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## “WHERE IS THE BLACK CHILD THAT WAS HERE?” FROM SELECTIVE VISIBILITY TO THE ERASURE OF BLACK CHILD AT THE BNCC

### ABSTRACT

The objective of the article is to question the emphatic absence in the BNCC of themes focused on racial education in early childhood, that is, for black children between 0 and 5 years and 11 months of age. At the same time, the need to fight for a curriculum that, especially since early childhood education, conceives political, historical, social and emotional places and experiences for a black childhood, aiming at human plurality, a primary condition for all democracy and combating all social inequality, is problematized. The interpretative hypothesis maintains that the BNCC, from this political option complicit with systemic racism, manages curricular emphases consistent with the maintenance of the values of the Brazilian patriarchy and all the social contempt of it. To this end, the article conceives two analytical developments. In the first, the reasons that underlie the erasure of the black child in the BNCC are evidenced. Next, we investigate the systematic scope of an educational political project complicit with the racist norms of Brazilian society, projecting to black children a selective visibility. In the end, it's argued that without prioritizing black children as subjects of education in the curriculum there is no educational curriculum, however, there is a racist political platform.

**Keywords:** Black child; Racism; BNCC; Education.

### “CADÊ A CRIANÇA NEGRA QUE ESTAVA AQUI?” DA VISIBILIDADE SELETIVA AO APAGAMENTO DA CRIANÇA NEGRA NA BNCC

### RESUMO

O objetivo do artigo é o de questionar a ausência enfática na BNCC de temas voltados para a educação racial na primeira infância, ou seja, para crianças negras entre 0 a 5 anos e 11 meses de idade. Ao mesmo tempo, problematiza-se a necessidade de se lutar por um currículo que, mormente desde a educação infantil, conceba lugares e experiências políticas, históricas, sociais e emocionais para uma infância negra, visando a pluralidade humana, condição precípua para toda democracia e combate a toda desigualdade social. A hipótese interpretativa sustenta que a BNCC, a partir dessa opção política cúmplice com o racismo sistêmico, agencia ênfases curriculares condizentes com a manutenção dos valores do patriarcado brasileiro e de todo desprezo social deleivado. Para tanto, o artigo concebe dois desenvolvimentos analíticos. No primeiro, evidenciam-se as razões que fundamentam o apagamento da criança negra na BNCC. Em seguida, investiga-se o alcance sistemático de um projeto político educacional cúmplice com as normativas racistas da sociedade brasileira, projetando para as crianças negras uma visibilidade seletiva. Ao cabo, argumenta-se que sem se priorizar as crianças negras como sujeitos da educação no currículo não há um currículo educacional, porém, há uma plataforma política racista.

**Palavras-chave:** Criança negra; Racismo; BNCC; Educação.

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They treat us as subhuman in our own country. They always did (WHITHEAD, 2019, p. 232).

## The story that begins in early black childhood: Initial questions

At the opening of the recent 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, UN High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet presented the report on systemic racism against African and Afro-descendant people whose human rights have been ruthlessly ignored and vilified (OHCHR, 2021). The diagnosis about the multiple and indelible forms of racism pervading contemporary society highlighted Brazil. There is a convergence towards the same parameter highlighted in February 2021 according to the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Situation of Human Rights in Brazil (CIDH, 2021).

Although nothing is new, especially for black individuals in Brazil, the expulsion of their human conditions as dignitaries of their own history is recurrent in contemporary history. It's the colony making resonance, since the basis of its dignities is undermined by all kinds of political, economic, symbolic and social power that, in the terms of Galeano (2010, p. 80), mirror the “racial contempt” as a vice of degradation of civilizations built by the fury of the expropriation of bodies, the flogging, the crushing of identity and the confiscation of freedom, non-negotiable assumption of any human right.

We think that the childhood of black children should be a kind of social event that functions as a turning point and mutation point in this tireless palimpsest. But about him, the aggravation of inequalities and marginalization is still rewritten, for all areas of black life; the hyper-acceleration of blocks to equal access to opportunities, resources and representation on the scales of power, even more so in times of dissolution of affirmative public policies. If that were not the case, how can we welcome the following words from the High Commissioner?

This is a story that begins in early childhood. Wherever data are available, they show that children of African descent are often victims of racial discrimination in schools, have poorer educational outcomes, and are sometimes treated as criminals from an early age (OHCHR, 2021. Our griffins).

The history of the long cycle of decline of black peoples in Brazil and the dehumanization of their lives did not cease with the letter of the Golden Law, in 1888, however, is inconsumably disposed in the present time that, by collecting from the past the same conditions of racial discrimination of the past, makes persist through black

children the passage of what insists on not ending: The ways of servitude, the cruelties of social injustice and hardened dehumanizing racism.

Now, if this whole horizon does not cease to be circumscribed from early childhood; if it's through black childhood that the reproduction of the conditioning factors of its maintenance is inscribed in the social fabric; if it's essential to defend and protect black children, in order to produce an inflection in systematic racism, two issues emerge as far-reaching problematization. In the first place, does not replotting and retracing possibilities distinct from those that operate in the maintenance of the suppression of human rights and the “racial contempt” of blacks in order to, instead, emerge the recognition of the singularization of blackness and its values demand a fundamental educational process? Assuming so, secondly, how would this be possible if, as our research hypothesis suggests, black children are erased from official formative strategies, when not taken as an exception and in the place of rule in a society composed of 56.3% of blacks and blacks?

