

**Whiteness and coloniality in teaching:
an essay from a Brazilian historical perspective**

**Bianchezza e colonialità nell'insegnamento:
un saggio da una prospettiva storica brasiliana**

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Abstract

This article is the result of research whose general objective was to present reflections on teaching, race, and gender relations in Brazil from a historical perspective, within the time frame of the feminization of the Brazilian teaching (19th century) to contemporary times. It is important to emphasize that the social places we occupy affect our scientific practices, in agreement with De Certeau (1995). This formulation derives from a theoretical-methodological framework established by author (Souza, 2021), who understands, from her *lugar de fala* as a light-skinned black woman, the whiteness present among the participants in her master's research. This concept refers to the experiences of researchers and these experiences involve their cultures, class and gender relations, and who the person is. The article emphasizes the feminine as a norm, contradicting the grammatical norm of Brazilian Portuguese, when it mentions female educators and researchers, to highlight such presence in science. It is a bibliographical investigation in terms of sources, and historical in terms of approach. In conclusion, the embodiment of resistance took place in recognition of its own existence, the light-skinned black female researcher's place of speech, in addition to the need for female Educators to know the teaching profession in Brazil historically, regarding the feminine gender.

Keywords: education, history of education, female teaching, gender relations, whiteness.

Sommario

Questo articolo è il risultato di una ricerca il cui obiettivo generale era quello di presentare riflessioni sull'insegnamento, sul concetto di razza e sulle relazioni di genere in Brasile da una prospettiva storica, nell'arco temporale che va dalla femminilizzazione dell'insegnamento brasiliano (XIX secolo) fino all'epoca contemporanea. È importante sottolineare che, in accordo con De Certeau (1995), i luoghi sociali che occupiamo influenzano le nostre pratiche scientifiche. Questa prospettiva teorica deriva da un quadro teorico-metodologico stabilito dall'autrice (Souza, 2021) che cerca di comprendere, a partire dalla sua *lugar de fala* di donna nera dalla pelle chiara, la bianchezza presente tra i partecipanti alla ricerca svolta per la redazione della tesi di laurea magistrale. Questo concetto si riferisce alle esperienze delle ricercatrici che coinvolgono le loro culture di origine, le relazioni di classe e di genere e chi è la persona. L'articolo enfatizza il femminile sovraesteso, contraddicendo la norma grammaticale del portoghese brasiliano, quando menziona educatrici e ricercatrici, al fine di evidenziare la loro presenza nella comunità scientifica. Si tratta di un'indagine bibliografica in termini di fonti, e storica in termini di approccio. In conclusione, l'incarnazione della resistenza è avvenuta nel riconoscimento, da parte dell'autrice, della propria esistenza in quanto ricercatrice nera dalla pelle chiara accanto al bisogno, per le educatrici, di conoscere la professione della docente di genere femminile in Brasile da un punto di vista storico.

Parole chiave: educazione, storia dell'educazione, insegnamento femminile, relazioni di genere, bianchezza.

Introduction

Understanding the female teachers as a multifaceted historical body of struggle, for women's human rights, I emphasize my interdisciplinary and fluid journey as the path of genders. The comparison of fluidity through the paths of a female researcher with the many existing genders is built on the understanding that nothing is static and, reflecting with Burke (2005) on female subcultures, they have their internal struggles within their different cultural groups. With a bachelor's degree in Law, I started from Legal positivism and theorizations of women's human rights, understanding aspects not previously reflected when dialoguing with Education. Female teachers, in this article, especially those working in Brazilian Basic Education, found themselves with this professional activity when looking for participation in public places in our society, with the beginning of the feminization of teaching in the 19th century, in agreement with the authors Demartini and Antunes (1993).

