

# Racism as a Brazilian cultural complex: a feminist revision from a decolonial perspective

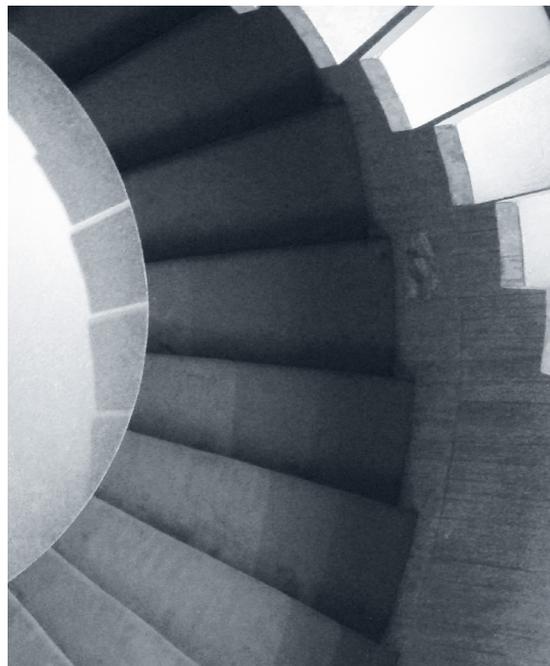
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## Abstract

This work aims to establish an interlocution between different areas of knowledge - analytical psychology, decolonial feminism and black feminism - in order to promote a reflection on racism in the current Brazilian society and the importance of the clinical work within this context. Our purpose is - based on a question that emerged from our practices - to instigate a dialogue to further our comprehension in a more plural way and to introduce an intersectional way of thinking, enabling new narratives that contemplate multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of racism. To this end, the Jungian study on cultural complexes proved to be a fruitful field of critical reflection

within clinical practice and theoretical expansion based on the transdisciplinary dialogue between different fields of knowledge. ■

**Keywords**  
racism,  
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decolonial  
feminism,  
transdisciplinary,  
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# Racism as a Brazilian cultural complex: a feminist revision from a decolonial perspective

## 1. Introduction

We must not forget that prejudice is insidious and that we have all been educated and conditioned to think according to colonial and racist structures. Therefore, the internal work that each conscious individual must do on a continuous and uninterrupted basis is to deconstruct their own racism. (CARIBÉ, 2018, p. 55)

The popularization of feminism and the black movement in Western culture, leveraged by political transformations and social networks, has brought the attention of the collective consciousness to issues concerning gender and race and the need to include a critical approach to the current social and political structures. Specifically in Brazil, the latest political developments and the growing rise of a conservative, liberal Right with a strong religious influence have highlighted the contradictions and paradoxes inherent of our culture and the ambivalence in which such claims and social transformations are establishing themselves in a society that retains remnants of its colonial past and its resulting social gaps.

The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, that affected the economic, financial and social conditions of countless countries on a worldwide scale, has not trivialized these matters. Contrary to this assumption, we witnessed the broadening of social inequalities and contradictions, a nationwide social movement in the pre-election period led by women that was articulated through social media in 2018, the growth in the numbers of femicide in Brazil and in the world, the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States against a long tradition of systemic police violence against the black community,

putting a magnifying glass over Brazilian cases as well. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been an increase in the search for therapeutic work, psychologists inputs and researches on the effects of the economic crisis and the precariousness of essential labor on mental health, as well as literal and symbolic mourning, pointing out the clinical work and academic research as essential tools in the comprehension, on a collective scale, of our different realities and a possibility for awareness and ownership - or even redirecting - of ongoing changes.

