



Ethnic-Racial Relations in the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies: advances, erasures, and silencings

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ABSTRACT – Ethnic-Racial Relations in the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies: advances, erasures, and silencings – This text presents an analysis on the theme of ethnic-racial relations and some of its crossings, such as racism, identity, exclusion, Black culture and arts, based on the texts published by the *Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies* over its 15 years of publication. The discussion aimed to highlight how the journal has addressed this task in connection with contemporary debates, theorization, confrontations, and struggles on the topic. The problematization was developed from the concepts of identity and racism through the thought of Sueli Carneiro, Grada Kilomba, Achille Mbembe, and Frantz Fanon. It is inferred that academic productions that address ethnic-racial relations can play a crucial role in both the reproduction and the combat against racism.

Keywords: Ethnic-Racial Relations. Identity. Erasure. Academic Writing. Black Performing Arts.

RÉSUMÉ – Les Relations Ethno-Raciales dans la Revue Brésilienne des Études de la Présence: avancées, effacements et silenciements – Ce texte propose une analyse de la thématique des relations ethno-raciales et de certains de ses traverses, tels que le racisme, l'identité, l'exclusion, la culture et les arts noirs, à partir des textes publiés par la *Revue Brésilienne des Études de la Présence* au cours de ses 15 années d'existence. La discussion cherche à mettre en perspective la manière dont la revue a assumé cette tâche en dialogue avec les débats, théorisations, confrontations et luttes contemporaines sur le sujet. La problématisation a été élaborée à partir des concepts d'identité et de racisme par le biais de la pensée de Sueli Carneiro, Grada Kilomba, Achille Mbembe et Frantz Fanon. On peut supposer que les productions académiques qui traitent des relations ethno-raciales peuvent jouer un rôle crucial tant dans la reproduction que dans la lutte contre le racisme.

Mots-clés: Relations Ethno-Raciales. Identité. Effacement. Écriture Académique. Arts de la Scène Noirs.

RESUMO – Relações Étnico-Raciais na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença: avanços, apagamentos e silenciamentos – Este texto apresenta uma análise sobre a temática das relações étnico-raciais e alguns de seus atravessamentos, como racismo, identidade, exclusão, cultura e artes



negras, a partir dos textos publicados pela Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença, ao longo dos seus 15 anos de publicações. A discussão buscou perspectivar o modo como a revista implementou tal tarefa na relação com as discussões, teorizações, embates e lutas contemporâneas sobre o tema. A problematização foi tramada a partir dos conceitos de identidade e racismo por intermédio do pensamento de Sueli Carneiro, Grada Kilomba, Achille Mbembe e Frantz Fanon. Intui-se que as produções acadêmicas que tematizam as relações étnico-raciais podem desempenhar um papel crucial tanto na reprodução quanto no combate ao racismo.

Palavras-chave: Relações Étnico-Raciais. Identidade. Apagamento. Escrita Acadêmica. Artes Cênicas Negras.

This article, written by three self-declared Black and cisgender women, reflects on how the theme of ethnic-racial relations and their intersectionalities – racism, blackness, identity, exclusion, silencing, but also Black culture, Black arts, Black ancestry, etc. – gained prominence and was developed in relation to the field of performing arts and performance studies, based on the way in which the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies (originally *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*), addressed these issues in its publications throughout its 15 years of production and dissemination of academic works and research. We seek to take a look that is both analytical and critical, paying attention to how this task, of central importance, was implemented by the journal in relation to contemporary discussions, studies, debates, and struggles on the topic. Taking this trajectory into perspective allows us to highlight and reflect, 15 years later, with fresh eyes and perceive the changes that have taken place at the heart of the journal, considering the team of editors and contributors, the topics addressed, the references used, the authors, researchers, and proposers of the texts, as well as its character of excellence and reference.

To define the analytical basis for the discussion, we established the following criteria for selecting the articles that were analyzed: 1) titles, abstracts, and keywords that directly addressed ethnic-racial relations and related themes, such as: blackness, racism, gender, Black arts, Black popular culture, controlling images, ancestry, identity, *escrivência* by Conceição Evaristo (1946 -), *Amefricanity* by Lelia Gonzalez (1935-1994), orality, memory, ritual, embodiment, diaspora, and their crossings with other fields of knowledge such as dramaturgy, race, discourse, ethnicity, performance, semiotics, eth-



nology, etc.; 2) publications by Black people who self-identify as such within their academic careers; 3) the two specific issues that guided the theme, namely, *Performance and Ethnic-Racial Relations* and *Black Poetics*.

