
Black Reason, Racism and Àse

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Vieram três pra bater no nego.

Puxaram faca, porrete e facão.

Vieram três pra bater no nego.

Puxaram faca, porrete e facão.

Você não sabe o que pode fazer o nego.

Você não sabe o que pode fazer o nego.

Troca a mão pelo pé, o pé pela mão.

Troca a mão pelo pé, o pé pela mão.

Troca a mão pelo pé, o pé pela mão.

Three came to beat the nigger.

They pulled a knife, a club and a machete.

Three came to beat the nigger.

They pulled a knife, a club and a machete.

You do not know what the nigger can do.

You do not know what the nigger can do.

Change the hand by the foot, the foot by the hand.

Change the hand by the foot, the foot by the hand.

Change the hand by the foot, the foot by the hand.

Song from the game of capoeira. Public domain.

REASON, MORAL AND

The conceptions of *black reason*, *racism* and *àse* are part of the conceptual body that forms the baraperspectivism. Concept that arises from the elaboration of my master's thesis, defended in April 2014, it arises from the desire to elaborate a critique of reason in the name of the affections of the body, taking, I would say, nowadays, the reason itself as basically affection. Now the need to formulate a critique of reason from the impulses and affections of the body is not new in the history of philosophy. At the genesis of baraperspectivism itself, Nietzsche's conception of the *Dionysian* is one of its basic references. The Nietzschean attitude of "seeing science with the artist's point of view, but art with that of life" (1992: §2) is the same attitude adopted and reproduced by the thinking experience of baraperspectivism. Moreover, when the young Nietzsche, in developing his interpretation of the birth of the Greek tragedy, appeals to the figures of Apollo and Dionysus, he introduces them as paradigms originating from mythical thought, with which, on the other hand, related to the concept of will, extracted from Schopenhauer, produces a technique of thought elevated to the level of the extra-conceptual. It is not a question of thinking about reason strictly from the point of view of the concept, that is, it is not about using reason as the privileged instrument of its own self-criticism. The lesson that remains for the history of philosophy and knowledge in modernity from *The birth of tragedy* is the importance of the image, art and myth in the construction of a philosophical discourse that dispenses with the primacy of reason. The uniqueness of Baraperspectivism, therefore, is not in the desire to establish an analysis of the relation between myth and reason in modernity, but rather to take advantage of the symbolism of the myths of this *yorùbá god*, the *òrìsà Èsù*, in a similar way to Nietzsche's treatment of the figure of Dionysus, throughout the development of his philosophy of the tragic, in the sense of elaborating an interpretation of the use of reason in the constitution of the knowledge that deposed the human condition of the African peoples in modernity, privileging, from a racial perspective, the "superiority" of the European white peoples, to the detriment of the "inferiority" of the black African peoples. For Baraperspectivism, it is a critique of racism in the history of knowledge. And since the differential element of the human being in relation to other animals, from the famous definition of Aristotle, is the attribute of the *logos*, and that the same *logos*, translated as reason in the Kantian formulation, sustained the production of the discourses of philosophy and of

science that defended the animality and racial inferiority of the black populations in modernity, it is also a critique of reason. In other words, for Baraperspective, it is a question of formulating an interpretation of the relationship between racism and rationality in the history of knowledge in the form of a *denunciation*. This is the desire that moves us.

Besides examining the use of reason in the constitution of knowledge, that is, in the perspective of knowledge, one must also consider its relation to morality. In the face of human diversity and the infinite power of nature, I can not but agree with Nietzsche when he affirms that under the presuppositions of science there is a moral presupposition, the will of truth. The nihilistic impulse of control, domination and denial of one's own body and nature, in his "innocence of becoming," to use Nietzsche's terminology, the will to truth is a *belief* in the very divinity of truth, is the belief in the truth as the absolute value and ultimate end of all human actions. For the Congolese philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, the will to truth governs our will to know and is one of the principles of exclusion that determine the conditions of discourse production and the enunciation of truth (1982: 39). In Kant's categorical imperative, the relationship between truth and rationality formulated in an inextricable way is presented as the ultimate cause of all human actions. There reason occupies a privileged place and bestows privileges upon all beings who enjoy their faculties – moral privileges. In addition, of course, epistemological privileges. In a text on the categorical imperative, Giacoia, reproducing Kant, informs that the only end that is not a means for no other is the rational being itself; and he describes the formula of the realm of ends, as a variant of the categorical imperative: "act in such a way as never to treat the rational being, in your own person or in the person of all other, only as a means, but always also as an end" (Giacoia 2012: 62).