Our perspective as feminists, researchers and white clinical psychologists, inserted in privileged academic contexts is one of observation, listening, learning and expanding possibilities and connecting fields of knowledge. In her work *Pequeno manual antirracista* (Ribeiro, 2019a), black activist and writer Djamila Ribeiro argues that white people are co-responsible for expanding the anti-racist activist and academic movement beyond an identity cause through education, broadening the canonic perspective through the inclusion of black authors, historians and thinkers and the recognition of white privilege. Our work translates as the effect of our experience and the relationship with different realities, both in our clinical work and our affiliation with a more plural and avant-garde feminism. This locates us in a specific place that is constantly evoked in the making of this article as an attempt to dodge the risk of a generalizing voice or, as decolonial thought has pointed out, an erasure of narratives that clash with what has been produced in the canonic academic field.

Taking these epistemological assumptions as a starting point, our clinical experience has brought to our attention the lack of theoretical framework within the field of psychology to ac-

count for the mobilizations, concerns and realities of individuals inserted in contexts in which the social place - or its inexistence -, race and gender become extremely present and interlinked issues in their identity formation and individual trajectories. Black, feminist and decolonial studies are interconnected and become indispensable tools in our attempt to comprehend identities as no longer fixed, essential and immutable, but plural, complex and capable of transformation, marked by the cultural and social context and based on the direct experience of individuals inserted in a specific time and space.

The strategic point of view of activism unifies the personal and the collective, part of the place and see themselves more as social subjects than as political subjects. They manifest themselves for the right to control their bodies, demanding services, social equality and human rights. They move from the abstract universal to the concrete universal. This is also the political language of what is called the fourth wave of feminism. [...] In this context, Eurocentric and civilizational feminism begins to be seen as a mode of oppression aligned with what it is supposed to reject - a patriarchal whiteness - and informed in the authority and coloniality of powers and knowledge. (HOLLANDA, 2020, p.12)

We find ourselves mobilized and demanded in our clinical practice by young patients whose suffering is directly linked to matters regarding social place, race and/or gender. Subjects of belonging, alienation, building one's own racialized identity and confronting one's own identity with current discourses and social structures are strongly present in their speech. In these cases, the therapist must work with matters of uprooting, inadequacy and the need to understand one's own social place, the specific condition of women and their own blackness, which demands sensitivity and attentiveness from the therapist,

including to his/her own social place. We understand, based on analytical psychology, that individual and collective narratives are intimately interconnected both in terms of consciousness and in unconscious and archetypal contents. Based on this assumption, deep psychology can bring a new dimension of content and knowledge to the discussion, taking into account the unconscious and the projective dynamics that perpetuate such social structures and that have an impact on the individual experiences and narratives that emerge in psychotherapy.

Although transmission of a classical and relatively displaced Jungian view of the theoretical advances of postmodernity still prevails, a considerable amount of authors defined by Andrew Samuels (2008) as *post-Jungians* are establishing at the same time a critical distance and a dialogue with classical Jungian theory, implementing interconnections and revisions considering a feminist and postmodern perspective. In *Jung: a Feminist Revision*, Susan Rowland (2002) engaged in a critical review with regard to gender in Jung's writings, understanding them in two directions: as a "great theory", focusing on its tendency to a consecrated and generalizing view of the psyche and culture and, consequently, with a stable conception of gender and the feminine in an essentialist and timeless way; and as a "personal myth", understanding Jung's own subjectivity as inseparable from the fabric of his work and, therefore, bringing attention to limits and the particular and non-universalizable perspective that it imposes, especially concerning women's psychology and the conceptualization of the *feminine*. In *The Female Trickster: The Mask That Reveals*, Ricki Stefanie Tannen (2007) explores fictional characters from Anglo-American popular literature as well as popular and avant-garde female figures from music and television, expanding the traditional image of the trickster in Jungian psychology highlighting elements as autonomy, the authority over the narrative and the body as subversive. These characteristics define what

Tannen (2007) identifies as the *female trickster*: female characters that are black or racialized, endowed with elements that differ from a desirable figure of femininity, subverting and transforming the collective consciousness in relation to women and making space to new narratives arising from the imagination of women.

