

EDUCATION FOR AN ANTI-RACIST PERSONALITY: BECAUSE RACISM IS NOT BORN WITH THE CHILD

FORMAÇÃO PARA UMA PERSONALIDADE ANTIRRACISTA: PORQUE O RACISMO NÃO NASCE COM A CRIANÇA

FORMACIÓN PARA UNA PERSONALIDAD ANTIRRACISTA: POR QUÉ EL RACISMO NO NACE CON EL NIÑO

Christian Muleka MWEWA¹
Patrícia Ferraz de MATOS²

ABSTRACT: This article addresses racism in the context of personality formation. The analysis of the content and form of a mini conference (held in 2017 at the Maria Matos Theater in Lisbon) will be based on three assumptions: racism exists; one is not born racist, and we must bet on an anti-racist education since childhood. The essay, which included the conference directed at children and the interview with one of the speakers, was based on literature on “race”, racism, colonialism, and cultural diversity, especially in Portuguese and Brazilian contexts. This initiative has shed light on subalternizing social relations that inferiorize some individuals to the detriment of others, mainly due to its phenotype. The results indicate the pertinence of initiatives such as this, since they generate a potential for the formation of an anti-racist personality with a view to social equity and respect for differences (national, ethnic, phenotypic, and economic, among others).

KEYWORDS: Racism. Anti-racist personality. Children. Education.

RESUMO: Este artigo aborda o racismo no contexto da formação da personalidade. A análise do conteúdo e da forma de uma miniconferência (realizada em 2017 no Teatro Maria Matos de Lisboa) será baseada em três pressupostos: o racismo existe, não se nasce racista e é preciso apostar numa educação antirracista desde a infância. O ensaio, que inclui a conferência dirigida a crianças e a entrevista com um dos palestrantes, apoiou-se em literatura sobre “raça”, racismo, colonialismo e diversidade cultural, sobretudo no que diz respeito aos contextos português e brasileiro. Esta iniciativa lançou luz sobre relações sociais subalternizantes que inferiorizam uns indivíduos em detrimento de outros, principalmente em função do seu fenótipo. Os resultados indicam a pertinência de iniciativas como esta, pois nelas germina um potencial para a formação de uma personalidade antirracista com vistas à equidade social e ao respeito pelas diferenças (nacionais, étnicas, fenotípicas e econômicas, entre outras).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Racismo. Personalidade antirracista. Crianças. Educação.

¹ Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Três Lagoas – MS – Brazil. Professor at the Graduate Program in Education-Master's and Doctorate (FAED/UFMS). Doctorate in Educational Sciences (UFSC). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7079-5836>. E-mail: christian.mwewa@ufms.br

² University of Lisbon (ULisboa), Lisbon – Portugal. Assistant Researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS). PhD in Social Sciences with specialization in Social and Cultural Anthropology. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7322-3756>. E-mail: patricia_matos@ics.ulisboa.pt

RESUMEN: *Este artículo aborda el racismo en el contexto de la formación de la personalidad. El análisis del contenido y la forma de una mini conferencia (celebrada en 2017 en el Teatro Maria Matos de Lisboa) se basará en tres supuestos: el racismo existe; no naces racista y necesita apostar por la educación antirracista desde la niñez. El ensayo, que incluye una conferencia dirigida a niños/niñas y una entrevista a una de las ponentes, se basó en la literatura sobre "raza", racismo, colonialismo y diversidad cultural, especialmente en lo que respecta a los contextos portugués y brasileño. Esta iniciativa arrojó luz sobre las relaciones sociales subordinadas que hacen que unos individuos sean inferiorizados en detrimento de otros, principalmente por su fenotipo. Los resultados indican la relevancia de iniciativas como esta, ya que generan un potencial para la formación de una personalidad antirracista con miras a la equidad social y el respeto a las diferencias (nacionales, étnicas, fenotípicas y económicas, entre otras).*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Racismo. Personalidad antirracista. Niños. Educación.*

Introduction

In 2017 Lisbon was the Ibero-American Capital of Culture. In this context, several activities were promoted, and the Maria Matos Municipal Theatre was a privileged stage, playing a cultural program with formative pertinence for a wide and diverse audience. In this article we intend to analyze the form and content of a mini-conference on racism, aimed at children, which took place in that theater as part of that cultural program. The event, entitled "Racism with Rita Pedro: Mini-Conference for Curious Girls and Boys," took place on November 11, 2017, for approximately one hour, and was repeated on the 12th, 25th, and 26th of the same month, but we only consider the session of the first day. The conference was guided by the assumption and assumption that racism exists in Portugal (PEDRO, 2017).

