly white.

This entails an almost complete ignorance regarding the knowledge of indigenous populations, of black populations, of knowledges of Afro descent, which have given support to life. So, I believe the connections can be established somewhat along these lines, and this is absolutely powerful... the entire proposal of the *movimento negro educador* encourages us to think about education beyond the classroom setting. Education as a daily commitment, as

¹⁴ TN: The notion of '*lugar de fala*' was popularized by Brazilian political philosopher Djamila Ribeiro. It is akin to Walter Mignolo's '*locus of enunciation*' and describes the subject's positionality at the time of speaking.



something we invest in every day and which goes way beyond the strictly institutional school environment that we've come to associate with education.

SO: I am currently engaged in two research agendas and both research agendas have also been affected in some degree by issues that have to do with the *movimento negro educador*. The first one, which is a long-term project of mine, involves considering spaces of informal urban development and spaces of poverty and social oppression within cityscapes. In Brazil, when we attempt to approach these spaces, spaces of social oppression, we see that class and race are intersected. So, now there's a field within the disciplines of History, Sociology and urban Anthropology that are open to discussing these questions. How are these spaces established? How are they different? How do policies that impose social control operate intersecting stereotypes of class and race within these spaces? This intersectionality promotes social exclusion and impacts how these subjects create these spaces. We should keep in mind that these informal popular spaces are very diversified, they are *favelas*, peripheral areas, suburbs, etc., involving different localities. They are greatly heterogeneous and diverse. How do subjects operate these categories of class and race based on their agency, their networks of solidarity, and their actions within the public sphere?

In research agendas for urban studies in Brazil, the concept of class would commonly feature, but racial oppression was mostly absent. And now I see that there has been a major change in this scenario brought about by the *movimento negro educador*. Today, it is practically impossible not to address these two categories, class and race, in tandem¹⁵.

The other issue involves the debate around social movements in Brazil: how political discourse often originates from social protest, and also how

¹⁵ The following texts have been published on the debate about class and race in relation to urban spaces such as *favelas*: OLIVEIRA, 2021a, 2021b, 2022, 2023, 2024.



visualities are generated within these mobilizations. These two things go hand in hand with my research agenda. And I see that there has been a huge branching out of the discussion about the black movement, about how it was instrumental in building citizenship in the 20th century. This aspect used to be completely left out, rendered invisible. It was as if there were a total lack of black experiences shaping views of citizenship and public policies in our society. Today, it would be impossible to consider citizenship and democracy building in Brazil without considering the political language and visual imagery produced by the black movement¹⁶.

So both these research agendas are associated with my activities as a professor. I am a professor, I prepare course material, I train education professionals within the different networks which I take part and do militant work in, and approaching the debate on black experiences and racism while raising these issues has gained importance in my work as a professor as well. So, these research and teaching agendas converge on this discussion concerning the *movimento negro educador*. What about you, Glenda, how is your research agenda informed by this discussion?

GCVM: I come from an Applied Linguistics background, so first of all we must be sure not to separate language from issues of race and intersectionality. This is crucial. Another important point is to realize that this *movimento negro educador* manifests itself and is constructed in and through language, and furthermore, it also does things to language. This is how the movement connects with my work of analyzing discourses circulating on social media regarding race, gender, and sexuality, from many different perspectives,

¹⁶ The present research was developed jointly with the Graduate Program in Ethnic-Racial Relations and has resulted in several texts that address the black movement and the different citizenship projects undertaken throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. cf. OLIVEIRA, BORGES (2023); OLIVEIRA, WICKER, PEREIRA (2023); MELO, OLIVEIRA (2021); SANTIAGO, OLIVEIRA, (2022).



but looking out primarily for the effect that these discourses have on social practices. This is an angle that fascinates me, because I believe that, in language, we have the possibility of agency, not apart from or detached from history or from a social angle. In language, there is the chance of constructing other narratives and further circulating this perspective of the *movimento negro educador*, showing how it emancipates, builds, gives hope, while still challenging and questioning society.