Thirty-eight articles were found, published over a period of 15 years. This research and mapping of publications resulted in the publication, in the SciELO Data Repository, of the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Descriptive Report on Articles on Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERR) in the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies 2011-2025 – Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025), in which we discuss each of the 38 mapped articles in an analytical and summarized manner.

In doing the exercise of looking at this trajectory from the elements and evidence that constituted it, as well as dealing with the theme of race relations, we understand that identity, racism, and race are fundamental concepts for better configuring and explaining this narrative, precisely because we understand that thinking about ethnic-racial relations means doing so based on the relationship between Black and white people, in their different identities and ways of experiencing or not experiencing racialization. Consequently, this exercise covers their different understandings and possibilities of perception and positioning in relation to issues of racism. Racism that organizes us all as Brazilian society. This exercise we conducted, of more clearly delimiting who the people were who were reflecting on ethnic-racial issues in the articles, including racializing some of them, was a call to reflect from the perspective that, if we produce knowledge in any field, we do so from a place, from a history, and thus we also understand the knowledge we access. For us, cisgender Black women, who are constantly racialized and gendered, who experience the world, knowledge, and the production of our own knowledge from a specific place, it seems important and urgent to contextualize the social speaking positions (Ribeiro, 2017). In other words, racializing those who do not self-declare or are not racialized, including for a better deepening of reflections on ethnic-racial relations and understanding of the articles from the positions from which these subjects speak.

Analyzing the articles for this discussion, something we already knew from experience became even clearer: the fact that Black people are neces-

sarily racialized, to the extent that certain themes recur in one form or another in their writings, such as: Black performances, Candomblé ritualities, racism, decoloniality, violence, memory, records, bodies, and Black narratives. This is because, if these people do not address such issues, no one else will. The fact is that people considered white do not racialize themselves and/or do not identify as white, since there is no need to self-identify or racialize themselves. So, how can we know the ethnic-racial identity of those who proposed the texts? Since circumstances of race, class, and gender speak, what do researchers who are thinking about issues related to Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERR) in the journal say? These were questions that intrigued us and also guided our first look at the texts.

This is a difficult task we have set ourselves, considering that Brazilian society is undoubtedly very heterogeneous and culturally rich, also known for its miscegenation and syncretism, which makes the meaning of being Black in the country very diverse in different corners of this continental territory. In this sense, we undertook a research effort to establish, as accurately as possible, how authors identify themselves in terms of race and gender, even though the journal did not propose this type of identification¹. We did so because we believe it is not possible to reflect on ERR without understanding these intersections of race, gender, and class, looking both at our perspective at this crossroads and that of the authors we read. Our productions are reflections of this information, which is constituted by the social and historical context. In summary, we sought to undertake a kind of timeline and themes reflected in the journal, from the first years of publication, with a view to tracing the development and maturation of the approach to ethnic and racial issues and their crossings, and from what perspectives, over this 15-year period.

It is no exaggeration to say that, especially in the last 20 years, in our Brazilian social context, discussions, clashes, and elaborations around issues of identity and racism have taken on great importance, dominating public debate, but not necessarily in a way that broadens, fosters, or complexifies the debate and compels the necessary struggles. On the contrary, they have come to feature in the hall of so-called *identity agendas*, in the sense of what is worthy of disparagement, diminishment, and devaluation. On the other hand, thinking about issues such as identity, racism, racial relations, and exclusion



is the basis for implementing change, whether in terms of discussions, research, and academic curricula, or in terms of developing the necessary public policies that can resolve these major social ills. In this sense, the BJPS also aligned itself with this scenario, entering the field of discussions on identity and race relations, albeit timidly, in its early years of publication.