Since Kant, at least, reason is not a privilege of blacks. Histrionism, idolatry, petulance, arrogance, pride and vanity, the black is marked in Kantian speech with the signs of lack and excess. Far from being in moral and mental conditions on an equal footing with those of the white "race," the black, according to Kantian belief, deserving to be "scattered by club blows" (Kant 1993: 102), is closer to the animal than to the human being. Devoid of rational faculty by the Königsberg paranoid discourse, the black must be treated morally as an object of violence. A target of resentment and delirium, the

black acquires, since Kant's formulation, all the stigmas necessary for the scientific, economic and political support for the bourgeois capital accumulation as well as for the colonialism, that are consolidated with the establishment of the system of mass enslavement of the African populations. According to C.R.L. James, it was the French bourgeoisie itself, which defended the humanitarian ideas of the revolution of 1789, who invested and profited too much from the manufacture of slave ships and the trafficking of enslaved Africans, promoting all legal measures and politic maneuvers necessities for the maintenance of slavery in the French colony of St. Dominic Island, now Haiti, which rebelled against the French colonial system, under the influence of the revolutionary action of the slave population itself¹ (James 2010: 75). Slavery is the phenomenon *par excellence* of transformation, naturalization and reification of black as an object of violence. The irony is that, with the exacerbated and violent exploitation of Africa and the African populations, it does not seem that the West has succeeded in reaching its estimated rational being; on the contrary, it provided the perfect environment for the dissemination of infinite modes of irrationalism.

The absolutism of the differences between blacks and whites also expresses their permanence in Hegel. For him, the Negro also finds himself exclusively under the condition of animality:

(...) the main characteristic of blacks is that their consciousness has not yet reached the intuition of any fixed objectivity, such as God, as laws (...); the black represents as it has been said the natural man, wild and indomitable (...). In them, nothing evokes the idea of human character (...). Among blacks, moral feelings are totally weak - or, to be more exact, non-existent (Hegel in Noguera 2011: 18).

For Dimas Masolo, a Kenyan philosopher, in his text on identity in African philosophy, there are two important points to understand Hegel's definition of history and culture, which are fundamentally articulated with his conception of rationality. The first is to know that reason functions "as the subjective tool with which man creates and orders the world, and as the objective reality which dialectically manifests itself as an imposition over the natural spirit through cultural change and development". The second point is to know that "Africans are excluded from this fundamental value. They

have no reason. Because they lack reason, they also lack history, development and culture" (MASOLO, 1995, p.5). That is, according to Hegel there is nothing left for the black but the condition of thing or of animal. For baraperspective, it is necessary to understand it, the black, much more like a *target*, than properly as a *victim*. The victim succumbs. The target resists. Black bull whipped in the arena of history, the blood that flows from its marks and wounds, is the same blood that ignites its eyes, its *àse*, its effort to persevere in existence, its place and power of speech.

DU BOIS, THE HUMAN RACES AND THE PHENOMENON OF RACISM

The purpose of this text is oriented to present some considerations resulting from a reflection on the phenomenon of racism. Despite the relevance of the roles that the various forms of racism play in politics and anthropology, with respect to what has been stipulated in terms of racial difference between black and white, over colonialism intensification process, my interest now centers around the problem of racism and its relation to the affections of the body. Symbolically, the Kantian proposition of scattering the blacks by club blows illustrates a singular affective constitution and perhaps prior to any use of the supposed inferiority of the blacks and, on the other hand, of the superiority of the whites, to justify the slavery of the Africans and the colonial enterprise. There is something in the order of the affections of the body of the white and the production of phantasmagorias, which sustains the belief in the racial inferiority of the blacks.

Indeed, the issue of race between blacks and whites has been addressed in different modes by black intellectuals since the end of the eighteenth century, through texts that claim for black, in general, according to Achille Mbembe, in *Critique of Black Reason*, the "statute of subjects with full rights" (Mbembe 2013: 12). W.E.B. Du Bois, for example, was a black intellectual born in the United States, who at the end of the nineteenth century began to produce his reflection on human races, based on the belief that each race would have a contribution to offer to mankind, as a result of a "divine purpose". An important piece to remember about the relationship between science and racial inferiority in modernity, found in the text of Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, is that Du Bois intends to "revalue the black race against the sciences of racial inferiority" (1997: 56). Appiah further states that,

for Du Bois, "the problem of the Negro is to discover and express the message of his race" (55). Accompanying his interpretation In Du Bois's work, we will see three important aspects of the racial question that will be useful to us in developing our reflection on the relationship between racism and affection. First, for Baraperspectivism, Du Bois's attitude is not to be satisfied with the final word of nineteenth-century science about the division of humanity into races, based exclusively on physical characteristics, that is, with the scientific formulation of the concept of race, from the observation of phenotypic differences among humans, such as skin color, hair type, nose shape and cranial measurements. Secondly, for Du Bois, in what concerns the division of humanity into races, what he calls "subtle forces" is the determining factor which divides it in a more correct way. Finally, these subtle forces, which determine the differences inherent in the whole of humanity and the development of the processes that characterize each racially defined human grouping, would be defined more fully by the sociologist's gaze and the historian's gaze, which leads us to take the conception of race, for Du Bois, according to Appiah, as a "socio-historical" concept, much more than scientific.