I see this unfold in my work, in this perspective of analyzing how discourses or performances that circulate on social media concerning race intersect with other markers. For example, I analyze discourses on obstetric violence. Black women, in diverse online support groups, bring up the racism they suffer when giving birth, a time when women are particularly vulnerable. Through language and through their bodies, they resist to protect their children at their most vulnerable.

In relation to my work, one guiding principle for me is that the theoretical perspectives I work with must be tied to my teaching praxis. At this point I think that when you train professionals who will become language teachers, they are not only teaching languages, these professionals are teaching people to give existence to, to contest, to take action through language, through discourse and practice. Perhaps I am somewhat of a utopian, but I believe there are very significant effects. It is not just teaching the verb “to be,” it is teaching people to give existence to something that this verb brings.

It is not just teaching people how to hold themselves a certain way, that’s just the beginning, since language makes resistance viable. There is a power play that comes with it, that is, who has the right to speak – who has the right to teach the English language, for example, and who is authorized to teach Portuguese, or Spanish – and all that has a tremendous social impact. In this teacher training task, teachers hold the power of discourse in their hands, so



they should think carefully about how they approach language, and how they convey a whole range of notions and knowledges that will prove to be relevant for students. That's the way I see it.

GCVM: How is the *movimento negro educador* tied to contemporary contexts?

LRBP: The *movimento negro educador* is tied to the black movement as a whole, the Afro movement and an entire political and epistemic production that manifests itself in multiple ways and under multiple denominations, but which, within the framework in which we operate, remains extremely valid, potent, and necessary for contemporary contexts in uncountable ways.

We are witnessing, to a greater or lesser extent, a series of far-reaching transformations which impact our countries' educational systems. For many years now, changes have been under way, impacting agendas, strategies, different contents on a variety of educational levels, leading to the introduction of the racial issue into our considerations, and not only as a problem, but also as a framework, as a major contribution throughout the diaspora, and more recently, the theoretical contribution of black thinkers. There lies an aspect which is still very valid, very necessary and very contemporaneous. That is the key issue, in my opinion.

A second field that I find to be central has to do with our research topics and the way we approach them. And here, again, from two different perspectives. The first one is that as we recognize this situated place of enunciation, this in fact questions the idea of objectivity which many of us were trained on, because it was the established paradigm of science – the premise that one should distance oneself to gain objectivity – in order to move towards a way of producing knowledge that is itself situated and that carries an academic and political intentionality, and this seems to me to be just as central as the other perspectival shift, which involves research topics themselves, so



much so that these intersections are placed at the very heart of the analysis regarding power relations: how do they operate in each specific context; how do they operate in the field of language; how do they operate in the medical field; what are the specificities and how does this also affect these configurations of race and power, class, and gender. I think there is a potential there to help unravel or understand these social relations in greater depth.

A third element I would like to add also has to do with why to me the black movement seems so contemporaneous, so vital and fundamental. It has to do with the subjects themselves. We are going through tough times, in which we are facing crucial battles concerning much of the progress we have made in different areas, from a more emancipatory perspective, and which are now being questioned. So, this place from which the *movimento negro educador* conceptualizes itself and engages with other approaches, I believe also has to do with defending what we have achieved, and how we also build bridges in order to establish a dialogue and promote the recognition of popular knowledge, of different ways of enunciating, which maybe challenge the idea of the specialized discourse, a discourse which sometimes can become quite inaccessible. Lélia would always mention the notion of *Pretoguês*¹⁷, and its claim to be taken not as an incorrect form, but rather as one that was historically established. In all our countries, we are able to find these similar elements of attempting to give recognition to the local histories, to these specific manifestations.