It is also important not to lose sight of the unique characteristics of the formation of a Brazilian identity, which cannot be dissociated from the structurally racist context in which we are immersed. For some time now, researchers have attested to the inseparable relationship between racism and the construction of our national identity, placing them as intrinsically linked and the result of a particular culture that has developed historically in the country (Gonzalez, 1988; Nascimento, 2016; Almeida, 2020; Gomes, 2021; Carneiro, 2023). This intrinsic connection implies that Brazilian national identity was built on racist foundations that privilege a non-racialized social group, with whiteness as the ideal, and marginalize other racialized identities, particularly Black identities. When we compare, for example, the number of Black authors who manage to publish in prestigious journals, such as the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies, with the number of white researchers, this huge racist gap becomes very clear. Or even in relation to so-called racialized themes – which in their very name already carry the stigma of identitarianism –, when limited to topics, titles, and biases such as Black, Indigenous, queer performance, etc. When we look at the 15 years of BJPS publications, we find only 38 articles addressing ethnic-racial relations, which means that, in 15 years, the majority of non-Black researchers in the performing arts from different fields and themes were thinking about and constructing an identity for the field. This identity was only incipiently reflected in references, themes, and issues, that is, keeping these issues still in the preamble in relation to the production and dissemination of academic knowledge.

In view of this, we understand that reflection on ethnic-racial relations in academic studies, especially in the field of arts and performance, requires not only the recognition of the themes addressed, but also critical attention to the social and racial position of the subjects who produce knowledge. As Kabengele Munanga (2005) argues, the construction of knowledge in Brazil has historically been marked by the invisibility of Black knowledge and the



normalization of a eurocentric perspective, which tends to universalize white experiences as neutral. In mapping the articles published by the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies, we observe that Black production, even when consistently present, still operates in tension with a field that sometimes resists revisiting its own structures and criteria of epistemic legitimacy. This process of critical racialization of authors therefore becomes a fundamental methodological resource for understanding how ethnic-racial relations have been addressed and how statements and speaking positions have been constituted over these 15 years of publication.

Although progress has been notable, especially in the journal's most recent thematic issues, we note a significant gap with regard to the racial self-identification of white authors and the recognition of whiteness as a social and political marker. This absence reinforces what Sueli Carneiro (2023) points out, highlighting that whiteness remains a place of non-marking, whose hegemony is sustained by the refusal to recognize it as a racial identity. Thus, reflecting on ethnic-racial relations in the field of performing arts and performance requires shifting away from the idea that this is a problem exclusively for Black subjects, expanding analytical responsibility to the entire academic field. The absence of racial identification on the part of white researchers, while silencing fundamental aspects of knowledge construction, prevents a more profound critique of the ways in which racism manifests and reproduces itself in scientific practices. By proposing this analysis, this article is part of a collective effort of epistemological tensioning, aiming at greater accountability, visibility, and equity in the production of knowledge about and based on ethnic-racial relations.

The artist, intellectual and performer Grada Kilomba (2019, p. 77) helps us understand these structural relationships when she points out that:

Racism is revealed at a structural level, as Black people and People of Color are excluded from most social and political structures. Official structures operate in a way that manifestly privileges their white subjects, placing members of other racialized groups at a visible disadvantage, outside the dominant structures. This is called structural racism.

In this sense, when we look at the early years of the journal, it is possible to analyze approaches that guide ERR from a perspective of insurgency, understanding rites, corporeality, and religiosity as epistemologies for the



(re)construction of Black identities and subjects. Mainly publications by Black people, articles that highlight the different forms of violence that, according to Cameroonian philosopher and political scientist Achille Mbembe (2018), shed light on another constituent element of racist relations, when he argues that the concepts of racism and race are instituted by the State, which uses them strategically to preserve the normalization of the violence it commits. By stating that racism and race are defined by the State, Mbembe leads us to understand that these concepts are not just social or biological categories, but political constructions that are appropriated by State power to justify the normalization of violent practices. This normalization of violence occurs through the creation of legal and political narratives that protect State action, giving it an appearance of legitimacy. We still have few Black researchers occupying spaces in publications – an inference of a process of enslavement and deprivation of rights – who can work on ERR themes in a way that affirms their processes of afro-referenced and diasporic knowledge production. There are therefore few who are able to understand themselves in their identities, as well as reflect on racism, its normalization and structural and institutional legitimization, present in the elements of the scene and performance, as well as in the dramaturgy, the characters, the theatrical space, and the very history of Brazilian theater and the epistemicide of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture.

