

# SMELLS LIKE RACISM IN BRAZIL'S HYGIENIST POLITICAL-AFFECTIVE CULTURE: THE PROCESS OF DEJECTION OF THE TRASH-BODY

*O CHEIRO DO RACISMO NA CULTURA POLÍTICO-AFETIVA HIGIENISTA BRASILEIRA: O SANEAMENTO DO CORPO-DEJETO*

*EL OLOR DEL RACISMO EN LA CULTURA POLÍTICO-AFECTIVA HIGIENISTA BRASILEÑA: EL SANEAMIENTO DE LO CUERPO- DESECHO*

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**Abstract:** This article takes the racial stigma as an object of analysis, more precisely the symbolic construction that black people are dirty, stinky and/or filthy – a discussion that has been ignored in the Brazilian racial debate. In this sense, the aim is to discuss the racist production of bodies, senses and emotions. It is argued that, in a racist society, the processes of socialization and subjectivation are structured under a hygienist political-affective culture that reinforces white racial domination while subjectively subordinating, subjecting and sanitizing-whitening black people. Thus, there is an urgent need for greater articulation between the Psy field and Social Sciences to understand the interface between health, citizenship and the sociopolitical construction of ethnicity.

**Keywords:** Social Stigma; Racial Hygiene; Social Construction of Ethnic Identity; Racism; Mental Health in Ethnic Groups.

**Resumo:** Este artigo assume o estigma racial como objeto de análise, mais precisamente a construção simbólica que pessoas negras são sujas, fedidas e/ou imundas – uma discussão que tem sido ignorada no debate racial brasileiro. Nesse sentido, o objetivo consiste em discutir a produção racista dos corpos, dos sentidos e das emoções. Argumenta-se que, em uma sociedade racista, os processos de socialização e subjetivação são estruturados sob uma cultura político-afetiva higienista que reforça a dominação racial branca enquanto subalterniza, assujeita e higieniza-embranquece subjetivamente as pessoas negras. Assim, urge uma maior articulação entre as Psi e as Ciências Sociais para a compreensão da interface saúde, cidadania e construção sociopolítica da etnicidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Estigma social; Higienismo racial; Construção Social da Etnicidade; Racismo; Saúde mental em Grupos Étnicos.

**Resumen:** Este artículo asume el estigma racial como el objeto de análisis, más precisamente la construcción simbólica de que las personas negras son sucias, apestosas y/o imundas- una discusión que ha sido ignorada en el debate racial brasileño. En este sentido, el objetivo es discutir la producción racista de los cuerpos, sentidos y emociones. Argumentamos que, en una sociedad racista, los procesos de socialización y subjetivación se estructuran bajo una cultura político-afectiva higienista que refuerza la dominación racial blanca al mismo tiempo que subordina, somete y sana-blanquea subjetivamente a las personas negras. Por lo tanto, existe una necesidad urgente de una mayor articulación entre las Psi y las Ciencias Sociales para comprender la interfaz entre salud, ciudadanía y la construcción sociopolítica de la etnicidad.

**Palabras clave:** Estigma social; Higiene racial; Construcción Social de la Identidad Étnica; Racismo; Salud Mental en Grupos Étnicos.

## Introduction

Racism is like this: it embarrasses you. It puts you down. It makes you believe that you're way less than a white person. That you're ugly, dirty, inferior. ... Racism causes you incurable traumas. (MC Carol, 2020, *post*)

Since the *tumbeiro* ships, the black population has been subjected to unwholesome housing, work and leisure *undervival* experience due to the continuous denial of basic rights and citizenship. In this scenario, basic sanitation is highlighted as a basic hygiene condition and life quality, but having eugenics-hygiene as a hallmark of the sector's policy since its inception. Its result is the exclusion of rights and participation of this population in the construction of public policies, as well as the racial genocide regarding evitable deaths of sanitation illnesses neglected by the State (Jesus, 2020a, 2020b). Nonetheless, beyond this material inequality, the relation between sanitization and racism embraces a symbolic inequality as well. It is the representation in a collective imagery that black people are dirty, stinky, filthy and/or even society's trash.