In the current context, the awareness that racism exists is increasingly frequent and crosses several levels of contemporary society, both in Brazil and Portugal. Thus, although aspects related to racial discrimination may appear in various contexts, there is a greater predisposition to perceive and combat them. There is, however, still a long way to go. One of the contributions may come, precisely, from the anthropology of children, which, as Clarice Cohn (2005, p. 49) stated, "is not limited to the study of children [...] from other cultures and societies".

It is important to be alert to phenomena that lead to the inferiorization and disqualification of some individuals due to racism, as this can embed itself negatively in them. Paul Farmer (1996) goes so far as to inquire into what are the mechanisms that lead to incorporating social forces, such as poverty or racism, as an individual experience. According

to the author, factors such as gender, "race," and socioeconomic status can make individuals vulnerable to human suffering (FARMER, 1996). In turn, Erving Goffman (1988, p. 41) understands that people who have certain particularities, or "stigmas", have a "moral career", that is, "they tend to have similar learning experiences relative to their condition and to undergo similar changes in the conception of the self". Indeed, historically, elements such as racial classifications, for example, have been used to deprive various individuals of basic rights (FARMER, 1996). Furthermore, some authors argue that there is an intergenerational transmission of inequality (BANTON, 1998), which, given the social group on which this article focuses - children - has prompted us to pay special attention.

In the Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations "racial discrimination" is considered distinct from other discrimination in that the opportunities denied to some groups are not based on their individual abilities and merit, but on the fact that they belong to a certain set, wrongly judged as having a racial basis (CASHMORE, 1996). Broadly speaking, racism manifests itself when a particular personality and set of behaviors is associated with individuals of a particular physical appearance. According to Anthony Giddens (1989), a racist is someone who believes in the existence of a biological explanation to qualify, as superior or inferior, people with specific physical characteristics. For Michel Wieviorka (1996), racism is the manifestation of inferiorization or exclusion of a group in the name of reasons presented as natural.

On the other hand, like Giddens (1989), we believe it is relevant to distinguish prejudice from discrimination. Preconceived views about an individual or a group, often based on what one hears, rather than what one actually knows, may not turn into discrimination, that is, active behavior that disqualifies and denies access to opportunities, for example. Prejudice may underlie discrimination, but both phenomena can exist separately (GIDDENS, 1989).

Until the late 1970s, both in Brazil and throughout Latin America, studies on race relations emphasized an association between "race" and social position, on the one hand, and between "race" and social class, on the other. Such studies were influenced by the problems of development and modernization and placed their analysis in a perspective of evolution and transition, either from a traditional society to a modern society (in Weberian terms) or from a pre-capitalist and slave society to a capitalist society (in Marxist terms) (AZEVEDO, 1955; FERNANDES, 1965; HARRIS, 1964; PIERSON, 1971). These studies were unanimous in concluding that in Brazil there was no social identity built around the notion of "race" but rather "color", which was thought of and used as natural and objective evidence.

As of the following decade, the works of Nelson do Valle Silva (1981) and Carlos Hasenbalg (1998) broke, to a certain extent, with this "tradition" by demonstrating the dissociation between "color groups" and social classes. However, the analysis of social inequalities in Brazil, anchored largely in racial differences, as well as the discovery that "color groups" can be regrouped into two (whites and non-whites) to facilitate the study of the distribution of resources, access to education, employment, and health care, have led some current researchers to reintroduce the category "race" as an explanatory variable from a social point of view (MATOS, 2018).

