

Black Ancestry Literature: Diasporic Crossroads / *Literatura de ancestralidade negra: encruzilhadas diaspóricas*

Black Ancestry Literature has established itself as a fundamental field of research for understanding the historical, cultural, identity and discursive dynamics that involve artistic and cultural manifestations of, and in the diaspora. Between tradition and contemporaneity, conceived within the spiral timeframe that characterizes African and Afro-diasporic ethnic chronology, this literary production challenges established categories, proposes new critical and poetic perspectives, while at the same time re-signifying epistemologies and highlighting the centrality of ancestrality as a valid form and strategy for racial and cultural resistance, identity affirmation and political confrontation.

The African diaspora has evolved into a solid field of academic research over the last century, initially as an offshoot of the history of the African continent. Since then, it has attracted increasing attention in various academic disciplines, especially in cultural, literary, historical and social studies. The articles put together in this dossier demonstrate this growing interest, reflecting the diversity and vitality of studies on the African diaspora which has been constantly reinterpreted and expanded as a space for epistemological, political and artistic research since the days of pioneers like Paul Gilroy and his seminal concept of the Black Atlantic, through the period dominated by Stuart Hall's critical reflections on identity and difference, and continuing through Édouard Glissant's fundamental contributions on the poetics of relation and the concept of creolization. In Brazil, fundamental contributions such as those of Lélia Gonzalez and Abdias do Nascimento stand out, bringing innovative critical perspectives to the discussion of race relations and Afro-Brazilian and Afro-descendant culture.

In recent years, the concept of diaspora has become significantly more complex. In this sense, diaspora is no longer understood as a simple transfer of fixed cultural elements, but rather represents a continuous and plural movement characterized by reinventions, hybridity and heterogeneity as well as constant mutation between different cultures and temporalities.

The centrality of the notion of diaspora therefore reveals not only the historical trajectory of forced displacements, but above all a continuous space of resistance and cultural transcreation. In this sense, black ancestry emerges as a structuring element at the crossroads inhabited by spiraling time, memory and invention, acting as a discursive practice capable of promoting the critical elaboration of traumatic and criminal historical experiences in constant symbolic reworking.

By mobilizing memories, discourses and aesthetics of its own, this dossier contributes to the concept of *Relation*, within the ambits defined by Glissant, that is, the movement and constant (re)signification of diasporic experiences, offering fundamental critical readings on racial, identity and social issues that affect us. Thus, by bringing together in this dossier these contributions, we echo Édouard Glissant's words about *Relation* being made of shared knowledge.

For us, and without exception, and no matter how much distance we may keep, the abyss is also a projection of and a perspective into the unknown. Beyond its chasm we gamble on the unknown. We take sides in this game of the world. We hail a renewed Indies; we are for it. And for this Relation made of storms and profound moments of peace in which we may honor our boats.

This is why we stay with poetry. And despite our consenting to all the indisputable technologies; despite seeing the political leap that must be managed, the horror of hunger and ignorance, torture and massacre to be conquered, the fullload of knowledge to be tamed, the weight of every piece of machinery that we shall finally control, and the exhausting flashes as we pass from one era to another-from forest to city, from story to computer-at the bow there is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud or rain or peaceful smoke. We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify. We cry our cry of poetry. Our boats are open, and we sail them for everyone (Glissant, 1997, pp. 8-9).¹

This dossier reaffirms the strength of the ship. We received a significant number of articles, of which 24 contributions were selected, reflecting not only the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches, but also the geographical and temporal latitudes of the experiences analyzed. Above all, these studies demonstrate the vigor of a

¹ GLISSANT, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Harbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

growing field of studies interested in critically analyzing the multiple cultural and literary manifestations of diasporic crossroads.

The dossier addresses themes such as the denunciation of colonial ideological apparatuses, the use of writing as a strategy of narrative and pedagogical resistance, the construction of displaced identities in diasporic contexts, literary expressions that articulate religiosity and ecocriticism, and the specific cultural practices of African ethnic groups present in Afro-descendant literature. In short, the reader holds in his hands a set of articles that deepen reflections on black subjectivities, memory, ancestry, motherhood, gender, education, and historical processes of exclusion and erasure.