In this process of writing and inscribing of the self, it is also important to pay attention to the ways in which Black people identify and perceive themselves, that is, how they experience being Black. Frantz Fanon (2008, p. 105-106), an important reference in Black thought, states, based on his experiences:

I was at once responsible for my body, responsible for my race, responsible for my ancestors. I took an objective look at myself, discovered my deep blackness, my ethnic characteristics – then they blew my eardrums apart with anthropophagy, mental retardation, fetishism, racial perversions, slave traders, [...].

The author refers to the condition of Black people who are, on the one hand, trapped in a racialized social body, in which each and every one is responsible for an entire race and for the history that led them there; and, on the other hand, trapped in a white imaginary that stereotypes, marginal-



izes, and belittles, and which is equally responsible for the racialized condition of these *people*, as well as for the way they have been/are narrated historically. Thus, it seems symbolic to highlight the first article we analyzed in the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025), entitled *The Taint of Violence: insurgent voices in Brazilian Black Theatre*, by Marcos Antônio Alexandre, a Black cisgender man from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, which addresses the echoes of violence in dramatic texts from Brazilian Black Theater, bringing up the theme of the representation of violence and its crossings, which interfere in the (re)construction of Black identities and subjects. In order to highlight the urgent and purposeful tone of *Cabaré da Rrrrraça*, a spectacle by the *Bando de Teatro Olodum* theater company and one of the spectacles analyzed by Marcos Antônio Alexandre (2012, p. 128), we present the following excerpt:

Good evening, resistance. Good evening, white people. This is an educational, propagandistic, and interactive spectacle. So. My name is Wensley de Jesus. I'm Black and I'm out! I want to make that clear. I don't agree with this system that white people have structured over centuries to fit us into patterns that suit them. That's why I'm out! Because for me, being Black means being out, digging, seeking to evolve. And the question that arises is: are you Black? But before that, what does it mean to be Black? That's the discussion we want to raise here, at Cabaré da Rrrrraça!

As discussions matured and the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies editorial board developed, it became clear that the approach to ethnic-racial relations issues no longer fits solely within the agenda of insurgency. We realized, based on the production of the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025), that the articles engendered paths that unite elements already addressed in the early years of the journal, such as memory, history, rites, and records, but articulating them with contemporary languages, such as funk, gender relations, and performance. The article *Immund Poses: funk, photography, gender performativity and dance in the construction of the contemporary photographic portrait*, by authors Elizabeth Motta Jacob, a white, cisgender woman, and Rodolfo Viana de Paulo, a Black, cisgender man, published in 2020, in the issue Perfor-



mance Philosophy, helps us to illustrate this by creating posed portraits of six young men from different regions of Rio de Janeiro and reflecting on artistic creation in a discussion that touches on issues such as acts of language, gender performance of Black LGBT people, and the place of contemporary art when approached from the perspective of funk. It is also possible to see the weaving of new possibilities for the transmission of knowledge focused on the field of education, as in *Capoeira Angola Diversifying the University: sowing an Ecology of Knowledges in the Performing Arts*, by Cristiano de Mello Gallep (2022), from the Universidade Estadual de Campinas, a study that highlights the presence of capoeira masters in activities with students, emphasizing the importance of orality and physical presence in the transmission of Afro-Brazilian knowledge. Or by the compelling article, *Naming is Dominating? Universalization of theater and epistemic silencing about Afro-Brazilian scenic manifestations*, by Alexandra Dumas (2022), a Black, cis-gender researcher, who proposes the following critical reflection:

[...] theater, as conceived and taught in academic and cultural institutions, is historically linked to a white, eurocentric political and epistemological project, which relegates afro-Brazilian and indigenous scenic manifestations to the place of the exotic 'other' or 'non-art'. This practice of naming, which apparently seeks inclusion, actually subjects these expressions to the hegemonic logic of Western theater, disregarding their own world senses, structures, and meanings (apud in Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025, p. 10).