Such issues are orbited in an educational conjuncture that, since 2018, conditions school curriculum to the guidelines consolidated in the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (BRASIL, 2018). Recent research, such as that of Carvalho (2020), highlights the truncated complexity of BNCC's complicity with the neoliberal platform of subjective governmentality that is convenient to precariousness and state racism. When we consider, however, the issue of early childhood education of black children, we find that the BNCC does not have an objective, organized, structured and delimited emphasis for them. In fact, blacks and blacks are suppressed, in general, in the BNCC and abstracted in the spectrum of Afro-descendants, when not all Afro-descendants are black or black.

The early childhood of the black child is absorbed in generalized formative strategies, as if childhood were a universal stage of life in its character, aspect and in its formative demand. We assume that the BNCC's political strategy safeguards the same share of general political ill will, or bad faith, in the sense of making the diagnosis of systematic racism a platform for debate that does not lead to any kind of social transformation in depth.

Taking this into consideration, the objective of the article is to question the emphatic absence in the BNCC of themes focused on racial education in early childhood, that is, for black children between 0 to 5 years and 11 months of age. At the same time, the need to fight for a curriculum that, especially since early childhood

education, conceives political, historical, social and emotional places and experiences for a black childhood, aiming at human plurality, a prerequisite for all democracy and combating all social inequality.

The interpretative hypothesis maintains that the BNCC, from this political option complicit with systemic racism, manages curricular emphases consistent with the maintenance of the values of the Brazilian patriarchy and all the “social contempt” of it; strengthens exclusionary values that corroborate the erasure of racial differences, transforming them into inequalities; obliterates the social evidence of black children as subjects of education and subjects of socio-historical transformation, which brings political implication to the hypertrophy of racism, prejudice, segregation and deadly violence that rage in Brazilian society. In the end, what we maintain is: Without black children as subjects of education in the curriculum there is no educational curriculum, there is a racist political platform. In fact, to which we also maintain: This is a story that begins in early childhood.

To this end, this article is organized in two parts. In the first, we will explore how the question “where's the black child who was here?”, under the evident record of the children's *parlenda* “where's the sweetie that was here?”, refers us to the history of Brazilian social abuse with black peoples. Such abuse is anchored in the strategy of infantilization of blacks to the extent that, paradoxically, it erases the right to childhood for black children. At issue is the logic of an exclusionary cycle. In the second part, by investigating how black children receive selective visibility at BNCC, we explore the systematic scope of an educational political project complicit with the racist norms of Brazilian society. By defending the need to cut such a transmission belt from early childhood education, we maintain how urgent it's to consider black children in the centrality of pedagogical actions.

## **1 – Where's the black kid who was here? Did BNCC eat?**

The question “Where is the black child who was here?” is mobilizing for the centrality of black childhoods when we address racial inequalities, because “the provocation that the title suggests calls us to think about how racism has erased the presence of black Brazilian children, even in the spaces in which they are presente” (DANAÉ, 2016, p. 385). In this direction, we will resume the centrality of black childhoods

in the agenda of the black movement. In the poetry “Looking in the mirror”, Nascimento (1983, p. 50) announced:

So together and nameless  
We must continue our dream  
Reinventing our lyrics  
Recomposing our proper names  
Weaving the firm bonds  
in which  
to the joyful laughter of the new day  
We will hang the usurpers of our childhood

For black childhood  
We will build a different world  
nourished to the axé of Exu  
to the infinite love of Oxum  
to the compassion of Obatalá  
to the vigilante sword of Ogum

In this world there will be no  
trumpets  
*Pivetes*  
*Pixotes*  
and sand captains.

Historically, black children were treated as: “Trumpets, *pivetes*, *pixotes* and sand captains”. As fruits of black women, the “export products” for centuries animalized by the term “mulato”<sup>1</sup>, the black child typified from birth, was reduced to an internal consumer good for a society forged in hygienist values. As denounced by Nascimento (2016), the sexual exploitation of black women for the whitening of the “race” has always been a genocidal strategy. Bastide and Fernandes (2008, p. 199) evidenced the strength of this “soft solution” as the political idyll advanced with its strategies of diluting black peoples in the white mass, a kind of confiscation of the racial economy that prospects, since the slave colony, the superiority of the non-black person, in turn, typified as a common dominator in all orders and possibilities.

Therefore, the black child descended from the dehumanizable and the exportable, naturalized the transformation of differences into inequalities. If in the last century the approaches of authors like Nogueira (1985)<sup>2</sup>, Bastide and Fernandes (2008)

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<sup>1</sup>The word mulatto originates from the Latin *mulus*, mule i.e. “hybrid animal, sterile, product of the crossing of the horse with the donkey, or of the mare with the donkey”. In this regard, see Silva (2018).

<sup>2</sup>Racial prejudice is considered an unfavorable disposition (or attitude), culturally conditioned, in relation to the members of a population, to whom they are stigmatized, either due to appearance, or due to all or part of the ethnic ancestry attributed or recognized to them. When the prejudice of race is exercised in relation to appearance, that is, when it takes as a pretext for its manifestations the physical traits of the individual, the physiognomy, the gestures, the accent, it’s said that it’s of brand; when the assumption that the individual descends from a certain

showed that the marks of ethnic belonging sentenced individuals to objectification, such a sentence was not intended for an exclusively cultural perspective, but stressed the centrality of the social forge of inequality that was the infrastructure of capitalist society. In this case, the exploitation of black peoples has always been configured as the most efficient productive force, since every social structure depended on the exhausted energy of their bodies, primary and unavoidable infrastructure for the generation of wealth, justification of latifundia, recognition of inequality, the trivialization of death and successively. Currently, as Mbembe (2020, p. 27) denounces, the plantation has imposed experiences with an essentially racial principle based on the excretion of the superfluous and surplus.