In this context, despite racial stigmas having place in Social Psychology's classic debate (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Goffman, 1963/2013), there are few contributions on this specific object (Le Breton, 2016a, 2016b, 2019), and until the present moment there is not any research that approaches Brazilian reality. That is why we intend to analyze this symbolic dimension of Brazilian racism, that assumes sanitization as a racialized signifier, racism's smell. This is done under the argument that there is a hygienist political-affective culture that has historically produced racialized social meanings about bodies, emotions and senses from the stigmas that represent black people as dirty, filthy, stinky and society's trash, thus perpetuating racial inequality-domination and the structural racism on a symbolic level.

Therefore, considering Osmundo Pinho's (2014, 2019) alert regarding the importance of a historic and political cultural perspective about the meanings that are socially produced-producers of racial inequalities and its articulations with experiences, with daily life, with racial stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, the article is divided in three sections: the first seeks to historicdaily<sup>1</sup> situate-cartograph the racial demarcation of dirt, stink and filthiness of Brazil's interracial relations; the second section briefly points to the anthropological debate concerning the interface racism, bodies, emotions and senses – in contrast with the biological optics –, which confirms a racist political-affective culture; while the last section proposes to debate the psychopolitical dimension of this hygienist culture, instituted by white people from racial stigmas.

## The smell of racism in Brazilian historicdaily-life

The origin of the symbolic construction that black people are dirty refers to the colonial period, when they were demarcated like this by the Christian European white elite still in the 16th century (Zanlorenzi, 1998 cited by Garcia, 2009, p. 285), also attending the priest Antônio Vieira's sermons. Those defended that the waters<sup>2</sup> of Christian baptism would clean the black race and transform them into a white clean bastard (Nascimento, 2017). In this moment, also emerged the expression 'catinga de crioula' (creole stink) - which later on became 'cheiro de

corpo' ('body smell') or 'cecê' (Gonzalez, 2020) - and the association between dirt, the black population and sanitization services (carrying water, taking out the trash and excrement), named 'coisa de escravo', 'serviço de preto' ('slave thing', 'service of the black'), and therefore typified as repugnant, of less status-value, dirty and undesirable works e (Karasch, 2000; Silva, 1988).

Between the 18th and 19th centuries, water lasted as a synonym of whiteness and cleanliness in the naturalist image of a Tropical Brazil with a big and mighty white river that promoted the 'purification' of black and indigenous rivers, turning its waters 'purer' and 'clearer' (Schwarcz, 2012). And in the post-abolition period this became even worse with eugenic theories, when favelas and tenements occupied by the black population were classified as "deposit of human rubbish", infecting, dirty, filthy places, housing of free mousetraps<sup>3</sup> and unwholesome - and persecuted - by newspapers, politicians and scientists. In this period, any body, culture, work or space considered black was demarcated as contagious to the city and to society; and beholder of all filthiness, dirt, immorality and backwardness of Brazilian civilization (Campos, 2012; Chalhoub, 1996; Fonseca, 2012; Silva & Fonseca, 2012).

This smell of racism<sup>4</sup> that demarcates blackness as a signifier of stink, dirt, filth, disgust and repugnance continued in the 1950s/60s, appearing in the writings of Carolina de Jesus (1960/2014) - when they called her "negra fidal!" ("stinky black") and "dirty black" - as well as in the history of the origin of the vulture as the mascot of the Flamengo soccer team - a way of ridiculing the black and poor fans of the club by associating them with an animal considered dirty, of the trash (Guedes, 2020; Mascote, n.d.). And yet, several jokes related at the time, such as: "a negro standing still is a bum, walking is a thief, flying is a vulture" and "when a negro doesn't shit in the entrance, he shits in the exit, and when he doesn't shit in the entrance or the exit, he leaves a little note saying: 'I'll take a shit later'", perpetuating an imagery in which "the black person carries an unavoidable dirt" (Fonseca, 2012, p. 96).