As Carlos Serra (2014, p.8) noted, "human beings are not born racist, ethnicist, or xenophobic. They become so due to the combined logics of three phenomena: social interaction, power resource dispute, and education." In principle, more successful parents can give their children a better start in life and a better education. However, the children's education may not include addressing certain topics, such as racism, which is almost absent from textbooks and school activities. As early as 1934 Ruth Benedict stated that "to recognize the cultural foundation of racial prejudice is a pressing necessity in Western civilization today" (2013, p.19).

Thus, the anti-racist forum conference analyzed in this article seemed pertinent to us, especially since it was addressed to children. In this sense, we tried to focus on what children think and say and not so much on "adult-centric" images that may bias their observations and reflections (COHN, 2005, p.45). We will start by describing the mini-conference (divided between the lecture part and the questions part), indicating some theoretical and performative aspects taken into account in its realization. Then we will present the elements that were made known to us from the interview with one of the lecturers (Rita Pedro) and discuss, with a critical eye, some of the phenomena that emerged there. At the end, we gather some of the main conclusions to which this initiative has led us.

The conference with Rita Pedro and Ousseini Mamadou

According to the mini-conference release:

Being curious, asking questions, wanting to understand, is part of childhood. Cheating is not possible with children's questions, much less when they denote a philosophical complexity that is spontaneous and natural to them. We intend, first of all, to meet the questions posed by the younger ones to, through them, open space for a critical reflection on racism. (PEDRO, 2017).

The lecturer Rita Pedro, Portuguese, with a philosophy background and resident in France until she was 14 years old, was joined by another speaker, Ousseini Mamadou, approximately 25 years old, French, son of a father from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a mother from Senegal, born in France and resident in Paris. When she started her lecture, Rita Pedro introduced herself from her life trajectory, focusing on the geographical point of view in order to intensify the themes of difference and diversity; in the end, however, these themes were treated as synonyms. The conference continued, with a theatrical dynamic, with the second speaker coming on stage, who was supposed to oppose the first speaker, since he was black, male, and French.

Ousseini Mamadou, although born in France, is black and affirms this particularity, thus referring us to the idea described by Paul Gilroy (1995) about "racial group" consciousness when stories related to identity are told and retold. For Miguel Vale de Almeida (2002, p. 35), such "cognitive, habitual, and performative practices [...] constituted the Black Atlantic as a 'non-traditional tradition,' a truly modern, ex-centric, unstable, and asymmetric ensemble, inapprehensible by a Manichean binary code". Both speakers established a verbal and corporal dialogue, in a planned configuration, but which did not always work, being necessary to introduce some improvisation so that the theatrical plot could fulfill its general objectives.

Considering the target audience, although the lecture had a pre-established order, some of the questions posed by the children served as a thread for the sequence presented. In this sense, we also counted on their critical eye and on the fact that the questions were probably asked by other children on different occasions. The formative contexts have an essential role in providing intellectual tools (concepts) so that children can position themselves in face of objective reality. However, although this was not explicit in the event, we believe that some concepts were previously provided to the children. This procedure reinforced the objective basis of the initiative, because, as it was announced, "as an educational act against racism, this mini-conference also involves an awareness: we are not born racist, we become racist. (PEDRO, 2017).

The following questions, previously collected in schools, were thus presented:

- What is racism? (Hadhi Yatou)
- Can any of us become racist? (Ariana)
- Am I different? How do I know I'm different? (Valéri)
- Does demonstrating in the street against racism do any good? (Inês)
- Why do some people think they are better than others? (Kris)
- Why do some families move to another country? (Maria)

When I go to my friend's house in France am I a foreigner? (Rui)
Can we judge someone without knowing that person? (Omar) (PEDRO, 2017).

The idea was conveyed that the theme had passed through several school spaces, as inferred by Rita Pedro's speech when, by placing several shades of skin on an improvised clothesline, she revealed that there were twelve "types", but there were only eleven, because one must have been lost in Escola Básica do Castelo, in Lisbon (PEDRO, 2017). The occasion also included the reproduction of audios, presented between the speakers' speeches, with testimonials from children from various schools. The tone of the lecture, in general, transited between the commonly known and experienced and the insertion of concepts less known to the target audience. Such procedure was in line with what had been announced in the dissemination: "it is necessary to deconstruct prejudices, become aware of what conditions us and clarify some difficult words, such as xenophobia, discrimination, melanin, slavery, apartheid, and prejudice" (PEDRO, 2017). It was in this sense that subjects such as: a) immigrants who take jobs that the Portuguese do not want to do, and contribute to Social Security; b) the importance of knowing different cultures, exemplified with expressions of greetings or salutations in different languages; c) the superiority with which the racist feels, judging himself with superpowers.