The question now is: what is the true distinction between these nations? Are the physical differences in blood, color and cranial measurements? Of course, we must all recognize that physical differences play a large role (...). But while racial differences have mostly followed physical lines, no simple physical distinction would actually define or explain the deeper differences - the cohesion and continuity of these groups. The deeper differences are spiritual and psychic - undoubtedly based on the physical, but transcending them infinitely. [The various races] struggle, each one in their own way, to develop for civilization their particular message, their particular ideal, which will help guide the world closer and closer to the perfection of human life for which we all yearn, which is far removed from the Divine deed "(Du Bois in Appiah 1997: 54).

While nineteenth-century science divides humanity into at least two, or perhaps three, large human groups, whites and blacks, and possibly the yellow race, Du Bois considers the existence, not of three but of eight "distinctly differentiated races, in the sense that history tells us that this word should be used" (ibid.). Considering the difference between Du Bois's perspective and that of nineteenth-century science, we find that his socio-historical definition of the concept of race encompasses more fully the diversity of

human experience, which also gives us a broader dimension of difference in terms of physical characteristics as well as in terms of customs, languages, traditions, interpretations and worldviews. And, in fact, when it comes to an analysis of racism, it seems to me that the orientation of Du Bois's perspective on the concept of race is fundamental, precisely because it is a more complete notion. Being the most profound difference between the races, according to Du Bois, of a spiritual and psychic order, it seems to me that an approach to the problem of racism in the perspective of affections would reveal some interesting and illuminating aspects on the question, besides suggesting that perhaps we are at the right way to start our own reflection on racism.

To the extent that we admit the influence of "subtle forces" in characterizing the differences between the races, according to the theoretical framework of Du Bois, in a similar manner, we can also say that there is the occurrence of subtle forces in the characterization of racism as an affective phenomenon. It is possible to establish a correspondence between Du Bois' emphasis on the psychological and psychic dimension of racial differences, on the one hand, and the appreciation of Spinoza's theory of affection, on the other, with a view to examining the problem of racism through a perspective complementary to the perspectives of biology, history and sociology. In addition, it is important to point out that, for Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, "only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black problem can reveal the affective anomalies responsible for the structure of the complexes" (2011: 65). And, in spite of the importance he also attaches to an accurate understanding of economic and social realities for a "true alienation of the Negro," his perspective of analyzing the black-white relationship is fundamentally psychology (66). And thus, assuming that both the idea of subtle forces such as psychic and spiritual differences, in their relationship with the experience of racism, can be explained by an interpretation of the psychoanalytic approach of Fanon and Spinoza's theory of affections, it's worth saying, first of all, that what we call "affection" is the same thing that was defined by Spinoza in his *Ethics*, that is, "the affections of the body, by which the power of acting is increased or diminished, stimulated or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" (2011: III, def.3). As we deal with this aspect of racism that occurs as a phenomenon of the order of affections, it is also necessary to keep in mind that the affections, according to Spinoza, are divided between actions and passions. An action,

or an active affection, is the affection that finds in the nature of the individual who acts the exclusive cause of its production; while a passion, or a passive affection, corresponds to the affection which can not be explained exclusively by the nature of the individual who suffers. This is what we formulate from the definitions of *adequate cause* and *inadequate cause*: "I call an adequate cause the one whose effect can be perceived clearly and distinctly by itself. I call an inadequate, or partial cause, on the other hand, that whose effect can not be understood by it alone" (2011: III, def.1). The individual acts, therefore, when he is the adequate cause of an active affection, and in this case affection is called action, and, on the other hand, he suffers when he is only an inadequate or partial cause of a passive affection, and in this case, affection is called passion. According to Spinoza's definitions, therefore, to say that racism is an affection, it means, first of all, to affirm that it is a passion.