The present of this is verified in several and unusual scenes of everyday life, whether the black seller has to hear that "black stinks" for not having the change (Sampaio, 2012); be the *blackface* characters in humorous television programs that associate rats and cockroaches as their pets and armpit odor to blackness, such as the character Adelaide on Rede Globo's Zorra Total program between 2012 and 2013; be ex-BBB Franciele Almeida, who said she would get "neguinha<sup>5</sup> smell" if she did not use deodorant (Se eu..., 2014); whether racial humiliation in virtual networks, as the gymnast Arthur Nory did with Angelo Assumpção when he associated supermarket bags with white people, and trash bags with black people (Angelo..., 2015); whether the virtual attacks such as "dirty black, I shower, I don't know about you", "if you took a shower correctly you wouldn't be grimy" and "I got home stinking black" (Sperb, 2015); whether it is the speech of Nelma Baldassi who said laughing: "it would be beautiful to see those disgusting and dark people from Bahia exploding" (Brasileira..., 24 May 2017); whether it be the "stinky black" *pichações* on the restroom doors<sup>6</sup> of educational institutions (Lemes & Nassif, 2017); or also the speech of the prosecutor Avelino Grota, for whom "black people are stinky, they stink too much" (Negro..., 4 out. 2017).

The list goes on and it was only in the 2020-2021 biennium that the smell of racism was present: among the rich white students of the Colégio Franco-Brasileiro (French-Brazilian School) who amused themselves by accusing a Senegalese black student of stinking of slurry<sup>7</sup> (Barbosa, 2020); in cases where white women challenge black people on public roads under the shouts of "go away stinky trash, leave", "what was it, disgusting black?" (Homem..., 2020), "stinky monkey", "filthy" and "stinky creole" (Lima, 12 Apr. 2021)<sup>8</sup>; in the association between "cecê" and black skin made by influencer Isadora Faria (Influencer... , 2021); in the case of a

neighbor who screamed and glued papers to the building classifying black people as “filthy spirits”, “society scum”, “society excrement”, “bad character” and pigs (Lima, 10 May 2021)<sup>9</sup>; and, finally, in the case of the Philosophy PhD student Álvaro Hauschild, who harassed a white woman through virtual networks, trying to convince her to abandon her black partner, accusing him of exhaling a “specific smell”, among other eugenic arguments (Polícia..., 5 Oct. 2021).

These situations do not spare even black children, such as Lídia, who was born from an interracial relationship and grew up listening to her father say that bad smells and lack of hygiene are “black things” (Rocha, 2016); even attending the school environment, where black children are called by classmates as “the black that doesn’t shower”, “stinky black” (Carneiro, 2011, p. 76), “black cleaning lady” and are accused of stinking (Criança... , 2021), without any intervention from the teacher. Or yet, when racism comes from the teacher herself, as in the case of Andreia Ramos (2018), whose memory still remembers the white embroidery teacher telling her in childhood that she would not be good at embroidering because her hands were dirty. Similarly, the cases carry the assumption of the dirty black body, an imagery reaffirmed in other everyday cases in which black people are asked about the way they wash their hair, and the surprise when it is found that they smell good (Kilomba, 2008/2019).

Even today, professions mostly performed by black people, poorly paid and precarious, are considered ‘dirty work’ and ‘subhuman’, ‘black services’ in which workers are humiliated. This is the case of maids, recurrently treated as trash and/or with disgust, prevented from using the social elevator of the building, the toilet and domestic utensils in the house where they work in order not to dirty-contaminate; and they are also questioned about the smell, being called ‘fedorenta de cecê’ (stinky of body smell) or required to use a uniform or plenty of bleach to cover up their supposed bad smell (Preta-Rara, 2019).

Finally, the metaphorical use of water to symbolize the need for whitening; the accusation that blacks do not shower; the association that blacks are trash, scum, slurry, excrement, society’s waste; and the supposed stink, dirt and filth of the black population point to the symbolic presence of sanitation in an attempt to demean the black population and establish a despicable and unwanted racial identity. The examples of this brief cartography show the symbolic dimension of racism through name-calling, jokes, analogies, interdictions and racially stereotyped representations in which dirt, bad odor and lack of hygiene are dissociated from material inequalities in access to sanitation and linked to an inherent condition of being black. A process whose historicdaily dynamics involve the agency of the white elite, Christian religions, the hegemonic social media and science in the social and political production of racist subjectivities.