If it is true that there are advances in the way Black people, researchers of the arts, notice and perceive their languages and their history as the years pass, we believe that little has advanced with regard to non-Black people, who continue to relate to ethnic-racial topics by distancing themselves from racism, which, as already stated, organizes and structures us. Thus, in this paper, we propose something that seems to us to be prior to the processes of research and writing: an exercise in self-reflection, a critical, social, historical, and, in the case of some approaches, also gender-based understanding, so that reflection is possible from a precise social standpoint. After all, we are talking about 15 years of a Brazilian journal, we are reflecting on ethnic-racial relations and on bodies and identities that have been historically constructed from a narrative: the slave-owning/racist one, which continues to be maintained.



On this process, social scientist Joyce Maria Rodrigues (2012, p. 61) writes that “to think about the Black body constructed throughout the history of Brazilian society is to reflect on a body that for three centuries of Brazilian history was reduced to the status of a commodity”. This construction is consolidated not only structurally and institutionally, but also in the fields that concern the development of this subjectivity, both in Black individuals, in a negative way, and in white individuals, in an affirmative way. We have the construction of a Brazilian identity from the perspective of the discovery made by European colonizers, through their narratives, while the country is being established based on the labor of enslaved Africans, deprived of their humanity. This deeply rooted project, which establishes itself as national identity, is not unrelated to our constructions in the personal spheres and the construction of these places of superiority and inferiority that are previously established, structured, and naturalized.

The duality of identity established by racism, in which we have the being (white) and the other (Black), constructed in this historically intertwined “exchange of glances” and based on the control of one subjectivity over another, leads us to believe that this exercise of “looking at ourselves” for Black people, as reflected by Joyce Maria Rodrigues, is nonetheless a gaze that has been constructed. At the same time, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of white people becoming racialized, as an anti-racist understanding. Or, even, to question their places of supposed neutrality, realizing that their privileges and possible reproductions of violence lie precisely in racializing and discussing the history and culture of other peoples, without the need for this self-awareness. For the authors of this analysis, a good example of this is the article *From Ethnographic Work to Dramaturgy: a theatrical research on the afro-brazilians of Togo, today*, whose author, Bernard Müller (2016), is a French man, whom we believe to be white and cisgender. But, truth be told, we were unable to gather sufficient elements or evidence to establish his racial and gender identity. When attempting to racialize him using different search mechanisms on social media, the results/images were mostly of white cisgender men, but this does not guarantee confirmation. On the contrary, this is how the benefit of the doubt works, which white bodies can deprive others of. This is also why we believe that racial self-declaration is increasingly essential.

On the other hand, we know that this is evidence of a cisgender male and white identity, since it involves the total possibility of disidentification, a prerogative only possible for this singularity of individuals. The author recounts in his writings a surprising ceremony that took place near the coastal city of Aného, in Togo, which he was able to attend on the night of December 14, 2011. The ceremony marks the return to Togo of the remains of Black religious leaders who died in exile in Brazil. In the text, the author weaves a historical narrative about the enslaved people who returned free from Brazil to Africa. And he asks: “Who are they? Who are these Brazilians from Africa?” In this particular case, the questions become even more acute, considering a creative process that moves between ethnography and dramaturgy, drawing a parallel between the figure of the researcher, who is also a playwright. Bernard Müller (2016, pp. 100-101) writes the following:

In order to remain faithful to the ambiguity surrounding Brazilian identity, as manifested in the interviews, the dramaturgy should describe this game of identity evident in the biographies of Afro-Brazilians, whether they are real people or fictional characters, whether they are direct descendants of returnees or merely claim to be.

Thus, we will describe a heteroclite play of masks, more than a homogeneous cultural structure [...] in fact, what seems to constitute our object is this cultural malleability, this ability to be many people at the same time or throughout the same existence.

From this point on, the ethnographic description becomes essentially dramaturgical. It frees the researcher from his role as a hermeneutist in favor of a minimal, that is, anthropological (universal) description, clearly adhering, at this point, to the project of a praxeography.

The author’s words paint a picture of the researcher who does not racialize himself and, at the same time, seeks to paint a landscape of universal anthropology in which

[...] rather than attempting to grasp the characteristics of a culture, it is a matter of considering this art, inherent to man, of belonging to various cultures, thus inserting itself into a true anthropology, a science of man and no longer a science of ethnicities (Müller, 2016, p. 100-101).