I'd like to close with that, with two elements associated with the work we are doing here. We recognize the contributions of many women who are part of the Afro-Mexican movement, placing them in an epistemic position as producers of knowledge, as Afro intellectuals and as indigenous intellectuals

¹⁷ TN: The expression '*Pretoguês*' is a portmanteau word combining *Preto* (Black) and the particle *-guês* from *Português* (Portuguese). It was coined by Lelia Gonzalez to designate the African legacy present in the Portuguese language spoken in Brazil.



who have been questioning and also formulating important categories. I think this is a key point. And secondly, one of the projects I am currently developing with a group of colleagues with whom I research feminist anthropologies in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, following up on previous research work (BERRIO & CASTAÑEDA, 2020), has to do precisely with the Caribbean and how in the formation of our countries this logic of centers and peripheries is dominant; the centralism that characterizes both the shaping of our countries and how knowledge is produced within them. So, much like in the case of the Caribbean, in the Colombian case, for example, the periphery is designated as such in relation to the center of the Andean region, where the idea that knowledge was produced there was established. So, many of these more local histories, much of the contribution of Caribbean Afro-feminists is not registered, or is thought of as anecdotal data, or is positioned in the field of arts, of poetry, but not of epistemic production validated as such. So, I believe there is enormous potential for this moment we are in, to validate these localities from which we are building.

SO: The *movimento negro educador* transforms the ways in which academic knowledge is produced within universities, recognizing epistemologies which do not subscribe to these Eurocentric frameworks. These epistemologies originate in very different backgrounds. In my view this is crucial; for me, it is the main takeaway from this debate in our contemporary society. Our disciplinary training produces discourses and orthodoxies of knowledge, always repeating the same authors who hail from the Global North. The *movimento negro educador*, then, is one of the perspectives that opens up the field to a different epistemology, opening up possibilities for discussing different issues. This is important in the contemporary context because social life cannot be reflected in the rigid, bounded, and disciplinary categories that have shaped the Humanities in general. This Black diaspora, which is very



multifaceted, is not monolithic, it is plural, and has produced knowledge and categories of analysis that have impacted the way the disciplines of Humanities are constituted.

A second perspective is related to the resurgence of reactionary movements. Racism is always being denied; more conservative segments deny the problem of racism in society—its very existence—and deny the validity of race as a category for analyzing societies. They also deny the epistemic categories arising from these different diasporic experiences. By promoting this denial, they help perpetuate a series of oppressions and violences observable in countries from the Global North, where the far right has come to power – for example, in the United States, with the Trump administration – but also in Brazil, in previous right-wing conservative governments, such as Temer's (2016-2018) and Bolsonaro's (2019-2022) administrations. Both administrations had a clearly established agenda of denying the existence of racism in society. In Latin America, we also have the example of Argentina, under the Milei presidency. There are several experiences that point to this kind of reaction of denial. In a context of democracies in crisis, the *movimento negro educador* questions the racism that lingers on in society and the possible forms of emancipation for democracy. The *movimento negro educador* is fundamental because it raises an issue that is constitutive of nation states that have undergone a history of colonization, which is this issue of racism.

So, the way I see it, the *movimento negro educador* raises an issue that is crucial if we are to think about democracy at this particular juncture of crisis. One last thing I wanted to mention, considering our contemporary context, is this: we talk about affirmative action policies, that in Brazil are sometimes very restricted to public institutions, civil service entrance examinations, and state-funded schools and universities. I think the *movimento negro educador* has managed to give an expression to this debate on representation that goes



beyond the sphere of the State, but is increasingly being situated in different spheres: in the sphere of business, of health, of the media. This is hugely important because it means that society as a whole is changing. This debate on representation means that the audience is being considered in relation to black issues, black experiences, and this diversity, and this new context brings about plenty of transformations in cultural production in general. And this is a very important point concerning representation and especially the representation of black populations in society. Would you agree, Glenda?