When Ousseini Mamadou asked if the racist could fly, a boy said that he had superpowers and could perform this feat. On this occasion, the speaker lifted the child and made him "fly", commenting afterwards, in French, with a smile: "- Only this way can he think he has superpowers!", that is, only with the help of others a human being can "fly", thus trying to deconstruct the initial idea.

The defense of immigrants, mainly black, brought a moralistic, adult-centric tone that was oblivious to children's voices, so that in the middle of the proceedings, a white child declared that her best friend was black, thus seeming to question the pertinence of the way of presenting the problem. On the other hand, the debate was centered in defense of a cause and the purpose of no longer using the term race, as has been happening in several areas, because it has no scientific validity. In fact, the concept of race is an invention with a social, hegemonizing, classifying and subalternizing function ³ and the "geneticists themselves have avoided reference to race or mention it in order to deny its biological validity" (WADE, 2017, p.85).

³ On the use of the word "race" and its process of scientific validation and diffusion, see Matos (2013).

In his lecture, Ousseini Mamadou stated that he had grown up thinking that there were only white heroes and insisted on the need to know black heroes. For this reason, the story of Queen Ginga (referred to as being part of the "kingdom of Angola") was told by both speakers. According to the story, the Portuguese invaded the kingdom she inherited from her father. In the trading compound there was nothing but a rug on the floor for her to sit on, while the Portuguese king sat on the throne. So Queen Ginga (illustrated in a drawing passed around by the children) asked, with a wink, for one of her servants to crouch down so that she could sit on her back. With this act the queen would be in the same plane of vision as the king, thus obtaining a "visual reciprocity". At the end of the story, one of the children exclaimed, "-I liked the story!" However, the conference proceeded without comment and/or problematization to this intervention by the lecturers.

One of the highlights of the story was when the queen subdued her servant girl, sitting on her back, so that she could be at the same height as the king of Portugal with whom she was negotiating peace. This act showed the self-recognition that interpellates the recognition of the Other in symbolic struggle. In order to settle the prejudiced process that generates possible discriminations, the subjugated subject needs to undertake an ambivalent struggle for recognition, that is, the self-recognition of his psychic, cognitive, social and economic capacities, and a struggle for the recognition of the Other of his discursive locality, that is, of his right to social and historical life (HONNETH, 2011). In the case of the colonial context, "these factors [the objective inequalities] did not prevent cultural negotiations between individuals and groups of African and European origin who, in the colonies, divvied up hybrid forms of social relations and identity" (ALMEIDA, 2002, p. 32). In the case of the episode between the queen and the king, the queen's maidservant subjugated herself so that it was possible to negotiate as an equal (man to woman), as far as acceptable, in a quest for ocular correspondence. Such reciprocity was claimed, at other levels, in the 1960s, by the European feminist movement led by Simone de Beauvoir and other intellectuals. However, the issue of subjugation on the part of the servant girl, whose queen saw her kingdom threatened, did not occupy a place in the discussion.

The conference continued with several considerations about Portuguese colonialism. The latter, especially with regard to its "third empire," "was built on concepts of racial classification and separation, as well as [...] of citizenship and miscegenation, [anchored] in a previous colonial experience, that of Brazil, where the nation-state emerged as a self-proclaimed humanistic hybrid" (ALMEIDA, 2002, p. 33). According to the lecturer, "what differentiates us is the need for melanin according to the region where we were born"

(PEDRO, 2017), that is, people south of the Equator have more melanin and those from the north have less, for a matter of protection against the higher temperatures. Thus, each individual needs more or less melanin in order to withstand the sun.