If national surveys in the last century tried to show the differences between Brazil and the USA in what they organized as brand prejudice and origin prejudice, Mbembe (2020, p. 29) reveals that the significant difference was between the conception of colony of settlement and exploitation.

It's still necessary to take into account the distinction generally invoked between commercial colonization - or even of the trading posts - and the colonization of settlement itself. It's true that it was considered, in both cases, that the enrichment of the colony, any colony, only made sense if it contributed to the enrichment of the metropolis. The difference lay in the fact that the colony of settlement was conceived as an extension of the nation, while the colony of trading post or exploitation was only a way of enriching the metropolis by means of an asymmetrical, unjust trade, practically without any heavy local investment. In fact, the dominion exercised over the colonies of exploration was in theory doomed to a term, and the implementation of the Europeans in these places was entirely provisional. In the case of the settlement colonies, the migration policy was aimed at implanting, within the nation, people who would have been lost if they had remained among us. The colony served as an exutory, for these undesirables, categories of the population “whose crimes and debauchery” would have become “rapidly destructive” or whose needs would have thrown them into prison or forced to beg, rendering them useless to the country. This division of humanity into “useful” and “useless”, “surplus” and “superfluous” populations, remained the rule, with utility being measured, fundamentally, by the ability to employ labor power.

The same perspective is confirmed by Galeano (2010). The Spanish and Portuguese colonies did not act in the perspective of consolidating a project of civilization extensive to their empires, however, they made their lands overseas, a drain of negotiable and rapidly transformable raw materials. Not only were the lives of the original peoples thus discarded, but also that of enslaved black Africans subjected to

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ethnic group is sufficient for him to suffer the consequences of prejudice, he is said to be of origin” (Nogueira, 1985 [1954], pp. 78-79).

the functionality of hallucinated exploitation and quickly replaced. From such a scenario, it would be appropriate to add another question to the title “where is the black child who was here?”: Does not the projection of the black child as a mere surplus to be used in the expectation of renewal of the logic of exploitation come from the environment of the trading post colony?<sup>3</sup>

If it's true that in the colonial period we were far from the consolidation of the conception of childhood as a human stage inherent to the child (ARIÈS, 2006), therefore, able to make it distinguish itself from adults, on the other hand, and even when a social history of childhood was consolidated, we suspect that black children were not engaged in the same speed and proportion to respect for the universe of childcare. To do so, it's enough to verify how the multitude of symbolisms to represent the child exclude blackness in its form and content (LAUWE, 1991). The black boy introduced into the ritual of work precociously; the black girl initiated into domestic chores and victimized prematurely by the “voluptuous idleness” of the landlord, in Freyre's expression (2006, p. 402)<sup>4</sup>, they testify to the forced inscription of approaches and treatment to childhood that was roughly completely distinguished from the non-black child. As Carvalho and Souza (2021) argue, the black child has always been and still is plagued by the colonial burden of a childhood equally loaded with colonial jurisdiction.

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<sup>3</sup>It's important to note that this same system began to prefer and hierarchize black life according to the judgment of the values of exploitation. In the gold cycle, in the case of Brazil, Galeano (2010, p. 85) draws attention to a surprising fact: “The miners of Ouro Preto preferred the blacks who came from the small beach of Whydah, on the coast of Guinea, because they were more vigorous, lasted a little longer and had magical powers to discover gold. Moreover, each miner needed at least one black mistress of Whydah for luck to accompany him on the explorations. The black people died quickly, only in exceptional cases did they endure seven continuous years of labor”.

<sup>4</sup>The relationship of work that is forged imperious in the experiences of black children is updated in the reading of the death of Miguel Otávio that with Carvalho and Souza (2020) announce as complex Miguel Otávio: “On a Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, Miguel Otávio was killed, at the age of 5, when he suffered a searing fall from the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the building ‘Twin Towers’, in Recife. That day, his mother, Mirtes Renata Souza, found herself compelled by the imperative of work, domestic that was in the house of her employers. With no place and with whom to leave her son, Mirtes Renata Souza took him with her to work. When leaving for the tour round with the pet of his employers, his child, under the provisional care of the mistress, is allowed to enter the elevator alone. Heading wilderness to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor and exploring, still alone, the environment, he plummets and dies. Not to forget this is to affront necropolitics; to forget it's to vitalize necropolitics. The Miguel Otávio complex could be defined as the rational capacity or not, conscious or unconscious, of adultcentrism to trivialize the risks to which black children are subjected, to the point of dying gratuitously, stupidly, violently, irresponsibly and negligently. Such a complex also concerns the social inequalities inherited from a colonial system, which tests, all the time, the passive life of dying. In this case, and almost mostly, black mothers, fathers and guardians; inhabitants of the periphery; servants compelled to cheap, unstable, precarious, risky labor and subject to the whims of their ‘masters’ see their daughters and sons cut short by stray bullets, discretionary police violence, reified and elective racism, neglect of public powers and suppression of equitable social opportunities. We would also add the following detail: The complex of Miguel Otávio, in an idea, concerns death easily avoided, but which, nevertheless, is effective in the game of necropolitical ‘normosis’”.

By extension, conceiving of vetoing to black children a childhood peculiar to them was preponderant for the dehumanization of the group as a whole, since the social projection on black people was marked with the signs and values of a cultural system closed to their destination: The fact of being black.

But there's something seemingly paradoxical about this plot. It's that the willful childhood denied to the black child and suppressed from it did not prevent the trail of infantilization of all black peoples. Infantilizing Africans was a strategy justifying codependency forged on the basis of iron, lead, gunpowder, and flogging. The discourse of infantilization related to race and age is a historical construction far from being overcome.