RACISM, AMBIVALENT PASSION

There are at least two points of view by which we must examine this passion called racism. As we want to evaluate it from the relation between black and white, the examination of the problem of racism goes, on the one hand, to the notion of *feeling of superiority*, and, on the other hand, *feeling of inferiority*. With white in its "whiteness" and black in its "blackness", we must remember two facts observed by Fanon: first, that "whites consider themselves superior to blacks" and, secondly, that "blacks they want to show whites, no matter what the cost, the richness of their thinking, which have the same power of spirit" (2011: 65). If we think in accordance with Du Bois's proposition, which assigns a socio-historical dimension to the problem of difference between races, and try to situate the problem of feelings of superiority and inferiority in a socio-historical perspective as well, we must consider the concept of *colonial situation*. From Fanon's definition of the *decolonization* process, as being the "confrontation between two congenitally antagonistic forces", where the colonial situation must be understood as the historical movement itself in which the process of decolonization takes place (2011: 452), the concept of the colonial situation here refers to the fact that colonial society is divided between colonized and colonizers, dominated and dominators, and that duality, black and white, must be understood according to those dichotomies. It is also fundamental to know about Mannoni's point of view, as it is expressed in *Psychology of Colonization*, cited by Fanon: "the central idea is that the

confrontation of 'civilized' and 'primitive' creates a particular situation - the colonial situation - making appear a set of illusions and misunderstandings that only psychological analysis can situate and define "(Mannoni in Fanon 2011: 130). Although Fanon's analyzes refer to the black populations of the French Antilles and more specifically those of Martinique, his information is absolutely relevant, considering the scope of this work. He further states that the same behavior observed in the French Antilles lies in the "bosom of every race that was colonized" (Fanon 2011: 77).

In general, his observations regarding affective relations between black and white show characteristics that are reproduced worldwide, and in a large scale, and are related to matters that are also contemplated by the theory of affections, such as the approaches to feelings of fear and hate, as we will see later. Mannoni, in his book, tries to demonstrate that there is a "germ" of the feeling of inferiority latent in the psychic life of the black, prior to the establishment of the colonial situation, that is, even before the contact between the European colonizer and the native individual from the territories occupied by the European colonization. This is what Mannoni defines as a *dependency complex*, examined by both Fanon and Aimé Césaire, in his *Discourse on Colonialism*, according to which it must be understood that the native human groups of the colonized territories are "psychologically made to be dependent; that they need dependence, that they postulate it, that they claim it, that they demand it; that this is the case of most colonized peoples" (Mannoni in Césaire 2004: 47). For Fanon, on the other hand, the historical, social and political context of the colonial situation, what he calls the "intersection of objective and historical conditions," plus the "attitude of man to these conditions" (Fanon 2011: 130), constitute two indispensable factors in a psychological interpretation of the problem of colonization. And although we do not extend ourselves with a more detailed description of the political and economic circumstances that characterize a colonial society, that is, of its historical and objective conditions, I reiterate that this discussion on racism seeks to interpret it from the context of the colonial situation, due to the emphasis on the dichotomy between superiority and inferiority that is established in the same context.

Racism is a passion, or, more strictly, a passive affection, which manifests itself in at least two ways, as stated above. The first is the feeling of superiority. The second,

the feeling of inferiority. The feeling of superiority, according to Mbembe, is related to the "old myth of racial superiority" forged by the West.

In its avid need for myths destined to consolidate its power, the Western hemisphere was regarded as the center of the globe, the birthplace of reason, universal life, and the realm of humanity. The most "civilized" part of the world, only the West has invented a "right of peoples." Only he came to constitute a civil society of nations, understood as a public space of reciprocity of law. Only he was the origin of the idea of a human being possessing civil and political rights allowing him to develop his private and public powers as a person, as a citizen belonging to the human race and, as such, concerned with everything that is human. Only he codified a range of customs assimilated by different peoples, including diplomatic rituals, the laws of war, the rights of conquest, public morality and manners, techniques of commerce, religion, and government (Mbembe 2013: 25).

Thus, it can be said that this feeling is also constituted by the discourses of philosophy and science. More than that, it is a feeling reinforced by the discourse of the knowledge that denies the attributes of rationality and, therefore, of humanity to the black populations and which establish, on the other hand, the centrality of reason, of universality, of truth and of humanity in the Western hemisphere, more precisely, in Europe. It's a feeling, so, that increases, which intensifies, insofar as it is reflected in the values produced by knowledge in the West, in the areas of epistemology, ontology, law and sociology. The dichotomy "civilized" and "primitive", recurrent in the texts of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century on the difference between the peoples of Europe and the *rest* of the world also establishes terms that enhance the difference and the belief in the superiority established by knowledge. The very feeling of superiority becomes a belief, while it is scientifically and rationally justified on the basis of this knowledge. Thus, the racist, as an individual suffering from the feeling of superiority, deems himself the exclusive holder of the attributes of humanity, according to Mbembe's statement that "the racist subject sees in himself humanity, not in what makes him similar to others, but in what distinguishes it" (2013: 63).