This approach contradicts the racialist discourses of the 19th century, which spread the idea that northern Europeans were "superior races" and enjoyed the "ideal climate" and the "darker races or tropical climates would never be able to produce comparatively evolved civilizations" (SKIDMORE, 1989, p.44). Colonialism did indeed densify the racial issue and, although it is often presented as having been different, based on Luso-tropicalist arguments (CAHEN; MATOS, 2018), the Portuguese colonial system was racist because racial discrimination was institutionalized through legislation that recognized the existence of races and their hierarchization with regard to rights and duties. The imposition of the status of indigenous, which did not grant citizenship to a majority of the population under colonial administration, in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea, for example, is demonstrative of this (MATOS, 2013).

In the context of the conference, the racist emerged as one who cannot stand differences, but differentiates himself from the Other in a mythological process of subjugation (in the past, present and future). The manifestation of racism is interpreted in the context of early childhood education by a group of authors who define "racist personality" (Rp) as

[...] the sum total of prejudice (ignorance of the concept), discrimination (in the sense of segregation) and flagellation (imputation of sacrifices) inflicted by a contextually hegemonic agent (Ha) on the subject taken as deviant (Ds) or multiple deviant (that which aggregates different 'deviations' socially implemented and mostly shared) (MWEWA; PINTO; BISPO, 2016, p. 67).

Also according to these authors,

[...] for there to be the manifestation of Rp it is necessary that there be a hegemonic agent in front of a subject considered [...] the sum of prejudice (ignorance of the concept), discrimination (in the sense of segregation) and flagellation (imputation of sacrifices) infringed by a contextually hegemonic agent (Ha) to the subject taken as deviant (Ds) or multiple deviant (the one that aggregates different 'deviations' socially implemented and mostly shared) (MWEWA; PINTO; BISPO, 2016, p. 67).

[...] for there to be the manifestation of Rp, it is necessary to have a hegemonic deviant, therefore, $rp = Ha + Sd$, unavoidably, [i.e.] the racist personality only manifests in front of the considered deviant, especially the multiple deviant (MWEWA; PINTO; BISPO, 2016, p. 67).⁴

⁴ On this subject, see also Mwewa and Oliveira (2013).

During the course of the conference, one child (with Greek, English and Portuguese ancestry) participated actively and forcefully, making several interventions with some relevance. For example, when the lecturer asked if there were races, the child asked: "-Dogs or people? This question caused laughter in the audience, which further highlighted her participation. The lecturer clarified that it was about people and explained that there was only one human race, recalling the element of melanin stated earlier.

The second speaker asked the audience if anyone had ever experienced racism (defined as the explicitness of the superiority of one over another, namely of a white over a black, overlooking other aspects, such as ethnicity, for example). After a brief silence, a white girl, approximately 10 years old, answered that she had not suffered, but her best friend, Bruna, who is black, had. The girl reported that when Bruna had been called "black," which is considered an insult in Portugal, she responded to her questioner by calling him/her "white." The tension generated by this situation reinforces the idea that "racially discriminated populations have to win until they reach a position where their members can have equal respect and compete on an equal basis" (LEHMANN, 2017, p. 143).

The description of this moment reminded of what I, the daughter of one of the authors of this article (Author 2), black and proud of her appearance, experienced at (middle-class) school in Brazil. When asked by a white classmate if she was born with her hair, I answered: "-Everybody is born with their hair, right? When recounting this episode at home, the girl was outraged with the senselessness of her colleague's question. But, in face of the social structure, the subliminality of the question makes us question whether it was really a simple childish curiosity or the overlapping adult-centric discourse objectified by a childish body. In a way, this episode illustrates how "a person's life story is first and foremost an adaptation to the standards and criteria traditionally transmitted from one generation to another in their community"(BENEDICT, 2013, p. 14). Therefore, the child body that utters racist discourses is not always the one that produces them, but updates the neocolonialism that reproduces them through other ways, with the same effect as before.

Finally, the lecture was intended to stimulate children's demand for racial and ethnic equality by using a supposed children's street demonstration. To forge such a protest, outside the auditorium, audios were used and Ousseini Mamadou's entrance (into the lecture hall) was staged coming from that scene. Through "war cries" such as, "-No one is different! Nobody is different!" the staging echoed the cries of the children, but sought to awaken, above all, a greater engagement on their part in the fight against racism.