GCVM: I agree with both of you. As I see it, the *movimento negro educador* allows representation to take center stage, both in the Brazilian context, and in the broader Latin-American context, in which black people and black issues are gaining prominence, where Afro-related issues are gaining relevance. This knowledge generated in peripheral areas has an impact on the country as a whole, on the nation as a whole. This is of great importance. The representation you mentioned in the media can be seen today in soap operas. In Brazil, the media are using this as a litmus test, including black protagonists in their programming, because they realize they need to establish a dialogue with this segment of the population in a different way, not with those stereotypical characters we would see in the past. That will no longer stand. I'm talking about positioning black people so they'll be acting in contexts that are different from the ones we've traditionally seen them in. Another point you both mentioned is that we need to find other categories of analysis and think of other ways of generating data and conducting research, because this movement challenges the Eurocentric framework for producing knowledge.

Besides that, another point that gets me thinking concerns what the *movimento negro educador* can teach white people, that they are white and that white also qualifies as race. That's an important point. Furthermore, this movement also leads black people who have not socially construed themselves



as black to take this step, to start to take pride in their hair, their clothes, their make-up and their bodies. In the past, a black child would put a towel on their head to play with her hair; today she braids it, she takes pride in her braided hair.

The *movimento negro educador* draws attention to what it means to be anti-racist. It is teaching and debating what it means to be anti-racist, what racism is, as Samuel and Lina pointed out, but also what it means to be anti-racist. And it embarrasses racists, specifically those in supremacist groups, who want to hide behind a façade and say they are not racist. The movement exposes them and sheds light on them, showing everyone how racism operates. We have seen it on tv programs in Brazil, for example, famous people being grilled on why they are racist. Some even took courses on racial literacy. Society is no longer what it was in the past, when it believed that racism did not exist. I think that, in reality, they don't want to see it, because I think we still have a very strong system upholding whiteness, but the *movimento negro educador* is, at the very least, making people think about fascism and how to deal with it in contemporary society and in social practice.

Finally, the movement invites us to conceive of other policies, on a governmental level, in terms of public policies, to promote the inclusion of a segment of the population which drives the economy, which sets the wheels in motion and which is not here to be made invisible.

SO: What language does this *movimento negro educador* use, or might use, in order to address society?

GCVM: I think the *movimento negro educador* speaks to us, to society, in a multitude of languages, be it through spoken text, or visual text, through videos, films, music, through art in general. It speaks deeply to people. For example, poetry comes to mind. Think of how the works of black poets have circulated within the context of Latin America. Before that, they were often made invisible. Many of these works deal precisely with the lived experiences of



black people. Establishing this conversation with us in various languages has a profound impact on people's lives, on society, on government, on art itself, and on society in general. I think it speaks different languages, at different language levels, reaching diverse audiences. I guess. What do you think?

LRBP: I fully agree with you. And as I see it, it is enabling an open dialogue among us, for example, a dialogue among intellectuals and researchers from Latin America and the Caribbean, and it is also allowing us to establish links with fellow researchers from other corners of the world. In other words, to think also in terms of this diaspora, which also leads us to interact among ourselves, mutually nourishing ourselves. I think this is extremely important, because it allows us to build collective knowledge, recover content that others have already thought of; it allows for the circulation of categories and ideas, and helps to legitimize certain debates, such as the debate concerning anti-racism, for example; it is not enough not to be racist, but what does it really mean to be anti-racist?

So, there is a conversation taking place within academia that is very powerful, and there is another conversation that has to do with society more broadly, beyond the scope of academia, with social movements, with the spaces where each and every one of us functions, which also have their own particularities and potential strengths. And one such particularity, I think, has to do with other formats, other discussion formats, other formats of social media, of media, of publications, and other audiences. From my perspective, one of the most powerful arguments has to do with childhood, with children today, children in general, since there is a great amount of content being produced that did not exist as such when we were children, in other words, precisely the fact that you can see yourself reflected in a story that is read to you, or a poem, etc. And the other has to do with what circulates on social media. Every day on social media, on TikTok, I am impressed by the number of black female writers. In other



words, there is a very impressive vitality, databases, networks, audiovisual content, cinema, for example. The presence of cinema seems extremely important to me. How to allow for other artistic productions in which, effectively, their place is not one of subordination, not the place of the domestic worker, not the place of the enslaved, not a place of suffering, but a different place... of strength, of dignity. So, I think that there too, in the field of visual and audiovisual production, a lot has been done and there is much more to be done, right? And, the same thing goes for music, I think there is also an emergence of bands, of rap groups, of hip-hop, that is, other ways of talking about racism in contemporary terms, using other languages that I think are very rich; there is a lot to learn and to enable.