Thus, the smell of racism emerges as a product and as producer of subjectivities and affections in Brazilian historicdaily-life, when-where being disgusted by black people and humiliating them is routinely legitimized, as well as the hygienist (desires’) affective policies that symbolically (or psychosocially) kill the black population from childhood to adulthood, be it in a spoken and explicit way, be it in an unsaid and veiled way. Paradoxically, despite the colonial origin of this racist stigma and the numerous daily cases, the Brazilian scientific-intellectual production about it continues being silenced, a relevant symptom of Brazilian racism.

## Racism in the body, in emotions, and in senses: a racist political-affective culture

Faced with these cases of the smell of racism in Brazilian historicdaily-life, and so many others that are silenced, reproducing a symbolic colonial pattern of black people publicly violated - intercepted screaming, humiliated by white people accusing them of being dirty, stinky, filthy, trash -, we ask: how to understand these racist behaviors, languages and imageries around the senses (smell, stink, odor), emotions (disgust, repugnance, contempt, anger) and the body (black, and its white occult equivalent)? To answer this, we need to understand how racism shapes the body, emotions and senses based on culture.

First, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the (inter)subjective layer of racism, that is, of personal-internalized and interpersonal-intersubjective racism. In practice, this means that racism involves feelings and behaviors of inferiority, superiority, passivity, proactivity, acceptance and refusal; as well as omissions or actions of lack of respect, distrust, devaluation, persecution, dehumanization and negligence when dealing with it and its impacts (Conselho Federal de Psicologia [CFP], 2017; Werneck, 2016). Initially, we are interested in realizing that racism involves feelings and conduct-actions that are shaped by racial relations that produce (and are produced by) the relationship between individual and society based on the processes of subjectivation and socialization that constitute individuals.

Secondly, this symbolic-subjective dimension of racism that involves individuals-groups and society is inscribed in the culture that, despite its different conceptualizations, since classical anthropology, embraces the customs-habits, social norms, behaviors and ways of thinking as bases of racism (Benedict, 1934/2000; Boas, 1931/2005; Gluckman, 1958/1987). That is, racism shapes the social norm, behavior and way of thinking. In this way, the smell of racism is directly linked to culture, if we understand it as a symbolic system, as webs of socially established and shared meanings, in order to shape our behavior, language, ideas, values, feelings, perceptions and emotions. That is, culture consists of the historically created systems of meanings (cultural patterns), that are also systems of control (plans, recipes, rules, instructions, taboos, behavioral homogenization, rationalization of affections), from which we interpret the world (Geertz, 1978). This means that racism becomes a social norm, a behavior or a way of thinking when the cultural fabric intertwines the social imagery with racist stereotypes based on the meanings that culture gives it.

We come, then, to the third point: the connection between the smell of racism, culture, body, emotions and senses. For this, different from the strictly biological (anatomical-physiological) optics, and in agreement with David Le Breton (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2019), we assume that the body<sup>10</sup>, emotions and senses are social phenomena-elaborations, woven into the cultural fabric of everyday life, shaped by the education received in the socialization process (social interaction), and therefore, socially constructed and meanings. In other words, each society gives meaning (sense and value) to the body, emotions and senses from its world view. Therefore, based on culture, each society defines what is a healthy, sick, beautiful and ugly body, as well as the uses and prohibitions that can be made of it; it delimits its repertoire of sounds, tastes, smells, touches and looks, finding strange what escapes from it; and establishes what causes and how the emotions of anger, repugnance, disgust, fear, shame, contempt, joy, distress, excitement, and disappointment are expressed.

In this regard, it is worth remembering that children do not distinguish between good and bad odors, so much so that they play with their excrement and urine, and love to smell them. That

is, it is the system of values transmitted by the family and society - under the (re)pressure(ion) of education - that defines whether a smell is eschatological (a bad odor), from which the odor assumes a value judgment (smelly or fragrant), and a moral resonance (disgusting, for example), which marks the odors of existence - when the smell-odor becomes “a strong sense of discrimination” and “anthropologically a moral divider” (Le Breton, 1990/2016), p. 346).