Reflections on racism from an interview with Rita Pedro

After the lecture, one of the authors of this article (Author 2), who develops research in the field of socialization in the context of early childhood education, held an interview with Rita Pedro. On the occasion, the speaker stated that her goal was to give children essential tools so that they could deal with the problem of racism in the face of its multiplicity. However, such multiplicity could not be dealt with, in its entirety, during the 40 minutes allocated to the mini-conference. Therefore, choices had to be made so that what was not said would not be taken as an omission.

The invitation to give the mini-conference came about because Rita Pedro (Portuguese, in her 40s, daughter of Portuguese parents who went to live in France when she was a child) has a master's degree in philosophy and works in preschool education (more specifically based on the thought that articulates pedagogy and philosophy). With this background (instrumental and conceptual), according to the lecturer, she had the means to discuss the topic with children (the social category of childhood) from the perspective of ontological, metaphysical and ethical issues, among others. Rita Pedro indicated that she works more specifically from the perspective of Walter Cohen and Gilles Deleuze, who thematize the becoming of childhood, since it is not the fact of being a child that makes them a child, just as it is not the circumstance of being an adult that distances one from subjective childhood. In this way, "childhood" is not limited to chronological and/or generational issues as a position, as is the case with "adult". The category "adult" can incorporate "childhood" in a timeless way, that is, an adult can express his childhood at different times, just as children can express maturity (understanding and decision) in different situations. Thus, Rita Pedro explains the three philosophical dimensions of time, which are: *chronos* (chronological), *kairos* (opportunity), and *aion* (intensive/experiential). These dimensions guide the relationship that adults establish with children as different beings, not to meet the expectations of adults, but for children to express themselves in the intensive and experimental time (*aion*) extensive to adults, as in the case of painters and artists in general. This dynamic of time is manifested in day care centers, preschools, and in the organization of the daily routine, for example. On one hand, for adults the routine is based on chronological time, with some gaps for opportunities, that is, more *chronos* and less *kairos*; on the other hand, for children, the

same routine is inclined to the experimentation of opportunities, that is, more *aion* and more *kairos*.⁵

One of the lecturer's initial doubts related to the inclusion or not of the history of slavery in the conference. Faced with uncertainty, Rita Pedro wondered how much this content would attract the interest of children. It was perhaps because she considered that the subject would not be appealing to this target audience that the text was not developed at the time. In order to expose and explain the main subject - racism - he invited his friend Ousseini Mamadou, since he had already suffered racism and because he considers him an expert on the subject. However, in the interview it was not made explicit why Ousseini Mamadou is considered an expert on the issue of racism, beyond the subjective issues he raised during the conference and the fact that he himself is black. To give shape to the content presented, the theater management invited an artist - the playwright Maria Gil. According to the interviewee, Maria Matos Theater could have proposed a partnership with an anthropologist, or another specialist on the subject of racism, which would have been of great value, but dramaturgy was considered the most appropriate strategy, given the audience, i.e., children. Moreover, Rita Pedro stated, during the interview, that she visited schools to gather questions about the theme. This procedure is in line with the philosophy perspective that seeks to diminish adultcentrism in the apprehension of children's desires, i.e., it considers that we cannot understand them from what the adult intends them to be.

The motivation to work on the issue of racism was due to the fact that Rita Pedro has worked in the neighborhood of Cova da Moura, where lives a significant community of Cape Verdeans (from Cape Verde, former Portuguese colony) or descendants of Cape Verdeans. In this neighborhood, besides the vicissitudes related to the quality of the houses and basic sanitation, there have been problems of violence and social integration. According to Rita Pedro, it is frequent that children with Cape Verdean ancestry, when entering the first year of school, fail. Having worked for six years in this environment, she became sensitive to issues related to children with relatives who have been killed by the police, uncles who have disappeared, and others who are often victims of police violence. Working with children in situations of social vulnerability, Rita Pedro tried to understand how philosophy could help them overcome these obstacles and how she could talk about these issues, taking a critical stance. She also reported that the same children attended catechism classes (under the

⁵ Here it would be worthwhile to scrutinize the suggestion of Alexandre Fernandez Vaz (2016) that approximates children's play, in its social, temporal, experimental, and expressive dynamics, with Greek tragedy. For the author, the impossibility of political making (action in Arendtian terms) brings the form and content of Greek tragedy closer to children's play.

auspices of the Catholic Church), where it was advocated the condemnation of drug trafficking, for example, among other practices carried out by their families. Therefore, philosophy, as a tool, allows us to question and criticize the ideas propagated by adults, especially when these are the fruit of subalternizing, prejudiced and discriminatory social practices, according to the speaker.