The facets that compose the historical body of female educators in Brazil encompass the history of the feminization of teaching since the 19th century, a period when white and mostly elite women had such permissions supported by a Brazil that placed, and still places, power in the *hands* of the male, heterosexual and white. While white and elite women sought public lives, black women (black and brown) were already holding positions of leading their own families. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that in many professions, wage devaluation was attributed to the entry of women, as well as teaching in the early years of education, as mentioned by Saffioti (2013), Demartini and Antunes (1993) and Gonzalez (1988). So, delving deeper into the reflection on the female teaching body as historical and multifaceted, we dialogue with Rios (2008, p. 60) who highlights that «I am not talking about a teaching or student body as purely physical presence, but as an interaction of actions and meanings», and in this case I emphasize female teachers in their movements within the teaching body. Thus, we understand that gender issues and their intersections impact the historical scope of Education, Law, and the entire society in which we operate. And, we emphasize the authors of this article challenge the norms of the Portuguese language, using the feminine as the norm, delineating the research space as a place for women, emphasizing our existence and resistance. Therefore, the plurals and singulars of people will always be in the feminine form, marking the presence of women in our society. The historical educational and legal rights and their freedoms in public life, particularly in the field of education in Brazilian society.

It should be noted that this article is the result of discussions regarding aspects stemming from author's master's research (Souza, 2021), which focused on cultural representations of female teachers of Basic Education in the interior of São Paulo. The research employed the methodology of Oral History, allowing for reflections based on the micro-histories of women and on the absence of black female teachers in Brazilian education. Hence, we understand genders based on the cultural constructions of the sexes, in line with Scott (1995) and their imposed colonial baggage, according to Almeida (2020). Historically reflecting on Latin American and Brazilian female teachers, I propose a dialogue with De Certeau (1995) who mentions the historical operation and the necessary demarcation of the female researchers' place of speech:

history as an operation [and the need to] understand it in terms of the relationship between a place [...] and analytical procedures. It is to acknowledge that history is part of reality [...] that can be apprehended as a human activity. [...] The historical operation

refers to the combination of a social place and scientific practices (De Certeau, 1995, p. 18).

Therefore, the place of speech, that is the cultural experiences and social positions held by female researchers, influence their scientific practices. In other words, personal experiences as a light-skinned black woman, or brown, among many denominations existing in Brazil, which leave mixed-race people without a place, in line with Carneiro (2004), who emphasizes light-skinned black individuals as being placed in a social position of «too white for blacks and too black for whites», problematizing issues regarding the racial belonging of light-skinned black people in Brazil. This allowed me to glimpse in my master's research (Souza, 2021) that, within the time frame of 1938-1985, among the basic education early years female teachers interviewed in the interior of São Paulo, all were white. Thus, in accordance with Levi (1990, p. 132), it is emphasized that «the researcher, in addition to doing science, must also reflect on their own actions, contextualizing them in history and scientific literature, thereby allowing the promotion of new epistemologies» expanding into new investigations on racial issues from the place of speech.

Exploring the racial issue in Brazil, I bring into the dialogue Theodoro (2022, p. 42), who emphasizes that in Brazil «the issue of race carries significant weight [...] and the wage gap between blacks and whites exceeds 50%», the author also states that racism goes beyond economic matters, reaching a broad range of social inequalities. It is important to emphasize that in Brazil, the enslavement of black people lasted for more than 300 years (Penna Brescianini, 2019), and in the Brazilian context when talking about race, it is understood that it refers to the different skin colors, phenotypes, and ethnicities that exist. Regarding the historically constructed miscegenation – forced and cruel towards African and indigenous peoples – in Brazil, its characteristic is the banishment of the concept of race from social debate, allowing «the racism present in relationships and social structures» (Costa, 2002, p. 45) to remain untouched. Therefore, in line with Costa (2002, p. 45), it is still common for Brazilian women to say «we are just one race, the human race», demonstrating the persistence of racism in Brazil. Contemporary societies, particularly in the Americas, are the result of the 17th and 18th centuries revolutions in England and France. The rights of equality and fraternity do not apply to all peoples, and the issue becomes complex with colonialism, where the concept of race becomes intertwined with the notions of whites (subjects with rights) and non-whites (primitive and savage)¹, in accordance with Guimarães (2012) and Almeida (2019).

According to Guimarães (2012, p. 24),

here, it may be worthwhile to briefly outline the differences between the systems of racial classification in the United States, Europe, and Brazil, in order to avoid misunderstandings and excessive polysemy. The American system uses the rule of hypodescent, that is, descent traced from the socially downgraded spouse, to establish the boundaries of racial groups, which are openly referred to as races. The contemporary European system, since the end of World War II, rejects the term 'race' and classifies individuals either in cultural terms, proper ethnicities, or based on skin color, without reference to biological descent. The Brazilian system also avoided the term 'race' until recently, preferring the term *cor*, and it also lacks a clear rule for classification by descent but uses other bodily markers such as hair, nose shape, and lips to classify individuals into groups.