From this understanding, we may comprehend the racist bias of the socio-historical meaning of the body, emotions and senses, since it is in this context that racism produces an imaginative body, which has in the process of discrimination an exercise that transforms difference into stigma, in a foreign body, and reduces the Other (and its destiny) to the body marked by race - whose history, culture and presence must be avoided, neutralized or erased (Le Breton, 2012). Thus, the body is socially signified and mediated by social practices and symbolic processes-elements of racism in a racist society (Pinho, 2019), which leads us to assume that there is, then, a racist political-affective culture, that is, a set of socially shared meanings in which bodies, emotions and senses are historically produced from/to racism, mobilizing power and affections.

## Racial stigmas, social construction of ethnicity and mental health of ethnic-racial groups in the hygienist political-affective culture

Considering that the smell of racism is inscribed in a racist political-affective culture of a hygienist character, as it demarcates black racial identity (blackness) as a sign of dirt, stink, filth and mobilizes disgust, repugnance, contempt and laughter; and authorizes white people to exercise dehumanization, violence, humiliation and racial domination; it remains for us, finally, to situate the debate on racist stigmas and power. For this, we must first pay attention to the notion that racism is also a collective discourse, a social language of a given culture that produces an ethno-semantic field, in which the signifier “black color” carries symbolic messages and meanings of social and biological inferiority. This notion attests to the form of domination of racism that passes through the linguistic route (Gonzalez, 2020; Kilomba, 2019; Nascimento, 2019; Nogueira, 2017; Schwarcz, 2017).

It is important to understand that, from language, then, the hygienist political-affective culture is produced and transmitted as stigmas, which consist in the imputation of a derogatory and lasting attribute to a social group, leading it to have its social identity<sup>11</sup> morally disqualified as inferior, undesirable and rotten in everyday social relationships. When referring to ethnic-racial groups, these stigmas start to confer racist demarcations, determining skin color or other innate-biological traits as objective markers of collective depreciation expressed through discourses, metaphors, jokes, insults, puns, proverbs, sayings, phrases, popular expressions, ironies, images, speeches, narratives and stereotyped representations in a racist-hygienist semiotics (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Goffman<sup>12</sup>, 1963/2013; Gonçalves, 2017; Moreira, 2019; Sales, 2009; Schwarcz, 2017).

The combination of odor, discrimination and morality can become racist, then, when it assumes the existence of an ‘ethnic’ odor (or associated with some race) as groups accuse and link their opponents to the odor exhaled through racist stereotypes<sup>13</sup>. These accused groups would be olfactorily despised, inferiorized, depreciated and associated with a “stinky type, a dung, a dirty one, trash, a rotten one, a manure bag, etc”, and this “forces contempt and justifies in the imagination the symbolic or real violence of which it is the object” (Le Breton, 2016a, pp. 351-

354). An olfactory discrimination in which “the good man necessarily smells good, in the image of racism. The evil one stinks, in the image of his intention” (Le Breton, 2016a, p. 350).

In this plot, there is a semantic and symbolic compatibility between odor and hate in which the disqualification of smell itself is used to demarcate and demean stigmatized groups (Le Breton, 1990/2016), a process in which “the black person then becomes a canvas of projection of what the white person is afraid to recognize about themselves... allowing whiteness to look at itself as morally ideal, decent, civilized and majestically generous” (Kilomba, 2019, p. 37), in contrast to its history of violence, intimidation, oppression and racial sadism. And, at the same time, it allows the black population to be subjected to violent and hygienist processes in the name of the maintenance-imposition of (white) order and the suppression of supposed impurity, stench and danger, in which whitening is synonymous with order, cleanliness and holiness<sup>14</sup>.