[...] the African is presented not just as a child, but as an idiot child trapped in a handful of regulos, cruel and ruthless potentates. This idiocy would be the consequence of a congenital defect of the black race. Colonization would be a form of assistance, education, and moral treatment of this idiocy, as well as an antidote to the spirit of brutality and the anarchic functioning of the 'native tribes'. From this point of view, it represented a blessing of civilization. It would be the general rule of treatment of the idiocy of the races predisposed to degeneration [...]. The settlers were, not cruel and greedy lords, but rather guides and protectors [...]. In the colonial argument, race always appeared at the same time as a material matrix, a symbolic institution, and a psychic component of imperial politics and consciousness. In the defense and illustration of colonization, no justification escaped *a priori* the general discourse concerning what at the time were designated as attributes of race (MBEMBE, 2020, p. 121-122).

In this direction, in addition to the main banners of the black movement calling for education and equal opportunities to access the labor market, there is the demand for the right to childhood. It's more than known the approach of Davis (2016), Carneiro (2013), Gonzales (1982), Hooks (2019), among others, announcing that there is no racism without sexism. However, it must be added that there is no racism without adultcentrism either. In one way, because our adultcentrism is westernized from beginning to end, that is, beset by a “family police” (DONZELOT, 1980) that produces childhood in danger and dangerous childhood. While it covers children who do not benefit from all the care of education, upbringing and the social safety net, dangerous childhood emerges as a delinquent, peripheral, threatening and incorrigible identity. Needless to say, black childhood subscribes more vigorously on both sides. Of her, we could say, as in Whitehead's novel (2019, p. 186), addressing The Nickel Reformatory, that the black child of the adult family police is shaped in “various ways until it leaves her unable to have a normal life”.



In this vein, the association of the adjectivation of Afro or African, was composing itself as a synonym of infantile. We suspect that there is a kind of social unconscious that actualizes the destination imposed on enslaved black Africans as subalternization. Slavery justified the inferiority of black people *ab ovo*, atavically assimilating them as subjects in an eternal phase of development, that is, incomplete, dependent, demanding restrictions, and incapable of responsibility. In effect, surveillance, coercion and punishment have spread beyond colonial Brazil, flowing into hygienist public policies that still reverberate in the tropics. If the shenanigans of the patriarchal privatist family saw in the bastard, abandoned children; in children under the threshold of survival, handling petty delinquency, misfortune first that decals in them the criminal profile; in the children whose “poverty is first and foremost lacking rights, possibility, and hope”, in Martins' words (1993, p. 15), ends up housing them in the fatality of social exclusion, the inevitable fate of black infants, was because blacks have always been seen as a social problem for the construction of a post-manumitted nation. The caustic terms of Rodrigues (1957, p. 114) help us to understand this perspective:

Black Africans are what they are: Neither better nor worse than whites: they simply belong to another phase of intellectual and moral development. These child populations could not reach a very advanced mentality and for this slowness of evolution there have been complex causes. Among these causes, some may be sought in the very organization of the black races, the others may be sought in the nature of the habitat where these races are confined. However, what can be guaranteed with experience is that to try to impose European civilisation on a black people is a pure aberration.

Thus, the colonial relations of subalternization of Africa objectified part of humanity not westernizes with the discursive emphasis engendered by the adjective: “blacks”. The qualifier composes the strategies of dehumanization of blackness. The “racial sadismo” around it, as Kilomba (2019, p. 135) ponders (original griffins), is tail to the empire of senses riddled with the “sadistic function of provoking pleasure from the pain inflicted and humiliation of the racial other, giving it a sense of loss in relation to the white subject”. It takes little effort to understand why black Africans are historically stereotyped as childish, immature, naive, irascible, and dangerous. There is a global chain of equivalences of meanings ready to justify the erasure of the black child as the central subject of a history that resists reviewing the logic of its events, values and the forces of identities that insist on establishing itself as an immutable representation. As the most vulnerable link of the social system, black children continue to carry the

insidious marks of the fantasy of domination and the pluripower of racism. Here, racism “functions through a discursive regime, a chain of words and images that by association become equivalent: African – Africa – jungle – wild – primitive – inferior – animal – ape”. (KILOMBA, 2019, p. 130).

Rizzini and Pilotti (2011), in the art of governing children, they argue that the minorization of black children is a constant, because they are like legitimate “heirs” of the objectification denounced in their expression of melanin. And that’s enough to justify their ratings as minor. But there is something perverse in this case, since the black child ends up being considered inferior to any non-black child, because the latter is situated at an understandable and socially accepted phase as a result of childhood. Meanwhile, the black child is sentenced by the colonial charge. She does not live a childhood, but a minority extended to adulthood. Precisely here, being a minor is a sentence colonially loaded with stereotypes of inferiority, and for this the black minor must remain institutionalized, imprisoned and confined by the State, otherwise the minor must be neglected. The denunciations of Gomes and Theodoro (2021, p. 4) show the reactualization of racism to the Brazilian, in which the genocide of the black population arrives earlier and earlier:

To illustrate how the “disciplinary power” was operationalized, we use as an example the Disciplinary Institute created in São Paulo in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the practices that occurred there, it was possible to verify the techniques of power, beyond repression, and to elucidate how such practices served as a basis for the construction of institutional policies for the care of poor children [...] it’s possible to verify how biopower gained functionality from the 1930s, moment in which there was a significant change in the Brazilian reality as a whole and, consequently, in the policy of care for the poor child or the “minor” in Brazil. The bibliographic survey reveals that in this period, there was not the exclusion of disciplinary power, but a complementation with biopower, that is, it’s evident, at the national level, the creation of laws and regulations of policies never seen in the history of care for poor children in the country.