In relation to Europe, Miguel Mellino, in an interview with Flávio Santiago, emphasizes:

highlights that the concept of race has always encountered resistance, precisely because continental Europe has always been much more involved with fascism and racism. After fascism ended, the strategy with the concept of race was to deny its existence: race does not exist or race is a mistake produced by something else, which is the approach that Marxists tend to know who always they see race and racism as a type of superstructure (Santiago, 2018, p. 573).

That said, it is important to introduce some necessary concepts that Almeida (2019, pp. 22-23) emphasizes.

We can say that racism is a systematic form of discrimination that has race as its foundation and is manifested through conscious or unconscious practices that culminate in disadvantages or privileges for individuals, depending on the racial group to which they belong. Although there is a relationship between the concepts, racism differs from racial prejudice and racial discrimination. Racial prejudice is judgment based on stereotypes about individuals belonging to a particular racialized group, which may or may not result in discriminatory practices. Considering black people to be violent and untrustworthy, jews to be greedy, or Asians to be «naturally» suited for the exact sciences are examples of prejudices. Racial discrimination, in turn, is the assignment of differential treatment to members of racially identified groups. Therefore, discrimination has power as its fundamental requirement, that is, the effective possibility of using force, without which it is impossible to attribute advantages or disadvantages based on race.

Building upon these concepts, Almeida delves deeper into the debate on racial issues, demonstrating the presence of racism in individuals, institutions, the State, and the economy, which culminates in the concept of structural racism, defining that racism is present in the Brazilian social structure. This structure does not acknowledge the very existence of racism because it has already been declared a crime or because Brazil is a diverse society, which contributes to silencing, making racism in Brazil something complex that has in its structure a diversity of intersections that maintain it alive, whether veiled or explicit. Almeida (ivi, p. 34) explains structural racism and its historical perspective:

What we want to emphasize from a theoretical point of view is that racism, as a historical and political process, creates the social conditions so that, directly or indirectly, racially identified groups are systematically discriminated against. Even though individuals who commit racist acts are held responsible, the structural look at race relations leads us to conclude that legal accountability is not enough for society to stop being a machine that produces racial inequality. The emphasis of the structural analysis of racism does not exclude racialized subjects, but conceives them as an integral and active part of a system that, at the same time that makes their actions possible, is created and recreated by them at all times. The purpose of this more complex view is to avoid superficial or reductionist analyzes of the racial issue which, in addition to not contributing to understanding the problem, make the fight against racism much more difficult.

In Brazil, there are laws against racism, such as Law 7,716 of January 5, 1989, which defines crimes resulting from racial or color prejudice, the current Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988) in its articles 3 and 5 (item XLI), and Article 140 of the Brazilian Penal Code (racial insult). However, even with the presence of these laws, racism is still an everyday act. In this complexity of the Brazilian reality, we can observe the possibility of whitening, that is, «the possibility to *transition* toward an aesthetic related to whiteness and maintain consumption habits characteristic of the middle class can make someone racially *white*» (Almeida, 2019, p. 37). The structural racism that the author highlights involves issues of class, gender, generation, colonization, that is, an entire structure in which Brazil formed itself.

Bringing the issue of the whiteness of the skin of female teachers in Brazil into the debate is a historical racist occurrence that is related to the existing structural racism. It serves as evidence within the field of Education professionals in Brazil that African cultures drowned in the Atlantic (Akotirene, 2019), during the crossing of enslaved black people to Brazil have been and continue to be minimized and discredited, with even further efforts aimed at their complete erasure. Throughout our school and academic life, we had three black female teachers: one in preschool, who was a substitute teacher, one who was a specialist in History, and one at the master's level. When asking the female participating teachers of our research whether there were black female teachers during their time as educators (1938-1985) or whether they had black female teachers during their lives, they all struggled to remember, and the majority response was that if there were black women in schools during their study and teaching years, they were either in the kitchen or working as cleaners (Souza, 2021).