These articles engage with and expand debates initiated by authors such as Conceição Evaristo, whose concept of “escrevivência” [writing-living] has become a mandatory reference in the field of contemporary Afro-Brazilian literary studies. In addition, they reflect a critical engagement with thinkers such as Lélia Gonzalez, Grada Kilomba, bell hooks and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose reflections enrich discussions on gender, racism and black subjectivities.

In the article “The Childhoods of Bitita and Juan Francisco Manzano: Autobiography as Critical Fabulation in Black Authorship,” Diego Carvalho de Oliveira Soares and Amana Rocha Mattos (Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ) investigate how the autobiographical genre allows us to explore perceptions of childhood shaped by colonialism and slavery. Comparing the memoirs of Juan Francisco Manzano, a slave in 19th-century Cuba, in the *The Autobiography of a Slave* (1996 [1840])² with *Bitita's Diary: the Childhood Memoirs of Carolina Maria de Jesus* (1998 [1982]),³ by Carolina Maria de Jesus, the authors highlight critical fabulation as a literary strategy that goes beyond mere outcry to contribute to the affirmation of black authorship, creating new possibilities for identity and freedom.

In the article “Spiral Genealogies in Aline Motta,” Felipe Nildo Oliveira de Lima and Gustavo Silveira Ribeiro (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) examine the book *A água é uma máquina do tempo* [Water is a Time Machine] and the video *Filha Natural*

² MANZANO, Juan Francisco. *The Autobiography of a Slave*. Translated by Evelyn Picon Garfield - Bilingual Ed. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1996.

³ JESUS, Carolina Maria de. *Bitita's Diary: the Childhood Memoirs of Carolina Maria de Jesus*. Edited by Robert M. Levine, translated by Emanuelle Oliveira and Beth Joan Vinkler. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998.

[Natural Daughter], both by Brazilian multi-artist Aline Motta. The authors analyze how Motta poetically activates Afro-diasporic ancestral memory, addressing the trauma of the Black Atlantic through historical materials and colonial archives. Through her hybrid artistic practice, Motta inserts her black ancestors into historical narratives from which they were excluded, producing thereby a form of cultural and political resistance.

Paulo Fernando de Souza Campos (Universidade de Santo Amaro - UNISA-SP), Maria Auxiliadora Fontana Baseio (Faculdade Rudolf Steiner – SP), Silvio Gabriel Serrano Nunes (Universidade de Santo Amaro – UNISA-SP) and Alexander Willian Eugênio de Souza (Universidade de Santo Amaro-SP) discuss in their joint article titled “Black Masculinities in *Rei Negro* [Black King], by Henrique Coelho Neto,” the representations of black masculinities in Brazilian historical novels. Through discourse analysis, the article problematizes stereotypes related to the hypersexuality and subalternity of black men, highlighting how Coelho Neto’s novel proposes a critical reinterpretation of these masculinities, allowing a broader and more complex understanding of racial and social relations.

In her paper titled “Between (In)Sanity and Racial Denunciation: Narrative Adventures and Misadventures in *Madhouse Diary* and *The Cemetery of the Living* (1956), by Lima Barreto,”⁴ Renan Vieira de Santana Rocha (Universidade Federal de São Paulo – UNIFESP) analyzes how the writer, Lima Barreto, addresses the intersection between racism and mental health in his autobiography. By detailing his experience as a patient in an asylum, Barreto reveals the racial oppressions implicit in psychiatric treatment and broadens our understanding of the social place of black people in Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the article “The Mythical-Ancestral Crossroads in *Changó, el gran putas* [Changó, the Great Whores], by Manuel Zapata Olivella,” Lucy Miranda do Nascimento (Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso - UFMT) discusses the epic novel by Colombian author Manuel Zapata Olivella, which literarily reconstructs the historical and cultural trajectory of African peoples in the Americas. Using concepts such as *crossroads*, *pedagogy* of Cimarronaje and *afrorealism*, the study reveals how Zapata Olivella

⁴ BARRETO, Afonso Henriques de Lima. *Madhouse Diary and The Cemetery of the Living*. Translated by José Cláudio Awn. Criciúma: Convivim Editorial, 2023.

constructs a critical discourse that challenges stereotypical and marginalized representations of Afro-Latin Americans, offering new epistemological perspectives.