In the present work, we initially intend to briefly present a feminist militant and academic context in its national and international historical trajectory and the critical perspective of decolonial and black feminism, concerned with the inclusion of racial and social realities in a less homogeneous and more plural way within the feminist field of thought. Then, we will discuss cultural complexes as a possibility of connection, dialogue and contribution within Jungian thinking in its epistemology and clinical practice. We assume that Jungian theory is subject to criticism and transformation and that constitutes a field of work and academic production which is fruitful to understand the interdependent relation between individual experiences and historical and collective context, both in their conscious aspects and unconscious dynamics. Tracing a path already outlined in conjunction with feminist thought and a possibility of a dialogue in the Jungian field based on the reviews and critical perspective proposed by decolonial thought and black feminism, constitute a terrain that is arduous but extremely fertile for a creative contribution to post-Jungian thinking and clinical practice. The conceptualization of the collective complexes and a more assertive inclusion of social and cultural dimensions in Jungian theory constitute an essential tool for analysis because it resides precisely in intersectionality between such diverse fields of knowledge, thus making a dialogue possible.

## 2. Feminism(s): history and branches

The creation of feminism as a structured and broader political movement was founded on the dialogue between women in the so-called *aware-*

*ness groups* dedicated to examine sexist thinking, oppression and to exchanging experiences, providing a space for women to reflect on ways to change their own internalized sexist beliefs and attitudes, as well as developing strategies for building knowledge and commitment to feminist policies (HOOKS, 2019). The history of feminism, told briefly, can be divided into four main blocks: *pre-modern feminism*, with the first manifestations of feminist criticism; *modern feminism* or the *first wave of feminism* and the women's movement during the French Revolution, which later resurfaces with great strength in 19th century social movements in its *second wave*, appearing for the first time as an international social movement marked by the suffragette movement in the United States; *contemporary feminism* or *third wave* after World War II, with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) and the realization that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", alongside the controversy and the questioning of the myth of the domestic heroine in Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*. This extensive period also includes 1960s and 1970s movements and Radical Feminism in the United States that revolutionized political theory and gave birth to the slogan "the personal is political", and its ulterior decline in the late 1980's as a unified movement, giving rise to the multiple trends that transformed *feminism* into *feminisms*. Some researchers consider the latter as *post-feminism* or *fourth wave*, but there is no unanimity among the authors. (GARCIA, 2015; HOLLANDA, 2019)

What was initially defined as a struggle for equality between the sexes moved towards the paths of multiplicity and coexistence, fighting so that what can be perceived as differences do not become equivalent to inequality (RIBEIRO, 2018). In the course of its development and popularization alongside with a growing wave of criticisms and problematizations made by women who did not identify themselves with a discourse promoted by mainstream feminism, the feminist movement faced the trend of universalization of

“women” as a category, as it defended almost exclusively the interests of white, heterosexual and middle-class women. These perceptions triggered a crisis and a break within feminism as a paradigm in the late 1980s on, precipitating it towards more plural and contemporary feminisms, adding difference to the agenda instead of plain equality and introducing categories that broadened matters beyond gender, such as race, class and sexual orientation. (HOOKS, 2019)

The starting point of feminism in Brazilian history is relatively unknown, with a limited and fragmented bibliography on the subject. At the beginning of the 19th century, education for Brazilian women was restricted to a few convents, some private schools, homeschooling or through individualized education, keeping women in a strict cultural indigence. In 1827, it was enacted the first legislation authorizing the opening of public women’s schools, which can be considered an initial opening for the feminist movement in the country. This initial development featured the work made by *Nísia Floresta Brasileira Augusta* (1810-1885) who promoted the first feminist ideas influenced by British writer and pioneer Mary Wollstonecraft. In 1832, she published *Direito das mulheres e injustiça dos homens*, defending women’s right to vote and to participate in public life. Consequently, feminist ideas gained popularity in Brazil and, in 1870, a second moment women’s expression was born with the creation of newspapers and magazines that addressed themes related to their reality. In 1922, the *Brazilian Federation for Female Progress* was created, advocating for women’s suffrage and the right to work without their husband’s approval. (DUARTE, 2019; RIBEIRO, 2018; LIMA, 2019)

However, according to Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda (2019), a more expressive performance in Brazil only occurred from the 1960s on, when feminist initiatives in the country, seeking to strengthen the movement, formed alliances to both the Progressive Catholic Church and the Communist Party - the latter exercised import-

ant opposition to the military regime. This determined some initial restrictions on more specific claims regarding women’s rights in conflict with Catholic precepts such as the right to abortion; it also delimited, in association with the Party, that specific feminist demands had to give precedence to broader and more urgent needs of resistance arising from the military regime.