Still on the subject of this publication, which deals with identities, memory, cultural transitions, and to which we now add the layer of race, we reflect on these devices for controlling narrative and constructing identi-



ties that are part of the process of constructing Brazilian subjectivity, which is still produced and structured today by whiteness. Although we do not know Müller's data for certain, we wonder to what extent his methodological choices, as a collaborator, inspired by the concepts of *distancing* in Bertolt Brecht's theater, as an attempt to distance himself and give prominence to the collaborative process, according to the author, proposing "the reconstitution of the structure of relationships between characters, as an echo of the way of re-actualizing a past – in this case, Brazilian memory – in light of contemporary issues" (2016), do not give us exact indications of his racial status in the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025).

Finally, to more radically circumscribe the way racism institutes practices, relationships, and modes of constituting Black subjectivities, we bring in the great Brazilian Black intellectual, whose thought has made an important contribution to the unfolding of the theme of ethnic-racial relations and their intersectionalities – including the one proposed here – and whose trajectory has been fundamental in the construction and development of Brazilian Black intellectual thought: the philosopher, writer, and anti-racism activist of the Black social movement, Sueli Carneiro. In her doctoral thesis, defended in 2005, and published in book form in 2023 under the title *Dispositivo de Racialidade: A Construção do Outro como Não-Ser como fundamento do Ser* (Device of Raciality: The Construction of the Other as Non-Being as the Foundation of Being), the author elaborates on the conceptual notion of the device of raciality/biopower based on the concepts of device and biopower developed by French philosopher Michel Foucault (1979).

Through Carneiro's thought (2023), it is possible to understand and foresee how the process of racialization, based on the context of *racial affiliation*, produces death and life in relationships of racial subordination, silencing, and erasure. For her, through the articulation of the raciality/biopower apparatus, it is possible to understand how a multiplicity of elements and power relations that serve a historical urgency are produced and articulated. In this sense, a specific mechanism emerges from the raciality/biopower apparatus that shares the nature of two technologies of power:



epistemicide, which questions the place of education in the reproduction of powers, knowledge, and subjectivities; and erasures, which also affect these powers from a relationship with multiple oppressions, exclusions, and violences. This is precisely the operation that still seems to reign in the field of publications, where ERR and Black epistemologies remain rare or exceptional, while Euro-white knowledge is representative of the *status quo* and remains hegemonic.

Furthermore, the imagery constructed from racism directly interferes with the subjectivity of the Black population, placing them in a position of subordination in contrast to the position of power held by white people. This imagery assigns Black people the responsibility of resolving their own suffering and the problems of racism, as if racism were exclusively their *agenda*. However, as we have seen, racism is a narrative thread that has been unfolding for centuries, with social roles, truths, and places that have become difficult to deconstruct. Psychologist Lucas Veiga offers an interesting perspective when addressing Afro-referenced psychology: the creation of fictions about the life and way of living that we (Black people) desire as strategies to decolonize the unconscious. For him,

We have never been uncolonized from the standpoint of the unconscious. The unconscious, as a plane of forces that produces reality, operates through the creation of fictions. Human life and culturally created ways of life are folds in the infinite plane of forces of life, producing finite ways of living. To be human is to inhabit a fiction and construct a fiction for oneself (Veiga, 2021, p. 39).

Veiga (2021) proposes daily decolonization based on proximity to various African and Afro-Brazilian experiences, including Afro-Brazilian religions, mythologies, cuisine, culture, *aquilombamento* among Black people organized socially and/or culturally in spaces, and, especially, mental health care. He also advocates a Black clinical approach, with Afro-referenced foundations, which places African ancestry at the center of the analysis of Black subjectivity. This approach aims to construct new fictions produced by Black people about themselves, within the larger fiction structured by racism in various instances, including the field of research in the Performing Arts and, consequently, that of publications. Thus, research and texts

emerge that investigate pedagogies for Black children or that consider these children as bodies that propose knowledge.