SO: I tend to adopt the same perspective as you, that when we talk about language, we are dealing with communities of fate: in other words, different groups constituted with specific languages and raising different issues. There are several types of communities within this universe of the Black diaspora, developing very different ways of viewing this black experience in terms of its political significance and related racial issues. In music, for example, there is a vast universe. In different countries, popular music is marked by black rhythms and black presence. If we consider politics, the performance of specific political groups varies greatly. Within black feminism, there are figures from the peripheries who mobilize race in order to talk about the reality of the *favelas* from a certain perspective. There is a very rich debate about popular culture, about practices of popular culture that are Afro-referenced. So, there is the *Tambor de Crioula* (an expression of Afro-Brazilian culture from the state of Maranhão) and the *Congada* (a widespread expression combining Afro-Brazilian culture and religious traditions), which are very different languages within these communities of fate. So, this debate about black movements and languages is



very multifaceted, because each community of fate produces a distinct expression of this experience and this understanding of race.

I have paid special attention to this debate on visibility, on the politics of the_gaze. I understand that this is a field that is often neglected, the ways in which this *movimento negro educador* produces very intense visualities and corporealities. The notion of black beauty, for example, in the production of visual elements, is impressive in how it is able to circulate and be received in various contexts. These are different visual manifestations.

I am currently very interested in this, this connection between political language and visibility. I see how several photographers are engaging in discussions concerning race and blackness, drawing on a wide range of experiences. In cinema, as Lina mentioned, there is a great variety of black cinema productions that reference the experience of Afrodescendants. So, we should really look closely at these black visual manifestations, because they raise relevant issues.

Black visibility is central to today's world because we are exposed to images all the time, at every turn. Images convey messages and speak of a place that we sometimes fail to capture with the analytical tools we have. Our perspective is heavily informed by the Platonic view of images, treating images as false. But they are not; they inform us about life in a different way. Thus, I believe that visualities are a type of language that we should also be exploring¹⁸.

LRBP: Both visibility and corporeality. Because we perform and also communicate with our bodies. When we teach, we are communicating. When we speak, we are also communicating. This corporeal dimension is also very important, in my opinion. I was struck by this idea that the corporeal and the

¹⁸ On this topic, see: *Black Looks – race and representation* (2019), by bell hooks, and *Racismo e Anti-racismo no cinema e fotografia do século XX e XXI (Racism and Anti-Racism in 20th and 21st Century Cinema and Photography)* (2026), organized by Roberto Borges and Samuel Oliveira. See also OLIVEIRA and BORGES (2022); OLIVEIRA, AMARAL, BORGES (2021); VENTURA, BORGES, OLIVEIRA (2020).



personal are inseparable; they are associated in our speech, in our lives, in our daily actions in the world. I think that's what you're talking about, now that you mention visuality.

GCVN: I think it's about the gaze. The gaze has always struck me, its importance in terms of the visuality of the body. The gaze arouses feelings and emotions within us. The *movimento negro educador*, perhaps, teaches us to look at ourselves, as black people, with a bit more loving kindness, and to be viewed by others with more loving kindness, more affectionately.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the interview, we could see how the theoretical perspective of the *Movimento Negro Educador*, proposed by Gomes (2017, 2022, 2025), has cut across the field of education and engaged in dialogue with areas such as Anthropology, History, and Applied Linguistics, pointing to the political, epistemological, and scientific relevance of this movement both in Brazil and Latin America.

In addition, we addressed how this movement puts in circulation narratives, languages, and aesthetics considered peripheral in academic circles, treating them as key to the production of Afro-Latin-American understanding and knowledges. These aspects are vital to building up democracy in the continent.

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