Fanon's critique of the correlation between superiority and inferiority, in effect, also establishes a connection between conceptions of humanity and culture. In structural terms, it is a similar correspondence to the Hegelian view that blacks, these "statues" devoid of language and self-consciousness (MBEMBE, 2013, p. 26), irrational entities, are not in a position to develop history and culture. It can be said that, according to the Hegelian view, blacks do not equal whites in terms of humanity, that is, as human value. Inasmuch as the Hegelian approach to racial differences between blacks and whites occurs through a relation between rationality, humanity and culture, Fanon's approach also favors this relation. Not to endorse Hegel's position, of course, but to reestablish it with a new meaning. "The inferiorization is the correlate native to European superiority. Let us have the courage to say: it is *the racist who creates the inferiorized*" (Fanon 2011: 136). Thus, inferiorization designates a process of discrimination, devaluation, degradation and brutalization of dark-skinned populations.

I begin to suffer for not being white, in that the white man imposes a discrimination on me, makes me a colonized, extorts any value, any originality, tells me that I am a parasite in the world, that I must accompany as soon as possible the white world, "that I am a brute beast, that my people and I are a walking manure, horribly promising of soft cane and silky cotton, that I have nothing to do in the world"². So I will simply try to make myself white, that is, I will force white to recognize my humanity (Fanon 2011: 141).

There is, according to Fanon, a fundamental relationship between the idea of a colonized people, the black and the suffering generated by the inferiority complex, according to the way in which he designates the colonized people: "in the heart of which was born a complex of inferiority, by the burial of local cultural originality" (Fanon 2011: 72). A data of maximum relevance in his study concerns the relationship established with language. The colonial situation demands of the colonized people an attitude before the language of the colonizer. The relation of the colonized to the language spoken by the colonizer, that is, the relation of the black to the language spoken by the white, is a symptom of the suffering generated by the inferiority complex. For Fanon, the black in the Antilles, driven by the desire to whiten, will seek to become a perfect speaker of the French language. To speak, for him, implies the

possession of a world view and the ability to interfere in the processes of constitution of the real related to this vision of the world. "To speak is to be able to employ a certain syntax, to possess the morphology of such or such a language, but it is above all to assume a culture, bear the weight of a civilization" (Fanon 2011: 71). It is not, however, a question of exclusively considering the phenomenon of speech as a symptom of the inferiority complex, but it is also necessary to observe, besides speaking, action and feeling. To speak, to Fanon, too, is to "exist absolutely for the other." Thus, speaking, acting and feeling, implicated in the more general phenomenon of language, are experiences that indicate the intensity of the suffering generated by the inferiority complex. Although we have not yet done a detailed analysis of the notion of Fanon's inferiority complex, even knowing his interlocution with Freud, Adler, and Mannoni, I would say that the difference between inferiority complex and inferiority feeling is subtle. That can be understood as a pattern, an affective structure that arises in the mind of the colonized and, more specifically, in the mind of the black, conditioned by the colonial situation. And the feeling of inferiority is a way of explaining the suffering generated by the complex.

In drawing on Spinoza's theory of affection in the context of this discussion of racism, I also intend to present some considerations about an ontology of affections related to the experience of racism. I believe that thus it would be possible to explain the meaning of racism phenomenon, with respect to the affections of the body and, at the same time, express the meaning of the strength which constitutes the feeling of racial superiority or inferiority; that is, I believe that the relationship established here between Spinoza, Fanon, and Mbembe is capable of leading us to understand this experience from the conceptual point of view, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, from a point of view affective likewise, in a manner similar to that Fanon, with his text, look for "affectively touch the reader, that is, irrationally, almost sensuously" (Fanon 2011: 51). And in view of the texts that deal with this issue, besides *keeping* in mind the impressions produced by observation and the very experience of racial conflict, I am led to affirm that the suffering generated by the experience of racism is a sadness.

THE CONCEPTUAL FIGURE OF THE SUFFERING BLACK PERSON

In fact, to speak of racism and *black reason* - a concept I use according to the formulation of Achille Mbembe - in relation to Spinoza's theory of affections, consists essentially in establishing a comparison with the *primary affections* of joy, sadness and desire. In my view, both racism, understood as a passive affection, as the notion of black reason have some connection with these three primary affections, such as they were defined by Spinoza. Although Fanon and Mbembe do not mention Spinoza's theory of affections, they both tie the "black problem" to the experience of desire; that is, what I approach here as the problem of racism and black reason, in Fanon and Mbembe, appears associated with the experience of desire. I would even say that, from Fanon, the problematic of racism revolves around the desire of the *suffering black person*; that is, since Fanon, the desire of the suffering black person becomes an issue.