José Lucas Matias de Eça (Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia - UESB) and Zulma Elizabete de Freitas Madruga (Universidade Federal do Recôncavo Baiano - UFRB) present, in their joint article titled “Annunciation of a Decolonial Epistemology: Zambiapunga as a Cultural Movement of Resistance,” a theoretical reflection on the educational potential of the Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestation of Zambiapunga. The authors discuss how this cultural movement can promote decolonial and multicultural education in schools, subverting colonial teaching matrices through the valorization of ancestral knowledge, memories and practices.

In the article “The Other Opposite of Me: Self-Identity, Narrative Voices and the Answerable Act in the Novel *The Dark Side of the Skin*, by Jeferson Tenório,”⁵ Cristiane Corsini Lourenção, Vinícius Rangel Bertho da Silva and Rodrigo dos Santos Sbardelini (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUCSP), analyze how the theme of racism is elaborated by language in Tenório’s work. Based on the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia, the authors reflect on the technique of second-person narration, observing how the construction of self-identity and the subjectivities of the characters are mobilized to cause an impact on the reader. In addition, the Bakhtinian philosophy of the responsible act is used to explore the dialogical relationships that the narrative establishes with other literary productions and with black Brazilian music.

In “*Tatiana’s Return*, a Story about Black Motherhood,” Luciana Lis de Souza e Santos (Universidade Federal de Alagoas – UFAL) analyzes the representation of black motherhood in the short story “*Tatiana’s Return*,” by Miriam Alves. The article investigates how the author uses Afro-diasporic matrices to affirm black ancestry, discussing how Alves critically reflects on black motherhood, which is often forbidden or marginalized. The study also addresses how Afro-Brazilian religiosity appears as a path of healing and resistance, discussing concepts such as matrifocality and motherhood by extension. In this way, the short story is understood as a symbolic and literary space of ancestral resistance, where living, feeling and writing intertwine.

⁵ TENÓRIO, Jeferson. *The Dark Side of Skin*. Translated by Bruna Dantas Lobato. Edinburgh: Charco Press, 2024. E-book.

Black motherhood is also the subject of the article “Contemporary Quilombola Women: Matrimanagement and Ancestry in a Quilombola Community in the Southern Region of Brazil,” in which Bruna Rosa Farias, Rita de Cássia Maciazeki-Gomes and Cassiane de Freitas Paixão (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – FURG) analyze narratives and experiences of quilombola women from the São Manoel/Dona Geraldina community, in the south of Rio Grande do Sul. Based on interviews and group discussions anchored on African Womanism and the concept of Matrifocal Administration, the article highlights the strength of black women as agents of social and family transformation. As an unprecedented contribution, the study presents the emergence of psychoQUILOMBOlogy, a psychological approach that draws on quilombola and African knowledge, highlighting the importance of this knowledge for training in Psychology and for the construction of female quilombola identities.

Jean Vitor Alves Fontes and Beatriz Akemi Takeiti (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ), in the article “Afro-Brazilian Social and Subjective (Po)Ethics: Teachings from Black and Indigenous Peoples,” explore pedagogies and sociocultural teachings present in the myths of the orixás and in indigenous philosophical perspectives. Based on decolonial and anticolonial references, the authors propose abandoning white-colonial perspectives and reinventing ways of thinking about society, highlighting more integrated relationships with nature, other gender possibilities and new ethical and social models. The article suggests that these Afro-indigenous (po)ethics offer relevant paths for confronting contemporary coloniality.