Reflections on women’s issues in the academic field occurred simultaneously with the formation of feminist activism in the 1960s and 1970s, when *conscientization groups* and feminist ideals gained international attention through the works of Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan and the influence of Radical Feminism. However, the confluence between academic political feminism officially took place in 1974 with the participation of female researchers at the *Conference on Feminist Perspectives in Latin American Social Sciences* and with the institution of an organized activism at the seminar of the *Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (ABI)* in 1975 “marked by a strong political commitment to oppose military dictatorship and social inequalities” (HOLLANDA, 2019, p.11).

It is important to emphasize that, to this day, gender studies in universities and research centers are marked by North American and Eurocentric references whereas Brazilian feminist thought is often excluded (HOLLANDA, 2019). All the difficulties we have encountered in our research about feminism in Brazil, have multiplied when it comes to black feminism. Although there are great Brazilian and foreign scholars who approach raciality in feminism - some used as references in this article - invisibility occurs in a completely symptomatic way (RIBEIRO, 2018).

### 3. Black and Decolonial Feminism

A feminist cannot aspire to have “the” theory and “the” method, she seeks to be transversal. She wonders about what she doesn’t see, tries to deconstruct the school siege that taught her to no longer

see, to no longer feel, to drown out her feelings, to no longer know how to read, to be divided within herself and to be separated from the world. She must relearn how to hear, see, feel in order to think. (VERGÈS, 2020, p.46, emphasis added)

Historically, the development of feminism as a vehicle of activism of social transformation and, mainly, the rise of institutional and academic feminism that began to emerge in the 70s and 80s marked by an American and European cultural and intellectual predominance, left its trail of sanitizations, erasures and essentialisms. According to Vergès (2020), who adopts what she calls a decolonial feminist approach, feminist's achievements in terms of women's rights and its resulting institutionalization in that period compelled its guidelines and demands be white-washed to become more palatable to the neoliberal logic and current political structures. Therefore, a movement that initially aimed to embrace the reality of women and their demands within the political and collective discourse began to minimize and even erase a specific portion of these realities and a much-needed analysis of conflicts, contradictions and resistance of their existences. Accordingly, "decolonial feminism is the depatriarcalization of revolutionary struggles. In other words, feminists of decolonial politics contribute to the struggle waged for centuries by humanity to assert their right to existence". (VERGÈS, 2020, p.35)

As an 'alternative agenda' excluded by institutionalized white feminism, black feminism began to emerge between 1960 and 1980 in the United States with the founding of the National Black Feminist in 1973. However, it is important to point out that before slavery, black women were already writing and sharing stories of resistance that challenged the concept of *woman* as a universal category, which only reinforces its extreme lack of visibility (RIBEIRO, 2019b). In 1851, former slave, abolitionist and women's right activist Sojourner Truth uttered her iconic speech

*Ain't I a Woman?* at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, criticizing the plight of black women as being radically different from white women, revealing the reality that while "white women fought for the right to vote and work, black women fought to be considered people". (RIBEIRO, 2018, p. 43).

In Brazil, black feminism began to gain momentum in the 1980s after the *III Latin American Feminist Meeting* (1985), where the relationship between black women and the feminist movement emerged in a more expressive collective way in order to gain political visibility. As bell hooks<sup>1</sup> (HOOKS, 2019) points out, there was a strong resistance on the behalf of white women to include racial issues into the feminist debate, stating that it constituted an important deviation from the main focus of gender relations, which still constitutes as an unsolved debate. However, it was precisely criticism and revindications made black women in this important matter that constituted one of the main factors that redirected feminist movement towards a more plural expression in the 1980s, when issues of identity and identification emerged as widely relevant in the maintenance of democracy and equal rights, as well as the suppression of oppressive devices and necropolitics.