It is worth noting that, in line with Quijano (2005, p. 117), the idea of race «has no known history before the Americas». The author also mentions that it possibly originated based on phenotypic differences between colonizers and colonized peoples, thus the author emphasizes that «race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social classification of the population» (*ibidem*). Quijano (2005) also highlights elements about body and non-body and the relations with race and gender from a Eurocentric perspective, emphasizing that identities were forged during the colonization process, which unfolded in the historical-cultural development of the Americas. When we say *Eurocentric*, in line with Quijano (2005), we emphasize the pattern of the white, male, heterosexual colonizer. The idea of body and non-body also relates to what is human and non-human; what is subject and what is object. The relationship between colonizer and colonized strips the humanity of the colonized. What unfolds to this day in gender relations and their intersections in Brazil.

On one hand, when the Iberians conquered, named and colonized the Americas (the northern region, or North America, was colonized by the British a century later), they found a great number of different peoples, each with their own history, language, discoveries and cultural products, memory and identity. The known names of the most developed and sophisticated of them are: Aztecs, Mayans, Chimus, Aymaras, Incas, Chibchas, etc. Three hundred years later they were all reduced to a single identity: *Indians*. This new identity was racial, colonial and negative. This also happened with the people forcibly brought from future Africa as slaves: Ashantis, Yoruba, Zulus, Congos, Bakongos, etc. In the span of three hundred years, they became nothing but *black*. This outcome of the history of colonial power had two decisive implications. The first is obvious: all those peoples were stripped of their own unique historical identities. The second is, perhaps, less obvious, but no less decisive: their new racial, colonial and negative identity implied the stripping of their place in the history of

humanity's cultural production. Afterwards, they would be nothing more than inferior races, capable only of producing inferior cultures. It also implied their relocation in the new historical time constituted first with America and then Europe: from that moment on they became the *past*. In other words, the pattern of power based on coloniality also implied a cognitive pattern, a new perspective of knowledge within which the non-European was the past and thus inferior, always primitive (Quijano, 2005, p. 127).

It is noticeable that this process of disqualification, embodied in terms of race/ethnicity and gender in relation to female teachers in Brazil, right at the beginning of the feminization of primary teaching at the end of the 19th century, in which white and elite women were able to leave their homes to work as teachers, marking a victory in terms of expanding their experiences beyond the private sphere of their homes, still repeats itself masked by the remnants of colonization. Data from the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) in 2021 demonstrates that 91.7% of enrollments in higher education courses in Brazil are women in the Pedagogy and, in descending order, demonstrates the highest number of females in professions historically associated with caregiving:

the greatest female presence occurs in 15 courses. They are, in descending order of female participation: Pedagogy (91.7%), Social Work (89.8%), Biomedicine (84.5%), Nursing (83.7%), Nutrition (82.1%), People Management (79.9%), Psychology (79.7%), Physiotherapy (76.4%), Dentistry (71.6%), Pharmacy (71.3%), Veterinary Medicine (69.6%), Medicine (61.0%), Accounting (58.1%), Administration (57.6%) and Law (55.7%) (INEP, 2023, p. 26).

The reality is that non-white women, such as black, mixed-race, and indigenous women, were already active in both their private and public lives as heads of the family, which makes it possible to understand that affective characteristics towards Early Childhood Education and the Early Years of Basic Education were culturally defined - which persists in our Brazilian society - with the majority white presence of women, since the beginning of the feminization of the Brazilian primary teaching, in agreement with Gonzalez (1988) and Saffioti (2013). These women who participated in the feminization of the Brazilian primary teaching were part of a process of colonial hierarchical impositions that had already begun since the Portuguese invasion of Brazil in 1500.

According to Vilella (2000, p. 103), regarding Normal schools in Brazil «choosing European nations as the most perfected model, they believed that the lack of education among our people was the true cause of the gap between Brazil and the civilized nations», and, one more question, «education could be an efficient weapon against crime». In this way, it is understood that the notions of civility and criminality meet the diverse culture of Brazil (contrasting with the Portuguese norm), and people who lacked economic access and had non-white skin were excluded from the process of women entering the teaching profession with children. It is also important to highlight that white female teachers, during the course of the feminization of teaching, also experienced gender oppression, being, for many years, teaching in the early years the only possibility allowed to white women in Brazil for their respective emancipations, as Saffioti pointed out (2013). It is worth noting that despite the gender oppression faced by white women, they also oppressed (and continue to oppress) black women, who were not accepted into teaching in its process of feminization, heading families since the *abolition* of slavery in Brazil in 1888 and working in socially undervalued professions².