For baraperspectivism, the notion of "suffering black person" is fundamental. It designates the dark-skinned individual who suffers from a sense of inferiority caused, in part, by contact with the values of a world created by light-skinned individuals based on a belief in racial superiority. Every suffering black person suffers from sadness. And this sadness, when it is linked to any manifestation or modality of the myth of white racial superiority, defines what is the force of racism, understood as an affection. Thus, one can speak of black racism - against black itself. In the person of himself, or of any other black person. Exploring an associative terminology of image and concept, I would say that the notion of suffering black person is a *conceptual figure*. Furthermore, I dare say, more or less similar to the geometric figures, which may be employed in the analysis of spatial relationships, the suffering black person figure applies to the analysis of affective relationships involving race conflict.

Let us consider this conceptual figure which is the suffering black person before the primary affections of sadness, joy, and desire. The sadness is "a passion for which the mind moves to a lesser perfection" (Spinoza 2011: III, 11). For the baraperspectivism, an individual is the bodily manifestation of various attributes; among them, of an ancestral lineage. It is necessary to affirm this emphasis on the condition of ancestry, so that we have in mind the multiple dimension of the human, that is, so that we can conceive the individual, the human person, as a phenomenon composed of infinite particles, experiences, capacities, desires, senses, feelings, knowledge and opinions. In reality, for the baraperspectivism, the individual does not exist.

Individuation is a cognitive process of ontological ordering, indispensable to the production of any conventionally scientific discourse on the real. The manifestation of the diversity of the human embodied in the person is what should lead us to an understanding of the phenomenon *people* who go beyond the comfort and custom of producing philosophical statements from the conventional categories of Western thought in general, and especially the category of individual. To take the human person perceiving it as the sum, and a composition, under the influence, and as heir, of the characteristics of an ancestral lineage, for the baraperspectivism, is a philosophical attitude of affirmation and approach of an African way of thinking. For example, clearing the perception of what is from the deceased in the body of the living implies the resizing of the very notion of chronological time. According to Wole Soyinka, *yorùbá* time, traditionally, is a "cyclic concept of time" (Soyinka 1990: 145), which allows the coexistence of the deceased, the living and the unborn. And, according to Bolaji Idowu, even if there is no belief in the doctrine of the reincarnation in *yorùbá* thought, tradition also speaks of the permanence of the deceased in the very body of the living: "not only in a grandchild or great-grandchild, but also in several contemporary grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who are brothers and sisters and cousins, aunts, and nephews, uncles and nieces *ad infinitum*" (Idowu 1995: 209).

In Spinoza's view, the human being is the composition of a mind and a body, the body being the object that builds the human mind (2011: II 13), and the human body is composed of a "large number of different individuals" (2011: III 17, *esc.*). The passage to a lesser perfection provoked by sadness must be thought, considering the perspective of the body, and of course that of the mind. The baraperspectivism identifies in the ontological relationship of immanence between the mind and the body, the way it was established by Spinoza, an important contribution of white thought to the philosophical production of blacks, as far as criticism of the racist presuppositions of Western metaphysics is concerned, since the privilege of reason, to the detriment of the body and senses in the production of knowledge in the West, corresponds to the privilege and the supremacy of whiteness, in absolute detriment of blackness, in the colonial enterprise and civilizing process of the planet. Thus, one of the qualities of the human mind is to strive to increase the body's acting power. "And so, during all time when the mind envisages those things that increase or stimulate the potency of our body's action, the body will be affected in ways that increase or stimulate its potency to

act, and consequently during that time, potency of mind-thinking is increased or stimulated "(2011: III 12).

The idea of perfection, in Spinoza, is formulated, at least in two ways. First, he says that he understands perfection and reality to be the same thing (2011: II, Def. 6); which means that the infinite substance, that is, God, or nature, is perfect. He then affirms that perfection and imperfection are "modes of thinking," "notions we are in the habit of inventing by comparing individuals of the same species or of the same genus" (2011: IV, preface). But nature does not act for an end. There is no model by which nature creates all things, being itself the adequate cause of all that exists. Nature necessarily exists and acts, that is, creates, according to the same necessity by which it exists. Thus, it is possible to understand also that there is a model, a way of thinking, on the basis of which both the inferiority complex and the superiority complex were produced, and which corresponds to what Mbembe would call "myth", a fiction destined to substantiate Western superiority, to the detriment of other possible discourses on the consolidation of the power of other peoples and nations. If the black person is discriminated according to the color of its skin, it is because the discourse that affirms its racial inferiority is based on the invented model to assure the superiority of the white . And if a black person suffers from a feeling of sadness because of this model, it is because this discourse, as an external cause, produces inadequate ideas in his mind.