These questions, placed in the context of the conference, would allow the children to understand the manifestation of racism in a broader context. On the other hand, the dramaturgy (form), which the event made use of, became the thread for dialogue and problematization. It was in this way that tools and critical reflection were provided to face racism and not only to perceive it (because racism is prior to the appropriation of these tools and they can be mobilized to face it).

Thus, thematizing these issues with children can make them more sensitive to perceive the racist act, since some of them have never suffered it and, perhaps, do not recognize any form of its occurrence. It is not the children who are responsible for solving the problem of racism, nor the multiplicity of its potential, but by perceiving such an act, they can face it through critical reflection. For example, they can report to an adult the occurrence of discrimination when one has diminished the *Other* by his or her difference. In the chapter entitled "Reflections on Little Rock," Hannah Arendt (2004) presents us with an analysis of a context in which a black child is allowed to attend a school for "whites." Accompanied by her father's friend for her protection, the child suffers several instances of racial violence at the verbal level, but she stands up to the situations. Similarly, we are interested in arguing for this discussion that it is not the children's responsibility to find solutions to problems created by adults, but they should be protected by giving them, for example, tools for critical reflection on racism.

For Rita Pedro, children do not take as a parameter the color of their skin or their origin (since in Portugal there are many people from different parts of the world, especially from its former colonies, and the countries of the so-called Eastern Europe) to differentiate the *Other*. However, they reproduce the (verbal and gestural) discourse of the adult - family members and teachers, for example. When the racist discourse is uttered by children in an autonomous, or "authentic" way, a manifest incorporation of the adult world is inferred. In this aspect, Rita Pedro insists that children are not born racist, but become racist through an education that does not advocate the principles of equality in a perspective of individualization and access to the duties of the State, but rather values the differences within collectives in the view of free association (ARENDR, 2004). It is possible to conclude from

Rita Pedro's speech that the family environment and the formative context of children can influence their perception about racism. A multicultural environment, for example, can help to equalize the issue of differences. However, we agree with Lehmann (2017, p. 141) when he says that we cannot ignore that "multiculturalism is a normative idea, not a description of the state of things [...] invoked and employed in discussions about how the world should be organized or reorganized" and that "social institutions, notably Education, inculcate a *habitus* over the course of long periods, without possessing any logic except the logic of their perpetuation."

The children's questions at the end of the conference reinforced the relevance of the initiative. The way it was structured intended to obtain the concentration of the target audience so that the theme would not become boring, that is, in face of the multiplicity and complexity of racism, it was necessary to pay attention to the time during which the children would be exposed to the theme. The format of the conference aimed, in this way, to awaken the children's interest, but also to enhance and expand the reflective discussion about racism on future occasions. As such, Rita Pedro and Ousseini Mamadou's intention was not to exhaust the theme, but to extend its discussion to other areas, keeping this target audience.

In addition to initiatives like this conference, we believe that it is pertinent to invest in anti-racist education and that the school can play a fundamental role in not reproducing a discriminatory society (CAVALLEIRO, 2005). For example, in a study conducted in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, Brazil, it was found that educators, despite identifying stereotypical visions of blacks and women in textbooks, used these materials uncritically, had lower expectations of black students, and attributed discrimination to families and blacks themselves for conforming to exclusion (SANTOS, 2001). In fact, the existence of a negative stereotype regarding a social group can negatively influence its performance (JESUS, 2014). Thus, it is necessary to counter certain ideas or actions, so that they are not repeated, and this can be done through the teaching programs. The history discipline taught in schools, for example, has, above all, content that praises European achievements and often ignores the contributions of populations from other continents. As Wilmo Francisco Junior (2008) reminds us, the teacher/trainer can provide elements of history that also include African populations and their contributions (including to science) throughout the centuries. In this sense, and not taking out of sight the fulfillment of what is foreseen in the school curriculum, it is useful to stimulate collaboration between African history and science teachers, for example (JUNIOR, 2008). On the other hand, still according to the author, anti-racist education should focus more on humanistic (sociological) approaches than on cognitivist

