

Determination and Responsibility: truth in a structure of fiction ¹

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If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat. It is an unnecessary insult."

Maya Angelou, 1969

Freud and Lacan, from an early age, faced the question of truth, a question firmly raised by philosophy since its origin. With Lacan, we learned that truth has a fictional structure, which, in a sense, means that each subject will have a story that is their own, a knowledge about themselves that is not universal, but rather singular. On the other hand, we know that the subject is crossed by culture and that precisely because he or she is a speaker, something universal crosses them, creating a reality that is, in a certain way, common to everyone. From this, can we think that white people and black people are marked equally by culture? What about this "being black" can and should be thought of differently from "being white"?

It is not about being in the philosophical sense only, but about authorizing oneself in one's own skin.

"The subject begins with the cut" (LACAN, 1966-1967, p. 17). Its existence in fact does not equate to its logical existence. This is presented from the subject's entry into the world of discourse, where signifiers can already be managed. Thus, a reality is being woven, and the subject who was named by someone else also begins to name the world around him or her. The signifiers that speak of that subject are implementing a certain logic, while others are shared, and, in a kind of between-the-lines, are acquiring the same meaning.

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Society and culture play a founding role in the development of human subjectivity. This interlocution between a subject's psychological life and his or her experience in society is being fed back, marking the subjectivity of that time. It is important to emphasize that social models have been imposed upon us and that there are still alienated signifiers embodied in the general discourse, creating inequalities and abysses.

Racism is one of the biggest problems in world history, and at different levels, almost all societies are crossed by the racial issue. In Brazil, slavery contributed to making this issue take on gigantic proportions, which still cause the annihilation and destruction of black people in history today. For centuries, this situation has been repeated in the daily lives of Brazilians, who are mostly black.

Racism is part of our social structure, and the privileged position occupied by white people is marked by the violence of those who practice or have practiced it throughout history. The white population has been economically benefiting from this throughout history, while the black population is treated as merchandise. Whiteness is a socially and historically constructed race as a fiction of superiority. A trait marked by privileges and built on the oppression of another group.

Racism is the founding structure of social relations in Brazil. It is an oppressive system that, in addition to denying rights, often takes away from the subject the possibility of desire operating from lack. Segregation, prejudice, and racism create harmful effects on the psychological life of the black subject, often irreversible, who, more confronted with death, finds himself or herself facing another who exterminates and devastates them. We find many of these reports in the music of Afro-Brazilians, who put their pains of existing in a world where there is no room for their people.

Neuza Santos, a Brazilian psychoanalyst, dedicated a book to discussing what it means to be black, particularly in Brazil. According to her, this is a separate construction. In her book *Tornar-se Negro [Becoming Black]*, the author talks about this construction made from the black people perspective, and says that the book is an effort to elaborate on what it means to be black, and to live that experience. "To know oneself as black is to live the experience of having been crushed in one's identity, confused in one's perspectives, subjected to demands, compelled by alienated

expectations. But it is also, and above all, the experience of committing oneself to rescuing one's history and recreating oneself in one's potentialities" (SANTOS, 1983, p. 25).

For Santos, black people have taken the "white person" as a model of identification, as the only possibility to "become a person" (idem, p. 26). This reality fixes people with black skin to not appropriate and authorize their own bodies. Those who take on blackness, valuing black culture and becoming aware that they have been and continue to be victims of oppression, move away from the blindness imposed by society and begin to question the historicity of their people and themselves, as well as putting to the test those who see reality solely as white.

Can a black person, determined and responsible for their own life, have the same chance of breaking and shifting the destiny historically placed upon them? Someone taking responsibility for sustaining a subjective correction is a condition for this to happen. Responsibility is always individual, but we cannot overlook the importance of collective action. Seeing the world from one's social position can be transformative from a subjective point of view. Whiteness is a problem invented by white people, who, as its creators, must take responsibility for it.

Psychoanalysis, since Freud, has made a significant contribution to thinking about the complexity of the world and human beings, as well as their strange and seemingly incomprehensible manifestations of war. Despite the great psychoanalytic contribution to thinking about the subject and their time with regard to intolerance and racism, there is a lack of materials and research on intolerance against the black population, specifically. Franz Fanon (2021, p. 58), author of the book *Pele Negra, Máscaras Brancas* [*Black Skin, White Masks*], points out that psychoanalysis has yet to formulate a critical discourse equal to the segregation faced by the black population in Brazil. The issue of racism still needs to be addressed by Brazilian psychoanalysts. Examining Brazil's history and recognizing the nuances and transformations that have occurred throughout history is necessary for thinking about even deeper and more painful layers of the Brazilian people's origins.

We know that words have the power to retrieve the memory of a people whose voice has been silenced. Therefore, it is evident that if the story of one's own origin is left out, the individual does not have the symbolic endorsement to act on their discourse, remaining alienated and subjected to the imaginary that has been given to them.

Psychoanalysis must act against the "moral, cultural, and epistemological" genocide (idem, 2019, p. 30) of the Black population. It must also stand against the hatred, prejudice, and oppression of racially marginalized groups, whether from what they hear from their patients in clinical practice or from the position of the psychoanalytic movement in the world, in order to broaden the debate on the problematic reality in which we are all embedded.

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