When we discuss identities, we are saying that power delegitimizes some to the detriment of others. The debate, therefore, is not merely one of identity, but involves the reasoning on how some identities are debased and the need to reframe the concept of humanity, considering that black people in general and black women specifically are not treated as human. Since the concept of humanity contemplates only white men, our struggle is to think about the bases of a new civilizing framework. It is a great struggle, which aims to

<sup>1</sup> bell hooks (lowercase) is the pseudonym used by Gloria Jean Watkins.

expand the democratic project. (RIBEIRO, 2018, p. 21)

Black feminism and decolonial thought emerged only later as a critical approach to white and civilizational feminism, embracing a notion of racialized bodies in a more comprehensive way. Nevertheless, these forms of feminism tended to the gaps and demands intentionally disregarded by institutionalized and mainstream feminism. It is an epistemology that intends to be multidimensional in its approach by considering social relations in its wholeness and using them as a strategy against the hierarchy of struggles, knowledge and bodies that, as a general rule, remains dictated by prejudices. It seeks to observe and identify existing connections instead of re-connecting elements in an abstract and systematic way following already known paths. Therefore, decolonial criticism and black feminism are similar when claiming a multiple, wide, comprehensive and - often paradoxical - perspective of categories that have been institutionalized in a universal and static way. In Djamila Ribeiro's (2019b) words: "By promoting a multiplicity of voices what is wanted, above all, is to break with the authorized and only speech which is intended to be universal." (p. 40).

In light of this, bell hooks (HOOKS, 2017) warns of the importance of the reappropriation of the "authority of experience" - which has been widely used as a vehicle of silencing and exclusion - as a valuable source for building knowledge and theories, as well as to form identities. She resumes her own experience entering the academic field and, more particularly, feminist studies, facing a predominantly white and bourgeois description of the category 'women' and an exclusively male approach of the category 'black', where her own experience did not resonate: "I am disturbed not because I think that they cannot to know these realities but because they know them differently" (p. 122). With this speech, (HOOKS, 2017) evokes the *experience* - expressed through the body as the arena where

experience can take place and where racial, social and sexual evidence resides - emphasizing how much this standpoint is lost when the construction of knowledge is considered in an exclusively theoretical way. In her words, "This complexity of the experience can rarely be voiced and named from a distance. It is a privileged location, even if it is not the only or the most important location from which one can know." (p.124).

In their works, Françoise Vergès and bell hooks point to the absence of black women in the academic field both in the dissemination of their work and as teachers and educators. Due to issues previously mentioned, many of these authors find themselves excluded from the academic and militant fields of feminism that were absorbed by a colonial, neoliberal and excluding logic, perpetuating precisely what initially intended to denounce and to transform. In addition to that, our research work for the preparation of this article suggested the lack of decolonial studies that addressed the specificities of Brazilian reality. In one of the few disseminated works that fulfills this purpose, *Pensamento feminista hoje: perspectivas decoloniais* (HOLLANDA, 2020), inquires:

Would Latin American decolonial studies contemplate a particular Brazilian coloniality? What are our colonial matrices? How was violence against indigenous and black slaves metabolized here? I am not suggesting with this the refusal of our closeness to the Hispanic speaking / colonized women who echo problems so similar to ours, [...] but pointing to the urgency of thinking about the specificities that can be made by a Brazilian decolonial feminism. (p.23)

Taking into account the author's standpoints, we go further by asking: how has analytical psychology contributed to colonial studies and racial issues in Brazil? How can it continue to contribute to black Brazilian cultures? How can multiple

fields of knowledge establish a dialogue for a more plural and multidimensional understanding of particular subjective constructions within the Brazilian context?