Therefore, it’s necessary to consider how the Black Movement guided the search for equity since childhood in an integrated way to human dignity, that is, to the recognition of the humanity of black women. To this end, we highlight excerpts from the “National Convention of the Black for the Constituent Assembly” that took place on August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1986. Among the main points of the agenda were claimed: Extension of the time of maternity leave; the father's name on the child's Birth Record; decriminalization of abortion and the state's prohibition from implementing birth control

programs; parental leave, during the child's Christmas and postnatal periods, to fully enjoy fatherhood.

In a passage dedicated exclusively to children, who at that time were named as minors due to the Code of Minors in force at the time, we read the following:

'It's the duty of the State to educate and maintain the needy child, from zero to sixteen years old, aiming at their full and satisfactory development in society'.  
'It's forbidden to maintain a House of Detention for Minors. The Minor Offender will have extended social assistance to his family' (MNU, 1986, p. 3).

The main demand of the agenda of the "National Convention of the Black for the Constituent Assembly" was Education, because in the social movement this agenda was treated as the best possibility for the prevention of racism and the fight against inequalities. In addition, as we maintain, the inflection of the destiny of black peoples is in childhood, because it's from it that new values, new perspectives and social relations can be potentiated to introduce them into the world. Therefore, the demands revolved with the following emphases:

The educational process will respect all aspects of Brazilian culture. It's mandatory to include in the school curriculum of I, II and III grades, the teaching of the History of Africa and the History of the Black in Brazil;  
Education will be free, at all levels, regardless of the age of the learner. It will be compulsory at the level of I and II degrees;  
The development of school curriculum will necessarily be subject to the approval of representatives of local communities;  
The State budget for Education will correspond to 20% of the Union budget;  
That the wording of the 8 article of the 153 of the federal constitution be amended, with the following wording:  
'The publication of books, newspapers and periodicals does not depend on a license from the authority. Propaganda of war, of subversion of order or of prejudices of religion, race, color or class, and publications and externalizations contrary to morals and good morals, are prohibited'.  
The occupation of the positions of direction and coordination in public schools and of teaching delegate, will be effected by election, with the participation of teachers, students and parents of students (MNU, 1986, p. 5).

Despite these efforts, we have made great strides towards the maturity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century away from the emphatic visibility necessary to be aimed at black children in the formative scope. Taking the BCNN as a performative synthesis of public policies for the education of early black childhood, as we will see below, we witness that not only did it fail to emphasize the place of the black child and its formative specificity, but also abstracted it in the logic of racial erasure to the detriment of the pragmatic universalization of a neoliberal type of childhood. And here, as we know, the place of

black men and women is the servility of the merciless precariat, the new slavery (CARVALHO, 2020; HOSANG, LOWDENS, 2019; KILOMBA, 2019).

## **2 - After all, who is still afraid of the word black in the black child?**

Since Deleuze and Guattari (2010) erected analytical bases to understand that subjectivity is the most exploitable and profitable matter of capitalism, we have also come to understand why it's possible to talk about neocolonialism. It's no longer wood, metals, monocultures and heavy machinery through which the vitality of capitalism flows. It's from the affective, psychic, aesthetic, semiotic potentialities of individuals, that is, from their subjectivities that capitalism survives. Each of us lives in a constant war by which we are subjugated to adapt to the demands of functionalities of a system whose dominant head we no longer know where it comes from, because it's virtualized in communicative networks, in computational algorithms, in microchips, in cameras, designing ways of being and, at the same time, controlling them (ALLIEZ; LAZZARATO, 2016; BERARDI, 2020).

The neocolonial breastplate, in fact, is the tendency to the massification of subjective processes that, in the end, reconjugate, equally in a massive and comprehensive way, criteria of existential values that interest the capitalist network of profits, of aesthetic dividends - in this case the value that a white woman or man or child has in our society - and of performative surplus value adhering to the frameworks by which what one should live or should die is justified. It's here that we can understand, for example, the reasons why, in Brazil, "systemic processes of violence perpetrated by agents of the State, especially by those linked to police institutions and justice systems based on patterns of racial profiling" abound (CIDH, 2021, p. 19); or because they are blacks to make up 79% of the victims of those killed by the Brazilian police forces, one of the most violent on the planet, while the black population does not exceed 56.3% of the entire population of the Nation (ACAYABA; REIS, 2021); or because black, peripheral and poor children are prevented from entering the elitist temple of Mammon, the Juscelino Kubitscheck Shopping Center, in the city of São Paulo (LAVIERE; PEREIRA, 2019); or because the black child does not receive any kind of specific approach in the BNCC in the education of his early childhood.

In contemporary neocolonialism, being born a black child means being deprived of a certain existential capital in order to be able to move freely through where one consumes, precisely because the inability to consume or the precarious consumption will be attributed to the black. To be a black child is to be destined for the lethal carnage of public authorities; it's to be erased and abstracted in the generality of educational political strategies. Neocolonialism is the subjective handling of blacks by coefficients of identity representation. Although far from the iron rings and the lashes of the colony, since childhood, such coefficients sting the black condition in subjective impotence, reducing it to the way of being functional as a somatic contagion that must be avoided.

Neocolonialism, as we will see, is radicalized in the normalization coefficient of the erasure of the black child in the BNCC. This normality is only possible by virtue of the very relationship of subjective exploitation with capitalist servility. In a chronicle of 1911, Lima Barreto (2018, p. 487. Our griffins) knew how to diagnose all this on the skin:

I don't like the past. It's not for the past itself; it's by the poison that he deposits in the form of prejudices, of rules, of prejudgment in our feelings. It's still the imbecile honour of feudal bandits, barons, dukes, marquises, that determine our social taxonomy, our family relations, and from gender to gender; they are still things of the farm, with *senzalas*, *sinhás-moças*, who regulate the ideas of our diplomacy; it's still, therefore, the past, from here, from there, from there, that governs, I will not say the ideas, but our feelings.