FEAR AND HATE

For baraperspectivism, it is only possible to speak of the suffering black person, as long as it is also possible to speak of the *suffering white person*. For Spinoza, "when the mind imagines its impotence, for this reason, it becomes sad" (2011: III 55). In the case of the suffering black person, the dimension of this sadness is explained even more correctly, when one understands that "this sadness is further intensified if the mind imagines to be frowned upon by others" (III 55, color). In the case of the suffering white person, the sadness is not the same. In fact, the same affection can affect people in different ways equally different. I will not dwell on the case of the suffering white person, but it must be said that in order to understand this figure as opposed to that of the suffering black person, the affections are infinite, but all are composed or derived from the three primary or "primitive" affections, of desire, of joy or of sadness, since, according to

Spinoza , "all affections are related to desire, joy or sadness" (III 59, dec.). Thus, before presenting the definitions that Spinoza formulates for desire and joy, let us note that the most eminent affections that characterize the racial conflict between black and white are fear and hate. Indeed, for Fanon, black is a "phobogenic" object (Fanon 2011: 186). This fear, Fanon places him in the plane of the instincts, of the biology (193). Therefore, when we inquire what would be the primordial characteristic of the passion that affects the suffering white person before the black, we would probably say that it is fear, if it were certain that this affection precedes hate in the genesis of the relations between the black and the white.

If sadness is a passion for which the mind passes to a lesser perfection, joy, in turn, is a passion for which the mind moves to greater perfection (Spinoza 2011: III 11, esc.). In other words, joy is the passage of man from a minor perfection to a greater one, while sadness is man's passage from a greater perfection to a lesser one (III "definitions of affections"). The definition of desire that we employ here is that which Spinoza gives in the strict sense of the *conatus* (effort), that is, when he affirms that "desire is the very essence of man, that is, the effort by which man strives by persevering in his being "(IV 18). And, just as in Spinoza's own text there is an equivalence between virtue, potency, essence, and *conatus* (IV 20), when I refer to the power of the human being, I want to speak of the same thing as the nature of desire. As for hate and fear, the first is a "sadness accompanied by the idea of an external cause"; the second, an "unstable sadness, arising from the idea of a future or past thing, whose realization we have some doubt" (III, definitions of affections). In Fanon, we find a definition of phobia that relates fear to the idea of an external cause: "it is a neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object (in the broadest sense of everything outside the individual), or, by extension, of a situation" (2011: 189).

When blacks approach the world of white, there is a certain sensitizing action. If the psychic structure proves to be fragile, there is a collapse of the ego. The Black ceases to behave as an individual *ational*. The object of his action will be the Other (in the form of the White), since only the Other can value him (ibid.).

Sure enough, the suffering black person suffers from fear and hate before the white. That is, the feeling of inferiority raises fear and hate in the black, which makes him

experience a sense of impotence in the face of the white world, that is, in face of the "cultural situation" characteristic of the white world (Fanon 2011: 187). In Spinoza's terms, this cultural situation that devalues the black person involves the force of external causes. Passive affection of hate and fear implies the diminution of the black person's own being; implies the weakening of his *conatus* (effort), in the terms of Spinoza, that is, the weakening and diminution of self, as desire and will to live. And, to put it another way, since fear and hate are affections derived from sadness, these feelings weaken the black person's desire to live, just as, in general, "sadness diminishes or restrains the power of acting of man "(2011: III 37). When Fanon refers to the fragility of the psychic structure, I understand, also using the terms of Spinoza, that the mind is weakening in its potency of thinking and therefore the body in its potency to act.

ÀSE AND THE FIGURE OF THE ACTING BLACK PERSON, THE BLACK CREATOR

The nature of what Spinoza calls the "power of man's action " receives other predicates and reveals itself as a constitutive phenomenon of all things that exist, when we seek to examine it from the perspective of our understanding of the Brazilian black traditional wisdom, correlated with the knowledge produced by Nigerian intellectuals, such as Soyinka and Idowu, mentioned in this paper, and by Brazilian intellectuals such as Muniz Sodré. The phenomenon designated by Spinoza as "power to act" we call *àse* (ashe). Indeed, "potency" is precisely the term used by Muniz Sodré for the redescription of the word, which means, in fact, "a potential for realization *or not realization supported on the body*" (Sodré 2017: 133), "a principle of energetic movement of beings (gods, men and ancestors) related to the strength contained in the substances of the mineral, plant and animal kingdom" (134). For Muniz Sodré, this is a vital force (132). The sadness of racism, therefore, is against it. Decrease the strength of the body, undermine joy, creativity, pleasures. It is an obstacle to the full realization of the person's capacities, to the full development, growth and increase of his divine humanity. Inasmuch as the *àse* is in force in the body, physical and mental health is the immediate manifestation of *àse*. Racism, however, is the sorrow that gets sick, which causes the body and mind to fade.