#### 4. Brazilian racism as a cultural complex

Analytical psychology depended, in its foundation and onset, on the development of complex theory that derived from Jung's word association test, emphasizing an empirical and experimental attitude towards subjective contents brought by patients in his medical and clinical practice.

Based on Jung's initial theoretical construct of complexes - dynamics of projection and introjection of unconscious contents grouped by meaning and affectionately charged - Joseph Henderson<sup>2</sup> developed the concept of *cultural unconscious*, highlighting it as different from the objective, archetypal unconscious. The historical context in which the author was inserted, immediately after the Second World War, enforced an understanding that approached the particularities of each culture and embraced the specific dynamics behind the notions of nationalism, prejudice and also the complexes emerging from particular cultures. This demand was reiterated by an encountered resistance to the traditional Jungian tendency of attributing cultural events to an archetypal dimension. (SINGER, KAPLINSKY, 2010). Kimbles (2002), relied on conceptions brought by Henderson, coining the term *cultural complex* to refer to manifestations, affections and contents belonging to the cultural sphere, an idea later approached by many other authors.

These complexes function in that intermediate realm between the personal and archetypal level of the psyche, partaking of both but also being absolutely unique in that their content and activity is the bridge and link between the individual, society,

and the archetypal realms. "Cultural complexes" are at the heart of the conflicts between many groups and are expressed in group life all the time: politically, economically, sociologically, geographically, religiously. For example, one simply has to think of the struggles between Christians and Jews, blacks and whites, gays and straights, men and women, to begin to imagine how potent are the individual and collective processes activated by "cultural complexes. (SINGER, KIMBLES, p. 20, 2004)

Cultural complexes, like individual complexes, manifest themselves in a relatively autonomous way and can be defined as "emotionally charged aggregates of ideas and images that tend to cluster around an archetypal core and are shared by individuals within an identified collective" (SINGER, 2010, p. 234). Thus, both cultural and individual complexes have a significant importance for understanding interpersonal and intergroup conflicts in the broader context. According to Singer and Kimbles (2004), cultural complexes are intrinsically related to the concept of cultural identity, which is rooted in the social and historical dimension of a given group. Hence, when horrors regarding differences between distinct groups are committed, typically associated with social place and power issues that leads to the repression and dehumanization of certain individuals, it is noticeable that such complexes are usually accompanied by manifestations of oppression, violence, discrimination, inferiority and trauma, which are not evenly distributed among the polarities, but affect all individuals involved due precisely to its relational dynamic nature.

By introducing a material, historical and cultural understanding to individual psychology in a systematic and organized way, we find that cultural complexes are at the base of some Jungian studies which were dedicated to paint a more accurate picture of the Brazilian specificities,

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Henderson presented his inaugural paper on the subject entitled "The Archetype of Culture" at the Second Congress of Analytical Psychology in Zurich, 1962.

providing some theoretical material that contemplates them and can resonate in those experiences that call for a mindful attention and listening, both in clinical practice and academic research.

Over the years, racial issues have been timidly approached in the Jungian community and some authors proposed a review of racist tendencies within the very construction of analytical psychology<sup>3</sup>. In Brazil, the traumatic significance brought on by slavery as a racial cultural complex was widely studied by Denise Ramos (2011), who focuses on understanding its effects on cultural production and the identity of black Brazilians. According to the author, a traumatized group tends to represent a 'false self' in their surroundings, in their artistic productions and in their sense of identity, obliterating their authentic aspects, potentials and vulnerabilities, presenting low self-esteem as a result of a body inferiorly marked by race when compared to white people, which, on the other hand, are socially and culturally associated with beauty, wealth, success and high self-esteem.

Walter Boechat (2018), based on the ideas brought by Leonardo Boff and seeking a comprehension of a Brazilian identity, named four major cultural complexes in our national context: *colonialism, slavery, indigenous holocaust and corruption*. He highlights Brazil and other countries in America as earthly paradises, placing the myth of the Great Mother as one of the founders of Brazilian lands (*terra brasilis*), an inexhaustible source of natural resources to be explored. The author also approaches slavery based on the myth of *racial democracy* to define the covert way in which racism is manifested in Brazilian society, naming it *cordial racism*.