If we conceive diplomacy in the scope of all the ways with which we can use to socially exchange values, beliefs, attitudes, negotiating, on a daily basis, ethical postures and collective decisions, we quickly understand how the “poison” of the past of the “things of the farm” ebb and flow amalgamating the “diplomatic” places whose black peoples must circumscribe themselves. The most frightening thing is the government's updating of this past in “our feelings”, which, in a prophetic way, makes Barreto converge to the diagnosis that only belatedly Deleuze and Guattari (2010) elaborated: Our feelings, as indelible human subjective expressions, are exploited to fit the “social taxonomy”, that is, the scales of values and hierarchy instituted since the diplomacy of the things of the farm.

The racism of neo-colonialism will function first and foremost as an ordering of normality. Before the physical ghetto there is the subjective ghetto normalizing the order of recognitions; before the pillory is raised for the whip there is the normal support of belief in the master race; before disqualifying the epistemologies, cosmologies and black formative arts there is educational normality, regularized by a National Common

Curricular Base, because what is not common is strange, abnormal, threatening, dangerous, deleterious, black. Here the terms of Kilomba (2019, p. 168-169) make sense. Original griffins):

The idea of a membrane that contains or restricts blackness becomes real in segregated black neighborhoods, where black people are placed in marginalized areas, on the margins, prevented from having contact with white resources and goods. The ghettoization was created to promote political control and economic exploitation of black people. So what happens when black men and women cross that membrane and enter white spaces?

From the problematization of Kilomba we could rehearse some steps of decisive responses: When black people cross the membrane of white spaces, as we have already seen, they are watched, curtailed, relocated, stigmatized, harassed, in the soft limit, arrested and, in the active limit of violence, executed, disappeared, slaughtered or killed in the name of the law. But to do so, as we argue, it's necessary to produce the subjective ghettos with their narrow corridors, their biased lighting, their laws written on the boards of the *senzalas*, their exemplary punishments, their demands to fit into the system: Straighten the hair, use the skin bleaching cream, make use of the clothes that the “sinhôs” or the “sinhás” of fashion negotiate, pray to the altars of the gods who financed the slave ships, bow your head at the right time, enter school and behave like the child who appears in advertisements and films of the whites, in short, do not vary according to the white identity.

After all, in all this conjuncture, racism is nothing more than the wounded lactic to screw on the backs of black people the conjunction of order:

Racism proceeds by determination of the variations of deviations, depending on the face White man who intends to integrate in increasingly eccentric and retarded waves the traits that are not conforming, sometimes to tolerate them in a certain place and in certain conditions, in a certain ghetto, sometimes to erase it in the wall that never supports otherness (he is a Jew, he's an Arab, he's a black man, he's a madman... etc.). From the point of view of racism, there is no outside, there are no outsiders. There are only people who should be like us, and whose crime is not to be (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 2012, p. 50-51. Our griffins).

Delineated in these terms, updated racism in contemporary society is the high-octane fuel of neocolonialism. The chains of signifiers that he is able to forge are conditioned on subjective choices to function in the qualifying order of being or not being “like us” in the sense proposed in the excerpt above. Therefore, the contemporary state could be defined as one that holds the right to exercise racism. In this case, “racism

never detects the particles of the other, it propagates the waves of the same until the extinction of that which does not allow itself to be identified”, Deleuze and Guattari add (2012, p. 51)<sup>5</sup>.

But how does all this converge to the problem of the erasure of the black child in the BNCC? Now, by maintaining that the State has the right to exercise racism, concomitantly, we are announcing that the exploitation of racial subjectivity of the capitalist system is protected, stimulated and channeled also by the State. If there is something, in fact, that defines the current neoliberalism, it’s the reduction of the State to a mere instrument of defense and facilitator of the influxes of concentration of wealth accumulation, of jurisprudential instrument to justify social injustices, the explosion of poverty and the abuse of the suppression of rights to the social protection network (ALLIEZ; LAZZARATO, 2016; BROWN, 2019; CARVALHO, 2020).

Thus, we cannot fail to consider that the moving fund to justify the functional bases of the BNCC is precisely the formative adequacy for the adaptive “competencies” to the current economic scenario. Without any criticism of the explosion of human precariousness, especially when we consider black people, the BNCC is a safe conduit for educational policies forged by the interests of the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD and all funding or evaluative agencies for education that function as microprocessors of cultural adjustments, neo-colonizing ideological and behavioral. The stage in which the BNCC is constituted is the same as the demands of human capital production flows.

From this point of view, it’s curious to note that the emphasis that the BNCC unveils to education aimed at the formation of competences, attitudes and values that are signatories to the adaptation of the “new social reality” throws the subjects in formation to an irreversible self-responsibility. In other words, defending an education for a “life project”, a theme that crosses the BNCC, exempts the State and the collusion

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<sup>5</sup>The aberrations of the update of what we are saying can be remembered by the furrows that the plow of the racist State normalizes in everyday life: There is the special secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Márcio Frias, “ordering” the historian, popular communicator and writer Jones Manoel to take a bath because he is black, in the racist allusion that we have known for a long time: Black stinks (NOGUEIRA, 2021); there is the public school teacher saying to the black student: “You are ugly because you are black” (PORTAL G1, SANTOS, 2019); there is the broadcaster able to claim that the injured player in the football match is having difficulty standing up because the hair weighs too much - of course, black hair, considered filthy by the same broadcaster (DCM, 2021); there is the president of the republic referring to black hair in Black Power style as a breeding ground for cockroaches (UOL, 2021).

of the subjective capitalist confiscation from any active responsibility for the distortions and social imbalances that we suffer in society.