In the paper titled “On Amefricanity in Black Literary Discourses: Cartographic Perspectives on Technodiscourses about Lélia Gonzalez and Carolina Maria de Jesus,” Felipe Fanuel Xavier Rodrigues and Alejandra Judith Josiowicz (Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ) explore the potential of Lélia Gonzalez’s theorizations, such as Afro-Latin American feminism, the concept of Amefricanity and “Pretuguese.” The article proposes a cartographic analysis of these concepts, observing how they appear in contemporary technodiscursive productions about Carolina Maria de Jesus and Lélia Gonzalez on digital platforms. Based on a methodology that involves qualitative and quantitative analysis of tweets, the study recovers voices, meanings and what they call

‘counter public’ texts, expanding the understanding of contemporary forms of representation and appropriation of the trajectories of these black authors.

Ricardo Celestino (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUC-SP), in the article “The Denunciation of Colonial Ideological Apparatus through Afrofuturist Statements in *O último ancestral* [The Last Ancestor], by Ale Santos,” examines how Ale Santos’ literary work uses Afrofuturism to problematize and denounce the persistence of colonial ideological devices in contemporary times. Mobilizing French discourse analysis as a methodological apparatus, combined with Lacanian psychoanalysis and the studies of Deleuze and Guattari, the author reveals how Afrofuturism allows for the resignification of realities through the construction of alternative and inclusive futures. By highlighting the discursive resistance of this approach, the article emphasizes the transformative capacity of Afrofuturist narratives, which propose new subjective and social arrangements capable of confronting colonial structures that persist in the society.

As expected, Conceição Evaristo’s work and critical thinking are a recurring theme in the dossier, in some cases they constitute a central theme, as is the case of the article “Processes of Resistance and Emancipation of the Reader-Spectator-Listener in the Fight Against Structural Racism: Conceição Evaristo’s *Escrevivência* in Action,” in which Adrielly da Silva Gomes (Universidade Católica de Pernambuco – UNICAP), André Luís de Araújo (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUCRJ) and Maria de Fátima Vilar de Melo (Universidade Católica de Pernambuco) analyze how Conceição Evaristo’s work, guided by the concept of *Escrevivência* (write lived experience), acts as an active tool of resistance and emancipation in the face of structural racism in Brazil. Starting from an interdisciplinary perspective that brings together literary theory, sociology and critical racial theory, the authors highlight how writing narratives promote the authentic and valuable recognition of black subjectivities. In this way, Black writing is understood not only as a literary technique, but as a political act of constructing positive identities that are strengthened through literature.

Lethicia Ramos Bernardino and Renata Beatriz Brandespin Rolon (Universidade Estadual do Amazonas – UEA), in the article “Two Feminine Universes and the Borders of Ancestry in Conceição Evaristo and in Ana Paula Tavares,” bring into dialogue the literary works *Olhos d’água* [Water Eyes], by Conceição Evaristo, and *Um rio preso nas*

mãos [A River Caught in the Hands], by Ana Paula Tavares. Focusing on the female characters in these narratives, the authors analyze how ancestry operates as a philosophical mechanism that allows the exploration of performative nuances of gender, race and class. By comparing the works, the authors' strategies for creating complex female characters who are resistant to hegemonic cultural impositions are highlighted, strengthening an authorial agency committed to the affirmation of Afro-diasporic ancestries.

In the article "Black Childhoods in the Literature of Conceição Evaristo: Memory, Ancestry and Homelessness," Michel Mingote Ferreira de Ázara (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora – UFJF), Silmara Lídia Marton and Renata Lopes Costa Prado (Universidade Federal Fluminense - UFF) investigate how the author, Conceição Evaristo, addresses the experiences of black childhoods through her writings. Based on postcolonial and decolonial studies and the concept of "Gorée childhoods," the authors explore themes such as temporality, memory, agency and the condition of homelessness, showing how the children's voices portrayed in the narratives offer deep and sensitive perspectives on racial and social relations. Thus, Evaristo's literature is understood as a privileged space for the valorization of black experiences, which are often silenced, especially in childhood.