Tereza Caribé (2018) addresses this discussion adopting a focus on clinical practice, emphasizing the importance of knowing the history of our people and the socio-cultural context in which the individual is inserted: "In psychother-

apy, any clinical model that ignores the cultural aspects of a patient's life may produce distortions such as: pathologization of life history and symptoms brought by the person and difficulties in building a therapeutic alliance, among others" (p. 41). In addition, she reinforces the importance of our further attention as psychotherapists in our practice so that themes of discrimination and racial prejudice will not resonate unconsciously with our own shadow. The author draws attention to our own gaps as therapists and individuals inserted in the same culture, considering we are most likely pervaded by the same unconscious and projective dynamics in which experiences are inscribed, even if it is from a different and opposite perspective. This draws our attention as psychotherapists and researchers, regarding the vicissitudes and particularities that characterize a cultural historical path, the manifestation and perpetuation of the segregation dynamics such as racial and social prejudices.

Armed with sarcasm and humor when addressing sexism and racism in Brazilian culture, Lélia Gonzalez (2019) inquires:

Racism? In Brazil? Who said that? This is an American thing. There is no difference here, because everyone is Brazilian above all things, thank God. Black people are well treated here, they have the same rights as everyone. This is so true that, when they try, they rise in life like anyone else. I know one who is a doctor; very polite, cultured, elegant and with such thin features... He doesn't even look like a black person. (p.27)

The author uses the illusion of a *racial democracy* to define the dynamics of racism in Brazil. As Gonzalez (2019) sagaciously points out, there is something markedly veiled, essentialist and naturalized in the racial hierarchy - that is not felt as such - that leads us to an apparent equality of rights and spaces. In other words, according to this logic, the places are determined accord-

<sup>3</sup> Complementary Reading: Polly Young-Eisendrath (1987), Farhad Dalal (1988), Andrew Samuels (1993), Michael Vannoy Adams (1996), Helen Morgan (2008) e Fanny Brewster (2013).

ing to merits, natural and essential attributes of each group. Thus, in confluence with the projective dynamics that underlie cultural complexes in certain groups, “racial democracy hides something beyond what it is shown” (p. 30). When it comes to the racial issue in Latin America, the author considers that “racism is embodied as the symptom that characterizes the Brazilian cultural neurosis” (p. 25) and, like a neurotic, “find ways to hide the symptom, because that brings you certain benefits” (p. 43). Furthermore, she recalls that we are heirs of ideologies of social classification (both racial and sexual) of Iberian societies - considering the historical formation of Spain and Portugal and the eternal dispute of territory with the Moors and also a highly hierarchical society organization - with different social castes and a violent social and political control of dominance. Therefore, pervaded by racial stratification inheritance, a closer look to racism in Brazil finds that obvious, literal and institutionalized segregation of blacks; indigenous is rather unnecessary, given the fact that the myth of racial democracy proves to be an equally effective mechanism of segregation based on an ideology of racial whitening, transmitted and perpetuated by traditional media and ideological systems, reproducing the myth of white superiority:

For all these reasons, it is not difficult to conclude that there are major obstacles to the study and direction of race relations in Latin America, based on its regional configurations and internal variations, compared with other multiracial societies outside the continent. In fact, this noisy silence about racial contradictions is based, modernly, on one of the most effective myths of ideological domination: the myth of racial democracy. (GONZALEZ, 2020, p. 44)

According to the author, the myth of racial democracy is currently active with all its symbolic power in Brazilian carnival rituals that exerts

their symbolic violence especially on black women who are deified at the party, but transformed into invisible maids in their daily life. Sueli Carneiro (2011), adding a gender perspective to this discussion, highlights an important and often neglected element: colonial sexual violence, reinforcing that racial segregation and gender issues are far from being aseptically separated, but represents the multiplicity of dynamics and historical narratives which enters clinical practice in the form of personal and individual narratives, struggles and suffering.