We highlight, from the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025), the issue Children Performers and the articles *Performance and Ancestral Heritage:: what does Bakongo cosmology teach about black Brazilian childhood?*, authored by Gladis Elise Pereira da Silva Kaercher, a Black cisgender woman, and Gabriel Fortes Pereira, a Black cisgender man (Kaercher; Pereira, 2023); and *The Playing of the Child Performer with Orixás: artistic and afro-referenced experiences*, authored by Lia Braga and Teodora Alves (2023), both white, cisgender women. In this 2023 issue, the journal presents two Afro-referenced pedagogical approaches, researched and experienced at opposite ends of the country, one in Rio Grande do Sul and the other in Rio Grande do Norte. The first, drawing on *Bakongo* cosmology, especially the notion of spiral time and the philosophy of community care, proposes viewing Black childhood as an active phase of communication with the ancestral world. Meanwhile, in the north of the country, researchers, choosing to play with the *orixás*, reflect from a perspective that understands that children not only *learn* about African culture – they experience this culture in a sensory, symbolic, and affective way, activating ties with ancestral knowledge that is normally silenced or marginalized in the school environment.

We believe that the formative role in consciousness and the construction of subjectivities becomes an important framework for interventions regarding the deconstruction of racist stereotypes and the promotion of diverse positive identities, presenting itself, even, as epistemic possibilities. This challenge requires the coordination of different agents acting in diverse spaces of power, as well as a path that points to possibilities for highlighting and rethinking multiple social structures. For example, the fact that BJPS has a Black woman among its editors certainly contributed to opening space in the journal for the topic of race relations and their intersections. We believe and defend that the presence of Black people, aware of their racial condition, in decision-making positions, enhances the inclusion of non-hegemonic bodies and themes. For Brazilian pedagogue Nilma Lino Gomes (2021), an important figure in the reflection and proposal of affirmative ac-

tion and gender policies for the field of education, the challenges inherent in racism, in the sense of occupying equitable spaces in the fields of knowledge production, are directly related to the fact that

[...] education is perhaps the space where this tension is most visible. There are historical and epistemological erasures present in curricula, proposals, and educational practices, both in Basic Education and in Higher Education, which will only be overcome if the educational field and scientific production understand themselves as spaces that need to be decolonized (Gomes, 2021, p. 436).

Embarking on this overview of the texts published by Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies over its 15 years, related to the theme of ethnic-racial relations, has given us perspective on both the advances and inconsistencies in relation to the theme. In this sense, we realized that academic productions, such as research, discussions, training, and the texts derived from them, can play a crucial role in both reproducing and combating structural racism. We understand that productions such as these can be configured as a space for disputes in which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic views on race, identity, and other related issues are in constant confrontation and negotiation.

In 2017 and 2022, the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies dedicated two special issues focusing on themes related to racial issues. Twelve articles were published by researchers, both Black and non-Black, identified as such, within our possibilities in this exercise of racializing from our perspective, towards women and men, mostly cisgender. And we envisioned the themes of the ERR gaining density and conceptions that investigate paths to autonomy, highlighting their different perspectives and possible dialogues and counterpoints. These two special issues were the main points of attention in the *Relatório Descritivo dos Artigos sobre Relações Étnico-Raciais (RER) na Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença (RBEP) 2011-2025* (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025).

In *Performance and Ethnic-racial Relations* (2017), the reflections and different perspectives on the theme of identity are very evident. Among the approaches, we perceive the construction and stigmatization of social characters throughout history, which permeate the field of dramaturgy, discourse practices, and performances that reproduce stereotypes. Such per-



formances are mainly practiced by white artists, without them racializing or problematizing their issues. In contrast, and in the same proportion, the issue is composed of powerful approaches that understand and analyze identity from the perspective of corporeality, with the body as the central axis in the constitution of identity, as well as ancestry as a philosophical and metaphysical concept that enables the construction of notions such as Body-Crossroads.

In *Black Poetics and contemporary performing arts* (2022), we see ethnic-racial issues intersecting mainly with the theme of performance, which was widely reflected upon from different perspectives. It is possible to notice a kind of strengthening of self-esteem in articles published by Black people after five years, who begin to propose critical reflections on the universal and neutral languages of scenes understood as “theater” or “drama”, which operate as a mechanism of symbolic domination, reversing the roles of historically established researchers.

Finally, we notice a maturing of contributions to the fields of knowledge on the themes of ethnic-racial relations, which seem to have become more pronounced since 2019, perhaps strengthened by the issue published in 2017. Thus, there is a development of the theme in such a way that it is shifted from a discursive inquiry into the process of decolonization to epistemic and performative crossings, which make it possible to implement it as social and educational policies, curricula, and artistic practices (Souza; Silva; Alcântara, 2025).