Thus, with the possibilities presented for dialogues between gender relations and their intersections from a feminist decolonial perspective, starting from the hypothesis of the need for historical awareness in the teacher training process for effective anti-racist Education, it was proposed as the objective of this article to reflect on teaching, race and gender relations from a historical perspective, specifically female teachers and whiteness in the Brazilian teaching landscape within the time frame of the feminization of the Brazilian teaching (19th century) to contemporary times. Nothaft, Lisboa, Kleba and Bambilra (2019) introduce the decolonial approach as something that goes beyond coloniality, with the term «des» being the break with colonization, and highlight that:

the terms decolonial or decoloniality are preferred by Latin American authors such as Rita Laura Segato (2011), María Lugones (2004), Yuderkis Espinosa Miñoso (2014), Ochy Curiel, among others, who questions the ideas of center and periphery, or north and south, redirecting the gaze towards the complexity of the world, the cultural, symbolic, linguistic and political diversity of anti-colonial reactions that question old imperialist models. In this sense, we mark our position by adopting the terminology «decolonial» and «decoloniality», precisely to highlight the path of continuous struggle for the identification and visibility of women, particularly Latin American and black women who occupy «places» of exteriority and have been challenging alternative constructions (ivi, p. 152).

The article is a bibliographical investigation in terms of sources, and historical in terms of approach, presenting the results of reflections on the historical research of author's master's dissertation (Souza, 2021).

1. A dialogue with the female teaching profession

The theme involving the female teaching profession in Brazil and whiteness paves the way for reflections regarding gender, race/ethnicity, class, generations, and all existing intersections. Whiteness studies developed as an exchange field between colonizers and ex-colonized people, according to Schuman (2020, pp. 49-50), corresponding to the «chain of historical processes that begins with the modern colonization project, leading to slavery, the trafficking of Africans to the New World, colonization, the formation and construction of new nations and nationalities throughout the Americas, and the colonization of Africa». The author states that these historical processes regarding whiteness are constructed as «an ideological construct of power, in which white individuals take their racial identity as the norm and standard» (ivi, p. 50). Therefore, whiteness is understood from the perspective of the cultural construction of racial/ethnic and gender differences in relation to the European white male. Cardoso (2017, p. 611) defines that «whiteness is a place of symbolic, subjective, objective privileges, that is, tangible materials that contribute to the social construction and reproduction of racial prejudice, *unjust* racial discrimination and racism».

In this context, considering the practices of female educators in Brazil, we understand that the concept of decolonization becomes relevant, since with the Eurocentric colonial understanding of bodies and minds that are reproduced to this day in Brazil, the school, and especially the teaching staff, is a possibility of social change. The concept of decolonization is understood by Rufino (2019, p. 14) as a practice of social transformation, and the author emphasizes that «Latin America, Brazil, and Africa are landfills that contain the remains of the construction of Europe». The whiteness of the women who comprised the feminization of teaching in 19th-century Brazil underscores

the colonial remains mentioned by the author. Furthermore, I emphasize my understanding that Normal Schools had different trajectories in the creation of the Brazilian Higher Education courses. However, it is important to emphasize, initially, how whiteness occurred with the feminization of teaching, and, later, for women working in Higher Education, allowing the understanding that intellectual spaces in Brazil are historically represented by white people.

Pereira, Pereira and Pocahy (2021 p. 1364) emphasize that «according to data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), less than 3% of black women with a Ph.D. are in teaching positions (Ferreira, 2018b)». They also highlight the 2020 Atlas of Violence, which mentions that in «the year of 2018, 68% of black women were murdered in Brazil, which is almost twice as much as non-black women» (*ibidem*). The authors also emphasize that, concerning Education in 2019, in accordance with the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), in the age group of 60 years and older, the illiteracy rate for black people (black and brown people) was 27.1% while for white people, it was 9.5%. These data demonstrate that university teaching has a small percentage of black women, and based on this the question that arises is whether there is a historical relationship with the elitist and white feminization of teaching in 19th-century Brazil. We understand that teachers in Basic and Higher Education have different academic paths, but we also recognize that the role of female teachers was predominantly held by white women in Basic Education, which can be clarified with the data regarding the outcomes of the majority of white women in university and teaching positions. The data presented by the mentioned authors demonstrate that Brazilian society continues to grapple with a culture that is both misogynistic and racist. It is important to highlight that the devaluation of teaching in the Brazilian Basic Education, especially in its early years, was attributed to the entry of women, as in other professions. According to Saffioti (2013), primary teaching lost its economic and social values with the entry of women, as is the case of pharmacists and dental professionals. However, when considering Education and the implications of the whiteness among female teachers in Higher Education, Santos (2021, p. 21) highlights a racial confinement experienced by Brazilian educators,