In the article "Notes on the Elements that Constitute an *Escrevivência* [Writing-living]," Eduardo Prachedes Queiroz (Universidade de São Paulo – USP) presents a detailed analysis of the main elements that make up the concept of *Escrevivência* (Black Experience Writing), developed by Conceição Evaristo. Through theoretical and semiotic reflections, Queiroz engages in a dialogue with black authors such as bell hooks and Grada Kilomba, highlighting elements such as black authorship, fictionalization as a form of (re)creating realities, black subjectivity as protagonists, and the internal ideological alignment of narratives. By exploring texts such as the *cordel* "*Maria Felipa*," by Jarid Arraes, the author confirms *Escrevivência* as a profoundly political and identity-based literary concept.

In "*Histórias do meu povo* [Stories of My People]. Reflections on Decolonial Pedagogies of Esmeraldina dos Santos' *Escrevivência* – AP [Amapá State]," Miquelly Tito-Sanches and Albert Alan de Sousa Cordeiro (Universidade Federal do Amapá -

UNIFAP) analyze the literary work of quilombola writer Esmeraldina dos Santos, from the Curiaú quilombo in Amapá. The article addresses how Esmeraldina's writings offer valuable support for the construction of decolonial pedagogies by narrating memories of resistance and denouncing the racism faced by her community, as well as the impact of environmental devastation and gender stereotypes on black women. By highlighting this interface between literature and education, the study reinforces the importance of quilombola and feminine narratives to overcome colonialist practices still present in contemporary educational contexts.

Paulo Alberto da Silva Sales (Instituto Federal Goiano – IFGoiano), in his article “The Racial Dilemma in Biographical Writings about Machado de Assis,” addresses the way in which racist and scientific readings from the first half of the 20th century influenced the perception of the racial identity of the Brazilian writer Machado de Assis. Sales demonstrates that intellectuals of the time, driven by scientific-racist thinking, contributed to the erasure of the writer's Afro-descendance, consolidating a “white” image of Machado. The study also highlights how this narrative only began to be reversed from the 1930s onwards, especially with the critical work of Lúcia Miguel Pereira, thus recovering the historical importance of Machado de Assis' black identity in the context of racial relations in Brazil.

In the article “Akunna: The Narrative of the Dislocated Subject in the Short Story ‘The Thing Around Your Neck,’ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,” Edna Sousa Cruz, Larissa Sá Mota and Milene Oliveira Assunção (Universidade Estadual da Região Tocantina do Maranhão – UEMASUL) investigate the challenges faced by black immigrant women in the face of geographic and cultural displacement between Africa and the United States. Using a post-colonialist approach, the authors analyze how Chimamanda Adichie addresses identity construction, everyday and gendered racism and stereotypical representations of the African continent. The article highlights how the short story takes a critical stance against the victimization of Nigerian women, offering a perspective of agency and complexity for the female character.

Paulo Petronilio Correia and Adelaide de Paula Santos (Universidade de Brasília – UnB) in their joint article titled “Time and Ancestry in Edmilson de Almeida Pereira,” explore how notions of time and ancestry are worked on in the works of Afro-Brazilian

poet and literary critic, Edimilson de Almeida Pereira, especially in *O ausente* [The Absent] and *Orfe(x)u e Exunouveau: análise de uma estética de base afrodiaspórica na literatura brasileira* [Orfe(x)u and Exunouveau: Analysis of an Afrodiasporic-Based Aesthetics in Brazilian Literature]. Using theoretical references such as those of Leda Martins and Muniz Sodré, the authors highlight the importance of “terreiro-literature” as a crossroads space, where ancestral and diasporic experiences meet and stretch dominant narratives. The article highlights how Edimilson Pereira destabilizes the hegemonic literary canon, allowing the emergence of new black and diasporic epistemologies.