Thus, the stigma has a political-affective function of producing a sociodynamic of stigmatization<sup>15</sup>, which establishes the groups' moral *status*, distinguishing them in desirable and undesirable, superiors and inferiors; and acts, through the control of affections and symbolic barriers, so that stigmatized groups internalize them and stay in this condition, accepting their sociopolitical subordinate place in the domination of everyday life. In other words, the stigma consists, therefore, of the self-valorization of a specific group at the expense of the devaluation-humiliation of another social group - forming a mechanism of protection of the interests and morality of the racial group that attacks, the whiteness in the Brazil's case (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Goffman, 1963/2013; Gonçalves, 2017; Moreira, 2019).

Therefore, historicdaily, racist stigmas lie on the black population. On the one hand, there is a construction and a systematic positive reinforcement of white racial identity as a sign of superiority, wealth, beauty, intelligence, *status*, merit, artistic purity, aesthetic nobility, moral majesty, scientific wisdom, culture, civilization and humanity; while on the other, there is the black racial identity as a sign of moral inferiority, filth, repugnance, dirt, disease, ugliness, almost inhuman (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Fanon, 1952/2008; Gonçalves, 2017; Kilomba, 2019; Moreira, 2019; Nogueira, 2017).

In this sense, these constructions lead us to the hygienist character of the racist political-affective culture since the colonial times, from when **being black** refers to a web of equivalent meanings, such as: “African – Africa – jungle – savage – primitive – inferior – animal – monkey” (Kilomba, 2019, p. 130). Or yet: black – dirty – fetid – filthy – disgusting, since “stinky”, “shit”, “rotten”, “smelly”, “disgusting”, “dirty” and “piggy” constitute racial insults recurrently directed towards the black population (Sales, 2009, p. 130).

In this way, these reiterated symbolic constructions make white people feel proud of being clean, but neurotic and blackphobic, mobilized by desire, envy, anger, hatred, contempt and destructive impulse directed at black people; in addition to the enjoyment of subjugating, humiliating and producing emotional insecurity in these people. Meanwhile, black people are humiliated and suffer from feelings of inferiority, depersonalization, racial humiliation, self-rejection, anguish, malaise, self-alienation, shame-dishonor, contempt-disinvestment of the self, trauma-neurosis, alienation and suffering-illness as effects psychosocial factors of racism (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Fanon, 1952/2008; Gonçalves, 2017; Kilomba, 2019; Nogueira, 2017; Silva, 2017).

In summary, racial stigmatization as a cordial micro-technique of the body gives meaning to the marks, odors, colors, textures, tastes, flows, gestures, enjoyments, etc., of the black body as a racial *status*, whose racist semiotics transforms it into the very place of exclusion, and to which physical and symbolic violence is directed. Thus, stigma demarcates the black body, reveals racial inequalities, and reifies the processes of white racial hierarchization-domination

by mutilating, flaying, fragmenting, codifying and semioticizing the black body (Sales, 2009), through an olfactory line that delimits otherness, and categorizes the real by shaping collective imageries. A line between those who smell good and inspire trust, sympathy and alliance; and that stinking, dangerous, loathsome Other, whose humanity is symbolically comparable to excrement, and who is to be despised, broken, and hated (Le Breton, 2016a).

Thus, the scent of sanctity of the white subject is reaffirmed, while maintaining the social hierarchy of their group, in such a way that the utterance “dirty black!” is also a vocative of “stay in your place!” (Sales, 2009). And so, whiteness emerges as a cultural signifier, the place of social power of an alleged racial superiority from racial hostilities and symbolic propagation of racialized images, discourses, narratives and cultural representations for the purpose of justifying racial hierarchies, privileges and inequalities (Moreira, 2019). This is equivalent to saying that racist stigmas serve to monitor, control, punish, disqualify, dehumanize and violate black bodies; as well as to justify-impose racism itself, (symbolic and material) racial inequalities and racial domination, exempting the stigmatizing group (whiteness) from any responsibility (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Sales, 2009).