Regarding early childhood education, it's curious to note how the demand for adaptation is already emerging. Although in theoretical terms, and let's be sincere, even elegant and seductive, the BNCC conceives childhood in different ways and with multiple cultures, we think that this is nothing more than a rhetorical strategy, since the formative demand is for the adaptation and the diagnoses for the formation of the contents do not start from the criticism of the unbearable of the current socio-economic conditions (CARVALHO, 2020). Because of this, we think that the BNCC ends up being racist, because it does the function of the racist State: To normalize demands for adjustments in which and since black peoples are conceived and summoned by the edges, by the exceptions or by jurisprudential fittings. In fact, it's interesting to see how the racial theme is introduced in the BNCC by adjustment of footnotes and not in obvious terms of content, with scant cases for the stages of high school.

Early childhood education at BNCC at no time considers the specificities of black, indigenous children or even say - because the current policy is of evident extermination of indigenous peoples. It's not just a matter of historical discrimination, but of the very agency of the racist state. For this very reason, black children are absorbed by the abstraction of “fields of experiences” in the sense that they need to adapt to the ordering of normalities. To educate black children is to introduce them to the perpetual unevenness of subjective ghettoization, whose first role is to highlight the power that racism exerts as pedagogical racial dispossession.

Such a scenario is affirmed by Souza (2016) when highlighting the silencing of the ethnic-racial debate in the BNCC in the first version, and the attempt of open and broad suggestions that characterize almost a universal child, in the second version, by bringing the word culture in the plural “cultures”, but without recognizing the differences that mark the ethnic-racial relations, that is, cultures without differences, therefore in a generalization that universalizes.

From the moment that the fields of experiences for children up to 5 years and 11 months, “the I, the other and the we”, “body, gestures and movements”, “traits, sounds, colors and shapes”, “listening, speaking, thinking and imagination” and “spaces, times, quantities, relations and transformations” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 41-44) fail to consider possibilities of pedagogical strategies, in a forceful and affirmative way, for black



children, we are faced with a premature introduction into racism as the raw material of the subjectivity of the racialized State.

It’s true that this could be mitigated or even disputed by drawing out passages like this:

The students of Elementary School - Early Years - have their own ways of life and multiple personal and social experiences, which makes it necessary to recognize the existence of childhoods in the plural and, consequently, the uniqueness of any school process and its interdependence with the characteristics of the local community. It’s also important to recognize the necessary continuity to the experiences around play, developed in Early Childhood Education. Children have knowledge that needs to be, on the one hand, recognized and problematized in school experiences with a view to providing understanding of the world and, on the other hand, expanded in order to enhance the insertion and transit of these children in the various spheres of social life (BRASIL, 2018, p. 224).

However, what are “childhoods in the plural” other than a theoretical juggernaut that, in truth, does not highlight plurality by the political intent of the document. On the contrary, it’s well known that a responsibility of integration with the local community is relegated to the school floor, which does not always apply. On the one hand, because the BNCC itself does not start from the majority respect for the racial component of the Brazilian population to think about the “fields of experience” for the first education; much less does it require it of schools. On the other hand, because the BNCC is a political synthesis devoted to neoliberal education whose “transit of these children in the various spheres of social life”, as it intends, is not consistent with the lack of public policy that excludes black, poor, peripheral children and permeated by material, vital, housing, food, etc. insecurity from their own access to education. Black children are not present in “plural childhoods” because, at the end of the day, the same formative attributes are required of them as performative passes to be accepted in white society, which is otherwise reflected in every “local community”.

The fact is that as long as we do not relegate to the last plane the pedagogical cynicism with its strategies subservient to the racist State, black children will continue to be unviable in education. Or, they will continue to be abstracted in the Afro-descendant bias that, after all, does not affirm the place of black people and their respective black subjectivities. And isn't that what neocolonialism is about? After all, in the terms of Kilomba (2019, p. 65), “what a great way to colonize, that is, to teach colonized women to speak and write from the colonizer's perspective”. In the neo-colony, black children

are abstracted into conceptions of “plural childhoods” with the deliberate refusal to assume them as black.

It’s not without reason that early childhood education needs to forge “evaluative” elements of children. Every evaluation is a passage through a responsive demand template, despite different degrees and intensities. Therefore, all human subjectivity is summoned and considered. But if the black person already goes through the existential test template and fails in it, since it does not result in the meaning of the normality of the “white man face”, as we saw with Deleuze and Guattari (2012), what to expect from a political proposal that, from the base, produces a selective visibility for the black child? Let’s look at the following terms of the BNCC (BRASIL, 2018, p. 39. Our griffins):

Still, it’s necessary to follow both these practices and the children's learning, observing the trajectory of each child and the whole group - their achievements, advances, possibilities and learning. Through several records, made at different times by both teachers and children (such as reports, portfolios, photographs, drawings and texts), it’s possible to evidence the progression that occurred during the observed period, without intention of selection, promotion or classification of children into “fit” and “not fit”, “ready” or “not ready”, “mature” or “immature”. It’s about bringing together elements to reorganize times, spaces and situations that guarantee the learning rights of all children.

What an interesting contradiction: The bipolar, or rather manichean, game that seals what is a fit or unfit child, ready or not ready, mature or immature throws in the face of theoretical cynicism the impossibility of the realization of plural childhoods. There is only plural childhood in plural children and respected the pluralities of their appetizing, adaptive, corporeal singularities, etc. However, contemplating beacons that, in the name of cold truth, are nothing more than the qualifying game of normality and abnormality or exclusion and inclusion, prevent children judged “not fit”, “not ready” or “immature” to live their childhoods outside the presumed classificatory circuits to adapt, prepare or mature them. And as we have seen, being a black child is not a mere detail for such beacons.