## 5. Conclusion

Current times of intense political and economic crisis, along with the crisis of values demonstrated by an extremely polarized discourse in Brazil, disclosed in our clinical practice the need for rooting and belonging, segregation and violence awareness that set the tone for the experience of subjective construction of bodies marked by race and gender. Clinical practice as well as research in psychology constitute potential spaces for the construction of new discourses and the understanding of different realities, reinforcing the need for the construction of a theoretical framework that contemplates the plurality, that are increasingly demanding space in disseminated discourses and theories. As therapists and researchers, our goal is to broaden our knowledge by focusing on an attentive listening and a self-critical attitude that comes from a careful and conscious look at the collective dynamics which characterize race and gender in our society.

In this process, feminism has denounced sexism and androcentrism through its criticism of the dominant way in which scientific knowledge is created, which proved to be a significant mean in the deconstruction of universal knowledge and the proposition of an alternative way to articulate subjective and sociocultural dimensions, thus rescuing a precious dialogue in Jungian theory between the individual and collective. When women are able to expose their

experiences from the “margins” in greater detail, they end up producing an enriching counter-discourse. On the other hand, black feminism and decolonial thought alert to the essentialist and segregating aspect of Eurocentric and institutionalized feminism, which ended up excluding from its agenda the claims, needs and the reality of black and racialized women, highlighting the urgency of an intersectional thinking, a fact that we, as psychotherapists, come across daily in our clinical practice.

Thereby, we used the potential that resides in Jungian theory in its comprehension of unconscious dynamics and the interlocations between the individual and the collective, in dialogue with the concept of cultural complexes, to draw a rich panorama to address racism as a wider dynamic and to begin to access its blind

spots. This perspective restored the importance of listening to different perspectives and realities, which can only come when we really strive to understand our place in the world and give account to our moment in history in its plural and multidimensional aspects.

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to do harm, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a person, but stories can also repair that broken dignity. (ADICHIE, 2019, p. 32) ■

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## Resumo

### *O racismo como complexo cultural brasileiro: uma revisão a partir do feminismo decolonial*

*Buscamos, no presente trabalho, abrir um espaço de interlocução de diferentes campos de saberes - a psicologia analítica, o feminismo decolonial e o feminismo negro - a fim de promover uma reflexão sobre o racismo na sociedade brasileira na atualidade e a importância da área clínica dentro deste contexto. O objetivo é - a partir de questionamentos que atravessaram as nossas práticas - instigar um diálogo para apro-*

*fundar de maneira plural o tema e introduzir um modo de pensar interseccional, possibilitando novas narrativas que contemplem olhares múltiplos sobre o fenômeno. Para tanto, o estudo junguiano sobre os complexos culturais demonstrou-se campo frutífero de reflexão crítica dentro da atuação clínica e de ampliação teórica a partir do diálogo transdisciplinar entre diferentes esferas de conhecimento. ■*

Palavras-chave: racismo, complexo cultural, feminismo decolonial, transdisciplinaridade, psicologia clínica.

## Resumen

### *El racismo como complejo cultural brasileño: una revisión basada en el feminismo descolonial*

*En el presente trabajo, buscamos abrir un espacio para la interlocución de diferentes campos del conocimiento - psicología analítica, feminismo descolonial y feminismo negro - con el fin de promover una reflexión sobre el racismo en la sociedad brasileña actual y la importancia del área clínica en este contexto. El objetivo fue - basado en preguntas que han atravesado nuestras prácticas - instigar un diálogo para profundizar el*

*tema de manera plural e introducir una forma de pensar interseccional, posibilitando nuevas narrativas que contemplen múltiples perspectivas sobre el fenómeno. Por tanto, el estudio junguiano sobre los complejos culturales resultó ser un campo fructífero para la reflexión crítica dentro de la práctica clínica y de expansión teórica basada en el diálogo transdisciplinario entre diferentes esferas del conocimiento. ■*

Palabras clave: racismo, complejo cultural, feminismo descolonial, transdisciplinariedad, psicología analítica.

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