## Final considerations

“us blacks are in Brazilian society’s trash can, since thus the domination logics determines, ... [but] we assume our own speech. That is, the trash is gonna talk, and in a cool way” (Gonzalez, 1984/2020, pp. 77-78)

Throughout the text, we saw that racism has deep layers, shaping cultural meanings and impregnating our bodies, emotions and senses - which we commonly consider to be merely biological. Far from being punctual and random, this construction is historicdaily, based on (material, symbolic and power) racial inequalities, perpetuated by the processes of socialization and subjectivation, and supported by racist stigmas that act as symbolic mechanisms of control-repression-power. It is in this context that the persons without sanitation are the same symbolically racially sanitized by the smell of racism, having their human condition reduced to the status of slurry, sewage, (black) ditch and society’s waste-trash-undesirable-body. This reveals how racism has been effected from the production of symbolic inequalities that forge racial subjectivities-identities, privileging and overvaluing whiteness instead of blackness, based on sanitation as a racialized signifier.

As a result, it is possible to identify a process of socialization of everyday life from which people have their bodies-emotions-senses built under the exercise of racial hygiene - and its naturalization -, which assigns to black people the symbolic and social place from dirty, filthy, stinky and disgusting; and to white people, the place of the clean, fragrant, hygienic and desired. As a consequence, the smell of racism and many other racist stigmas-mechanisms-technologies of power are fundamental to understanding the theme of Brazilian racial identity and its symbolic-subjective aspects. Through this prism, we need to understand the construction of black racial identity, which sometimes assumes mechanisms of denial/whitening as strategies to escape the pain, humiliation and physical-symbolic violence that racist stigmas cause throughout a lifetime, being identified as dirty, stinky, filthy and society trash.

On the other hand, white racial identity, even in a condition of poverty, tends to be constructed under the systematic positive reinforcement of its human-dignity and in the unrestricted belief in its place of (meritocratic) legitimate-natural power in society, which constitutes a symbolic-subjective inequality that demands more research in the scope of studies of racial inequalities. In fact, this theme of the raciality of the white person and its mechanisms-strategies of power is fundamental in this discussion, insofar as whiteness operates directly both in the production of racist stigmas that constitute a political mechanism of subalternization, de-subjecting and sanitizing-whitening historically racialized (and belonging to powerless groups) individuals; and in the production of a **blasè racism** marked, above all, by indifference, insensitivity and “inertia”, which denies, invisibilizes, naturalizes, stigmatizes, silences and hides racial inequalities that daily life insist on explaining.

In this way, it is possible to affirm that the hygienist political-affective culture in the smell of racism: (a) influences the construction of racial identity as a strategy of racial domination, by stigmatizing, dehumanizing, inferiorizing and symbolically killing black people (the Other historically subordinated and disempowered) seen as smelly, and reaffirming the scent of sanctity of whiteness (white group historically established in power, who attributes the olfactory value); and (b) legitimizes-naturalizes (material and symbolic) racial inequalities, sub-living and under-citizenship of the stigmatized population, as if the natural, biological and unavoidable condition of being black was to be a trash-waste-disposable-body to live in filth, dirt and stench. Therefore, under the analysis of power, racial stigmatization is inseparable from what it intends to dissimulate, since by demarcating black people as dirty, whiteness intends to hide its active role in the production of racism and tries to convince itself (and others) that they do not have privileges and responsibilities in the face of the processes that produce racism. Instituting blackness as filth, then, is a way of denying itself its racist dirt and rot, it is a strategy to depoliticize-dehistoricize the whiteness of power and to naturalize racial inequalities.

From this perspective, the stigmas produced in a racist political-affective culture serve a genocidal-hygienist project, since, by reducing the black body to a morally dirty-filthy-stinky body, it transforms it into a trash-waste-disposable body, mobilizing affections-desires for racial removal and sanitization-cleansing of these bodies, while refusing policies to combat racial inequality. This is equivalent to saying that in this culture, black lives are disposable and do not matter, and can therefore be excluded from benefiting from social life policies; while white lives are overly protected, valued and assisted by the same policies. Thus, the subjective, intersubjective and institutional layers of racism are inseparable and feed back the structuring-perpetuation of racism and its hygienist political-affective culture, which appears from racist gazes to hygienist political discourses and positions that authorize policies to favelas' remotion, the eviction of populations from their territories for large enterprises (including agro-industrial ones), the unhealthy sub-living under environmental racism, the removal of homeless people from city centers, the criminalization of funk, the destruction of Candomblé *terreiros*, the massacres and police violence in black territories, hygienist urban planning and the so-called public security policies of genocide in the name of order, progress and cleanliness.