In the article “Religiosity Versus Ecocriticism in Masters of the Dew,”⁶ by Jacques Roumain,” written by Silvania Núbia Chagas (Universidade de Pernambuco – UPE), the focus is on how the work of Haitian author Jacques Roumain articulates the tensions between Afro-diasporic religiosity and ecological concerns. Analyzing the narrative that follows the protagonist Emanuel’s return to Haiti after a long diaspora in Cuba, the article highlights the character’s critique of human responsibility towards the environment, challenging fatalistic religious views and promoting an emancipatory ecological consciousness. The paper highlights the intertwining of voodoo spirituality and environmental criticism, revealing deep layers of cultural and ethical resistance.

Vitória Carvalho (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ), in the article “The Chokwe in the Work of Anajá Caetano: African Practices in the Novel *Negra Efigênia*,” investigates the ritualistic and cultural practices of the Quioco ethnic group, described in the little-known novel *Negra Efigênia: paixão do senhor branco* [Black Efigênia: White Master’s Passion]. Carvalho analyzes how these literary representations offer important clues to understanding the African cultural heritage in Afro-Brazilian literature. The research highlights the potential of the work to rescue and reveal sociocultural aspects of the African presence in the Brazilian historical and fictional context, valuing a literary production often neglected by critics.

Luciano Barbosa Justino’s (Universidade Estadual da Paraíba – UEPB) article, “Event and Singularity: *As mulheres do Tijucopapo* [The Women of Tijucopapo], the Contemporary Historical Novel of the Black Diaspora,” analyzes Marilene Felinto’s work in light of the concepts of event and singularity proposed by Gilles Deleuze. The author

⁶ ROUMAIN, Jacques. *Masters of the Dew*. Translated by Reynal & Hitchcock. Oxford, Chicago, 1978.

proposes a critical reading that articulates Leda Maria Martins' notions of spiral time and Georges Didi-Huberman's anachronism, problematizing identity boundaries that are configured as social and cultural barriers. The novel, with its fragmentary and critical narrator, displaces the historical event of the battle of Tijuapapo in 1646 to reflect on the existential and narrative boundaries experienced by contemporary black subjects, emphasizing the diaspora as an experience that is always updated by literature

In the article "The Nagô Heart and Its Reinvention: Oríkis in Brazil Today," Julia Almeida Alquéres (Universidade Federal da Bahia – UFBA) proposes an intriguing approach between contemporary literature and Yoruba poetic and philosophical practices, especially with the form of the oriki, a literary genre that salutes and affirms the singularity of the subject. Alquéres argues that Marques' work represents a reinvention of the oriki in the contemporary Brazilian context, pointing to a literary practice that assumes ritual and embodied contours. The author anchors her reflections on the concepts of *oralitura* and ancestry, highlighting the capacity of contemporary writing to rescue and update ancestral knowledge, enhancing forms of resistance and identity self-affirmation through literature

We hope that reading the articles put together in this dossier will stimulate deep reflections on the developments and potential of Afro-diasporic literature, consolidating its relevance for understanding contemporary racial, cultural and political issues.

We could not conclude without expressing our deepest gratitude to the editorial team of *Bakhtiniana Journal*, whose dedication, commitment, and continuous support were essential to the success of this work. We are also grateful for the invaluable support, funding and recognition of CNPq/CAPES granted under the codename CNPq/CAPES No. 30/2023 Editorial Program (Republished Edition). Proc. 400913/2024-0.

We wish you a pleasurable reading and an excellent reception of these texts!

REFERENCE

GLISSANT, Edouard. *Poética da relação*. Tradução de Marcela Vieira. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bazar do Tempo, 2021.

Elizabeth Cardoso^{*}
Félix Ayoh'Omidire^{**}

* Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUC-SP, Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências, Letras e Artes, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Literatura e Crítica Literária, Campus Perdizes, São Paulo, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8349-1620>; elizabethpenhacardoso@gmail.com

** Obafemi Awolowo University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Cultural Studies, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8872-7631>; feliomidire@gmail.com