Consider the terms of Kilomba (2019, p. 154. Original griffins):

Even before a black child has cast his gaze at a white person, he has been bombarded with the message that whiteness is both the norm and superior, Fanon says. Magazines, comics, movies, and television coerce the black child to identify with other whites, but not with himself. The child is forced to create an alienated relationship with blackness, since the heroes of these scenarios are white and the black characters are personifications of white fantasies. Only positive images, and I mean “positive” and not “idealized” images of blackness created by black people themselves, in literature and visual culture, can dismantle this alienation.

However, we would like to argue that also positive images of blackness created by education are fundamental to dismantling alienation. The fact that we highlight that one of the main documents of public policy for Brazilian education, the BNCC, relegates the black child to a selective visibility, because it abstracts it in the plurality of childhoods, erasing it, without considering it not subordinated to the generalities of the “fields of experience” of the same demands of formative adaptability, concerns a double movement. On the one hand, there is a scandalous denunciation of the persistent neocolonial logic present in racism politically justified by the state. On the other hand, there is an inventory of the real that encompasses the necessary inflection in breaking that logic: It’s through the education of children that we urgently have to begin. After all, and irrefutably, “wherever he goes, the black remains a black” (FANON, 2015, p. 168. Original griffins).

When considering the BNCC and the non-places of black children, the question rehearsed by Cuti (2012), “who is afraid of the word black?”, would end up being translated thus: “who is afraid of the black child?” Perhaps the equation Child + Black = Failure, in the evaluations of genocidal policies, historically based on denial and miscegenation, are more in vogue than we suspect. But as the black diaspora pushes itself into what surrounds Exu in his adage that “turns error into success” and prescribes his logic, perhaps the failure of a system of coloniality of power is the affirmation and pluralization of black children. But not on BNCC's terms, certainly not.

## **Final Considerations: Educating the black child is not providing him with a neocolonial muzzle**

Prosopagnosia is a rare brain disorder that affects the ability to recognize faces. The distortion of recognition, produced as a result of brain injuries, triggers the projection of an identity foreign to that of its holder. Thus, the person instead of being recognized becomes an unknown. From what we investigated in this article, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the BNCC suffers from a pedagogical prosopagnosia, by failing to recognize the centrality of the black child since early childhood education.

As we have seen, the strategies of erasure of the black child as the central subject of education are convenient with their selective visibility that the system of educational policies advocates. Moreover, such a system is subordinated to the State holding the right to be racist that, in the current phase of the capitalist system, exposes the black

person as the exclusive surplus of production. That is why it's easier to target it at the periphery, at exclusion, at the servility of the precariat, at forced migration and at an early deadly end. For this reason, black subjectivity is always captured, from the beginning, by the complex plots of racism that crystallize the same projections of the way of being racist in contemporary society.

By striving here to highlight the erasure of black children in the BNCC, we count on having made clear how urgent it's to think about changing the conceptions, destinations and formats of public policies that tend to justify the operational referrals of all basic education to encompass a project of Nation. Without breaking the cycle of “farm things”, as has been demonstrated, there is no disconnect between the normalization of racism, the exclusionary maintenance of black peoples and the subjective disqualification of blacks, whose rite of passage takes place since the first education of the black child.

The pertinence with which education disregards the centrality of the black child activates not only racial prosopagnosia, with its game of selective visibility and erasure. In addition, it ends up reinforcing the Eurocentric place of educational conceptions that are essential for the maintenance of subjective exploitation by the logic of precariousness, since such conceptions continue to be eivadas, with their pretensions to universalism, of every theoretical tail contributed in the experiences of white children. When Fanon (2015, p. 168) investigated *The black and psychopathology*, he warned of the danger of structuring black childhood as if it were white: “It's necessary to pay close attention to the ways in which white children come into contact with the reality of black children”. Such terms indicate the same concerns that we had in this article, because while the black child is restricted from his subjective condition by the very execration of his blackness, he is forced to adapt to the parameters of experiences that will never belong to his existential condition, since he will develop as a black person, will be black and will continue to be black. Education, therefore, cannot continue to be a marker order of difference to operate exclusion. But how to break this circuit if the black child continues to be denied the priority visibility through which educational experiences should be produced?

Galeano (2010, p. 96) reports that in colonial times black children, deprived of decent nutrition, ate land. Such a scenario was still very common in anemic children from northeastern Brazil: “Instinct compels northeastern children to compensate with soil for the mineral salts absent from their usual diet”, Galeano explains in the passage.

However, in the same context, the author points out: “In the past, this 'African vice' of children was punished by putting muzzles or hanging them from inside wicker baskets far from the ground” (GALEANO, 2010, p. 96. Our griffins).

We could say that the further purpose of this article was to draw attention to the fact of how muzzles are updated in the BNCC for black children. Black children cannot continue to be the continuous draft of the expulsion of black people from history. The black child who today foreshadows the adult / the black / o must be an unavoidable inflection to a past that is not mute, but that only continues to be deaf by the effectiveness of neocolonial strategies.

For our part, education is called upon to transform not into a flow of normality the diffuse racism that circulates in the State. Meanwhile, and for much less, education should not be the one who updates the logic of racial muzzles, as it still seems to occur. If we are very far from a common black curricular base, nothing justifies that in the National Common Curricular Base black children continue to be erased due to a selective visibility whose primary role is to avoid promoting the announcement of black difference as a transforming power of the unjust, unequal and racist society that remains the Brazilian.

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