Finally, the hygienist political-affective culture organizes social relations and public policies, demarking which bodies can suffer violences and be destitute of human-dignity and citizenship, and which cannot. It naturalizes that black people are the majority among the homeless and imprisoned population, and that these persons live without sanitization and other basic rights - without us even caring. It qualifies that some bodies, cultures, arts and territories

are considered trash, dirty, filthy; and, therefore, are passive-desirable of genocide-whitening, on which a cleansing is always welcome. With this in mind, a greater articulation between Psy and Social Sciences is fundamental for the comprehension of the interface of health, citizenship and sociopolitical construction of ethnicity; as well as for the construction of another society, truly human, ecological and democratic.

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## T. N. - Translator's notes:

All the direct quotes were freely translated from the Portuguese original quotation, as referenced next, by the article's translator.

## Notes

1 Historicdaily-life is understood here as a timeline in which the daily life of the present time is constructed and updated throughout the history of the past time. That is, a daily life that is updated throughout history.

2 It is interesting to notice that water, as a sanitization component, assumes the symbol of cleanliness-whiteness, metaphor of this process of becoming clean and white as happens in *Macunaíma*, by Mario de Andrade (Schwarcz, 2012).

3 Hygienist-racist reference to black people as rats.

4 The South Korean movie "Parasite" portrays what we name here the "smell of racism".

5 Popular nickname for black girls, often diminishing or racially discriminating.

6 It is symptomatic that the restroom is where *pichações*, specific Brazilian graffiti art, such as those usually appear.

7 Organic liquid of unpleasant smell of putrefaction that slips from the garbage.

8 In this case, the report of a witness points out the rawness of who is ravished and has to resist: "you would see the tears coming down the eyes of the boy, but he held on tight (Lima, 12 Apr. 2021).

9 In this case it is revealing that the woman thanks God for giving her "many talents and gifts" and "straight character", that is, of being white (Lima, 10 May 2021).

10 It is important to highlight that there are criticisms towards the humanist-speciesist and modern-Western notion of corporeality, that parts human-body from the non-human-nature-affectations (Narahara, 2022).

11 The stigma (and its racist violence) has always a collective character, since the target is not the individual quality (of the person as a person), but the group - the collective to which it belongs -, considered different and inferior (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Goffman, 1963/2013; Moreira, 2019).

12 Even though the author contributes to the stigma's comprehension, his theory has limitations such as: binary scheme, pathological-biologizing perspective and universalization of some US specificities.

13 There are linguistic expressions in different cultures for that, such as the anti-Semit expression "*foetor judaicus* ou *jiffá*" (this used in Arab countries), "*bata kussai*" is used in Japan to define the smell of foreigners, French and Germans accuse each other of fetid odor, which also lies on Africans. In France, this has become a speciality and pathology, where was developed an olfactory categorization based on an "ethno-chemistry" that compared "human races", pointing black, Chinese and North German races had fetid bromhidrosis (stink and sweat) (Le Breton, 2016a).

14 Although not discussing the racial and group character of dirt, by focusing on polluted individual behavior and its purification rituals, Mary Douglas (1966) offers an explanation for the relationship between dirt and disorder. According to the anthropologist, the ordering and classification of behaviors considered clean, perfect, holy, whole, purified, desired and orderly versus those considered filthy, dirty, impure, disordered, unwanted, marginal, polluted and sick is a way of symbolic meaning in the hierarchical social structure that allows punishing, humiliating and exterminating the dirty individual who disobeyed a taboo and caused social disorder.

15 This consists of a group established in being able to produce its self-image based on the minority of its “best” members, while it represents the group disempowered represented by the “bad” characteristics of its “worst” part (Elias & Scotson, 1965/2000; Goffman, 1963/2013).

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