Now, the central question that Fanon poses is whether white can behave in a healthy way face-to-face with black and whether black can also behave in a healthy face-to-face manner with the white (Fanon 2011: 199). For baraperspectivism, reproducing Fanon's attitude, it is not a matter of "coming and screaming my hate of white" (249). There must be a "leap" of the suffering black person in the direction of what I want to introduce to you now as the conceptual figure of the *acting black person*, the black creator. A leap that consists of "introducing invention into existence" (250).

For baraperspectivism, to think about this leap, is also to contemplate, in some way, the question of violence. In a speech entitled *Why We Engaged Violence*, given at the Accra Conference in Ghana in April 1960, a year before his death at age 36, Fanon states that "the colonial regime is a regime instigated by violence. It is always by force that the colonial regime is implanted. It is against the will of the peoples that other peoples more advanced in the techniques of destruction or numerically more powerful impose themselves"(Fanon 2011: 413). For Césaire, one of the characteristics of the colonial regime is what he calls the *law of progressive dehumanization* "whereby henceforth on the agenda of the bourgeoisie, there is not, there can not be now, but violence, corruption and barbarism" (Césaire 2004: 59).

This violence of the colonial regime is not only lived on the plane of the soul, but also on the plane of the muscles, of the blood. This violence that wants to be violent, which becomes increasingly disproportionate, inevitably provokes the birth of an internal violence in the colonized people, and a just cholera arises and seeks to express itself (Fanon 2011: 414).

The theme of violence is dealt with extensively by Fanon in *Year V of the Algerian Revolution* and in the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*. One of *Wretched's* most interesting hypotheses is that "violence detoxifies", it "liberates from the inferiority complex" (Fanon 2011: 496). At the same time in that Fanon recognizes the native Algerian ability to negotiate and make agreements and "human contact" with the settler and the French colonial army, he also praises their ability to resist, whatever the cost, using the strength and gun violence³. However, I will not dwell on the theme of violence nor will I praise it. If I consider it necessary to approach it, it is because I consider that the examination of violence from Fanon's point of view, even if in general

terms, would allow us to apprehend a more complete view of the passage, or rather, the jump of the figure of the suffering black person to that of the black creator. Now, what is at stake in this jump is not the perspective of destruction, but, properly, that of creation, because it is about introducing the invention in existence; in addition, for the baraperspectivism, thinking through the perspective of àse, it is not necessary to reproduce the negative attitude of the Other; that is to say, in the context of this discussion, it is not necessary to reproduce the negative attitude of the white in the face of his civilizing mission, according to what we have hitherto examined in regard to colonialism or colonial enterprise. To defend this point of view, I conjure up a beautiful proposition, found in the final pages of *Black skin, white masks*: "the disgrace of man of color is to have been enslaved. The disgrace and inhumanity of white consist in having killed the man somewhere" (Fanon 2011: 250).

In my view, praise for violence implies indirect praise for passive affections derived from sadness and, especially, hate. And just as hate is for destruction, maybe love is also for creation. Now, though Spinoza set both the love and the hate as passive affections, or as passions (2011: III, "Definitions of affections"), we can assume that both the destructive gesture as the creative gesture are actions.

However, I would say that one, associated with hate, corresponds, in the experience of empirical reality, to a *disruptive action*; that is, an action that corrupts, promotes a rupture, a break, it is against àse; and that the other, associated with love, corresponds, in the experience of empirical reality, to a *compositional action*; that is, that gathers, that increases and that composes, that strengthens the àse. Thus, I consider that the impulse of a disruptive action is a passive affection derived from sadness, hate; and that the impulse of a compositional action is a passive affection derived from joy, love. Therefore, to talk about the relation between baraperspectivism and the conception of black reason in the perspective of the àse, in order to present it also as this leap mentioned by Fanon and make its praise as invention, we need to declare that the impulse that fundamentally moves us, me along with my ancestry, can only be the feeling of revolt and love.

Notes

¹ It is still possible to find, in Nantes, 385 km from Paris, traces of the wood used in the manufacture of the French slave ships, making the support structure inside the *Le Lieu Unique* theater, where I presented a play, which I could contemplate with my own eyes.

² Aimé Césaire, *Return to my native land*.

³ "General de Gaulle says: ' We must destroy the Algerian people'. We reply: 'Let us negotiate, let us find a solution that is up to contemporary history. But know that , if they want to destroy the Algerian people, you need to take you to see your armies destroy the bulwark against the glorious Algerian soldiers "(Fanon 2011: 418).

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