this confinement is characterized, primarily, by an academic trajectory practically devoid of racial diversity in the education of white Brazilian university teachers. Carvalho (2005-2006) reaches this conclusion after researching the racial composition of professors at some of the leading universities in Brazil, such as USP, Unicamp, Unb, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), among others [...] Among other findings, it was observed that 99.6% of teachers were white and 0.40% were black, with no indigenous teachers among those surveyed.

Hence, the data reveal that intellectual spaces in Brazil continue to be predominantly white and elitist, with effects that trace back to the colonial period. Rufino (2019) emphasizes African culture as a transformative possibility for Brazilian Education and says that Orixá Exu is linked to Axé, as it is a movement, a seeker that opens paths and removes all the obstacles in the way. It is important to highlight in this text that Exu represents the connection between the worlds, the spoken and unspoken word, the laughter and silence, the messenger, the very communication that builds and destroys, the transformation, «Exu represents a sphere» (Correia, 2022, p. 139). Thus, with Exu embodying «life in metamorphosis», the author refers to the idea of dialogues between the crossroads, Exu, and the necessary decolonial turn for us Brazilian people to «think

politically, starting from ourselves and our worldview» (ivi, p. 140). Axé is vital energy, movement and enchantment of both life and death. This movement is essential in Education, surrounded by pedagogical responsibility for students in terms of content and cultures. The school is a place of social transformation and knowledge construction (Freire, 1996), therefore it is movement! Diversity is present in Brazilian society, so there is no reason to continue to perpetuate colonialist practices in Brazilian schools. According to Correia (2022, pp. 137-139),

Western Greek mythology was crystallized as unique in the field of knowledge. Thus, Western myths, «heirs of Greece», culminated in the colonial thought model for the author, who highlights black literature as a source of resistance against oppression and emphasizes the crossroads as the intersections of gender, class and race/ethnicity/color present in society and in schools, with the latter reproducing everyday social life within its walls. The mentioned crossroads are points of encounters and disconnections, of dialogues and transformations, places where «thought moves and reinvents itself».

Which aligns with the mythology of the orishas, who always are favorable to nature. And what is nature, if not transformation itself? The author conceptualizes myth as its «master function of establishing certain models of human actions and rites» (Correia, 2022, p. 139). Therefore, the myths inherited from Greece with their inherent whiteness contributed to the demonization of Exu, seen as evil in Western culture. From this perspective, understanding the crossroads as places that converge and multidisciplinary spaces aligns with the ideal of a school that educates human beings for social emancipation, in line with Paulo Freire (Freire, 1996). In this way, considering the school from a decolonial perspective allows for a commitment to listening to the multiple voices existing in Brazil, which are not all white. Decolonial Education aligns with the democracy and freedom of individuals, and hooks³ (2013) emphasizes the need for female Educators to pave the way for their students, bringing their experiences into the classroom, liberating themselves from the fear of being human beings in constant learning. Decolonizing oneself is a daily practice of deconstruction that involves whiteness, structural racism, gender, race/ethnicity/color, and class, among many other intersections. hooks (2013) also emphasizes the need for teachers to demonstrate interest in the plurality of voices in the classroom, which fosters a connection with the crossroads that expand «possibilities among the knowledge that merge and connect, where various forms of knowledge engage in dialogue with each other. [...] and if Exu gives us voice and freedom, it is black feminism that empowers, paves and strengthens this place» (Correia, 2022, p. 150).