This analytical journey has allowed us to recognize the importance of Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies as a space for visibility and validation of other epistemologies, pushing the boundaries of academic production still marked by eurocentric references. By bringing together plural voices and diverse experiences, especially from Black people committed to critiquing exclusionary structures, the journal contributes to the construction of a more democratic field, in which formerly marginalized presences are placed at the center of enunciation and agency. This movement is fundamental for pedagogical, artistic, and investigative practices to effectively commit to structural transformations in the way race, body, and art are thought about and experienced.



However, there is still a long way to go before we have a more balanced number of female and male researchers in the arts, with the understanding that, when reflecting from a country structured by racism, all research topics must be approached from the perspective of ethnic-racial relations. This means that we are all permeated by racist practices, which constitute us both as subjects of a time and space and as builders of social relations.

When analyzing the trajectory of the Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies and thinking about the themes of ethnic-racial relations, it seemed essential to us to recognize, from our perspective, who the subjects writing are. Therefore, the emphasis on the body is unanimous when we talk about ERR. When seeking information about the people responsible for the texts, we realized that Black researchers were easily identifiable, while, in relation to white researchers, we did not have as much information, nor did we feel comfortable racializing non- Black people.

We concluded that ethnic-racial relations are themes that concern anyone interested in thinking about and challenging the paradigms, relationships, and references that have shaped and continue to shape the fields of performing arts, performance, and education, in this case in an academic context. We believe that, over its 15 years of activity, the journal has enabled us to follow artistic approaches and movements that contribute to the recording and construction of Black history, culture, and thought in the performing and decolonial arts.

The productions, matured over the years, not only address strategies to combat racism, but also enable the reinterpretation of racist structures and their power devices. Such approaches transcend the hegemonic stages and become performative scenes constructed in the terreiro, in Bumba meu Boi, in Flamenco, based on capoeira or the performances of Black children. The choice of themes related to racism and identity is an invitation to highlight the urgency of white people becoming racialized, especially researchers who set out to observe and analyze productions that are not their own places of belonging. We believe that without first revisiting ourselves, our mirrors, and, consequently, the way we have been constituted, we run a serious risk of continuing to repeat micro-violences on bodies and subjectivities different from our own, whether at the intersections of race, gender, and/or social class.

The issue of the lack of critical reflection is so latent that, only in the last year of the journal's existence, an article was published with whiteness as its research topic. The article *The Line that Divides us: black theater racializing whiteness*, proposed by Amanda Cunha (2025), a cisgender white woman from the Universidade do Minho, Portugal, makes important contributions by seeking to understand how Black theater, understood from a decolonial perspective, provides Brazilian and Portuguese white spectators with a racializing experience. Nevertheless, it would be possible to deepen the debate and reflections on the author's use of a Black spectacle, the linguistic understanding of Black or white theaters, and even the use of the experience of Black pain from the process of enslavement on stage, as an object for their analytical study. In our view, such an exercise could lead to new mechanisms for objectifying these subjectivities, even if for a process of racialization of whiteness, given that ethnic-racial relations continue to be treated as problems belonging to historically racialized and currently identity-marked people.

Given this scenario, it is essential to reiterate that ethnic-racial relations can no longer be understood as a peripheral field of study or one of exclusive interest to racialized subjects. On the contrary, it is a constitutive dimension of Brazilian social and academic structures, which demands the critical engagement of all researchers, especially those historically positioned as the norm and, therefore, rarely called upon to engage in self-reflection. The gap in studies focused on whiteness and the persistence of research centered on the Black experience of enslavement and its consequences highlight the urgent need for an epistemological shift that not only recognizes racial markers as fundamental to the production of knowledge but also holds non- Black subjects accountable for revising their own speaking and listening positions. It is in this ethical and political gesture that the challenge of destabilizing historically consolidated hierarchies and establishing more equitable, pluralistic academic practices committed to social transformation is inscribed.



Note

- ¹ In seeking to racialize the authors, we worked in two ways to try to describe them: authors we know from other relationships, and whom we know identify as Black; and others, about whom we sought information in their Lattes CVs, social media, or images on the internet. We do not intend to assert who is or is not Black or white, but rather to carry out a necessary exercise of identification from the point of view of racialized people, which we, the three authors of the article, are.

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