Akotirene (2019) emphasizes that black feminism, intersectional, and decolonial feminisms have existed since the first slave ship departed from Africa, highlighting the dialogues between these feminisms. Hence, when we consider an Education that engages in dialogue with the heritage of indigenous peoples, with an appreciation for nature and African peoples, emphasizing the Orisha Exu, I return to the idea of being able to be who we really are, seeking an ancestral connection for an Education that makes sense for the peoples of these Brazilian lands, reinforcing that our place as Brazilian people is a place of existence that has resisted since the earliest days of colonization. The proposal for an Education «committed to the circulation of axé» (Rufino, 2019, p. 95) is a decolonizing approach to Education that calls for the black and indigenous representation in the Brazilian teaching profession, both in Basic Education and Higher Education. As Fanon (2008, p. 34) states:

Every colonized people – that is, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local originality – finds itself face to face with language of the civilizing nation, that is, the metropolitan culture. The more the colonized assimilates the cultural values of the metropolis, the more they will have escaped their bush. The more they reject their blackness, the whiter they will be. In the colonial Army, especially in the Senegalese infantry regiments, native officers are, first and foremost, interpreters. They serve to convey the orders of the master to their fellow countrymen, thereby enjoying a certain honorability.

The desire to be white is associated with the symbolic hierarchies and privileges of whiteness, such as, according to Schuman (2020), participation among the elites, beauty, civility, and Education. That being said, one must question how long we, female Educators, will keep perpetuating the coloniality of our bodies and minds? This serves as a point of questioning and reflection that still remains.

Conclusions

The reflection on one's own teaching practice can take as an example the study with women and feminist theories – which are deconstructed and reconstructed all the time – engaging with the variables that involve being a woman in this society in which we live, being a woman in body, being a woman in different ethnicities, being a woman actively involved in Education, and so on. We feminists are not unfinished beings, we are in this process of culturally deconstructing a sexist, racist and homophobic society in which we were raised, just as teachers need this daily deconstruction so that new knowledge can be built alongside their students. The construction of knowledge can only happen in minds that are open and willing to embrace what is new and different.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the responsibility of Brazilian female teachers, in their pluralities of colors and intersections, in the production of new epistemologies since we not only legitimize theories in our writings and in our teaching practice, but also promote epistemologies so that science does not contribute to the perpetuation of this colonial field. In the author's master's thesis (Souza, 2021), when the absence of black teachers among the interviewees is noticed – a reflection upon my own work as a future pedagogue takes place, which opens new paths for research that initially referred to cultural representations of basic education teachers, how they navigated the processes of action and reaction as women within the school, and unfolding in the possibility of encountering the variable of race/ethnicity, one of the intersections of gender.

Hence, the conclusion from the theoretical dialogues proposed in this article is the embodiment of resistance, in recognition of my own existence, from my place of speech as a light-skinned black female researcher with Brazilian ancestry that is not only white but also black and indigenous. Additionally, there is a need for the female Educators to know the teaching profession historically, in relation to the female gender. Therefore, recalling the objective of this article, the reflection on female teachers and whiteness in Brazilian teaching goes beyond considering Brazilian educational institutions, delving into the subjective realm of gender, race/ethnicity, class and generations, and proposes the need for historical and cultural knowledge of Brazil and the teaching profession, as they are placed within the colonial hierarchies of whiteness and gender relations. Thus, when considering a pedagogy that is sensitive to the humanity of all Brazilians and engages in a decolonization and feminist perspective, it is important to emphasize the role of the teacher a profession of daily (de)construction, with knowledge being infinite. Given

the structural nature of racism and given the existence of the homophobic, racist and sexist prejudices witnessed, the teacher has the opportunity to act to deconstruct the unreflective behaviors that culture transmits into people's lives.

An anti-racist and humanity-friendly female educator proposed in feminism needs to prioritize their daily decolonization and daily (de)construction, fostering dialogue among her students, culture and science.

Notes

¹ Black and brown people in Brazil are victims of a greater number of murders, poverty and illiteracy. In addition to being minorities in teaching positions in Higher Education, which demonstrates the constitution of a white and elitist space until today.

² The emphasis on the word *abolition* highlights the historicity of the struggle of black people in Brazil, and despite abolition, many black individuals continued to be enslaved for a long time. The consequences of such lengthy slavery in Brazil can be understood to this day with the structural racism of our society.

³ The author's name is written in lowercase because she understood that, by defying the norms of written language, it would demonstrate that what matters most is the theory and not the author.

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