approaches (which focus on individual learning), never forgetting the school's function, which should be to prepare the individual to defend himself and be happy. In short, to be a participant (to act) in the social collective. Likewise, the pedagogical and recreational spaces, which are, and were, built to be enjoyed mainly by children, also have a fundamental role, especially those dealing with aspects of colonialism, of contact between different peoples and the subjugation of individuals in an organized system (MATOS, 2010). Thus, the principle of an anti-racist education in the present must be based on combating harmful repetitions of the past so that they do not become a legacy for future generations. Even actions taken by small groups (contextual elites) can structure, in the long run, social normalities (as with phenomena such as machismo) that can germinate in the next generation. If it is not based on a determined foundation, an anti-racist education becomes ineffective as a social technology.

Final remarks

This article was based on three assumptions (racism exists, one is not born racist, and it is necessary to invest in an anti-racist education since childhood), from which a conference aimed at children and an interview with a speaker of that event were analyzed. As we have seen, racism is a phenomenon that can be incorporated as an individual and collective (structural) experience and lead to social exclusion and suffering. It is important, therefore, to be aware, from an early age, to identify stereotypes and contribute to their elimination. And this can be done through schools, public spaces, with a pedagogical or playful character, and initiatives such as the conference analyzed in this text, but mainly, or especially, in the family context as a formative circumstance that fosters children's first socialization.

As some aspects of racial discrimination are related to the history of colonialism and slavery, one of the ways to fight it may be through school contents and the way they are transmitted. Making children aware of these aspects will help to form more vigilant citizens, better able to deal with differences and adversities. To this end, we believe it is essential to have an articulation between teachers (trainers) from various subject areas (from history to sciences, to the arts), which aims to include the different contributions that have reached us until today, from various countries (and geographical areas), in which, despite very different cultural practices, we find significant values for all humanity.

Moreover, the theme of the analyzed conference, central in both Brazilian and Portuguese society, can be introduced by teachers who have worked on other areas. As it happened, for example, with Rita Pedro, who, despite not working, as a teacher, with issues

about "race", racism or ethnicity, researched these topics for the conference at the Maria Matos Municipal Theater and, after this experience, started to integrate them in her philosophy classes, also taking into account the students' experiences. One of them, being in South Africa, visited the prison where Nelson Mandela was confined and brought back pictures of the place, which served as a basis for the debate on discrimination and racism in a class.

Contributing to the elimination of racism requires denouncing certain practices, both historical and contemporary, that naturalize and sustain its permanence. It is necessary to develop attitudes that are continuously antiracist, because to think that it no longer manifests itself, or to not actively do anything to avoid such situations, leads to their reproduction and to the "maintenance of physical, psychological, social, economic, and labor violence that have subordinated black people and other ethnic groups" (JESUS, 2014, p.34).

Discriminatory attitudes, especially of whites against blacks, should not only be understood within a historical context of Western expansion and colonialism. To confront racism, as Miguel Vale de Almeida (2002, p.33) states, it is necessary to "undo Eurocentrism, while maintaining the awareness that postcoloniality does not develop in a pan-optical distance from history: postcoloniality exists as an 'after'-after having been 'worked' by colonialism". In effect, postcoloniality has produced subjects that are beyond conceptual determinations, putting in check the very concept that intends a permanent remembrance of the past, and in the worst sense, because it can remind them so that this concept persists. And this is opposed to what the philosopher Theodor Adorno (2003) taught us in relation to Auschwitz, that is, the need to keep memory alive so that history does not repeat itself. In other words, it is urgent to keep remembering that, besides the slavery of the "Black Atlantic" (GILROY, 1995), Auschwitz also produced a violence that must not be repeated. We should also be wary of the fact that the concept of post-coloniality may contain within itself a certain maintenance of a subalternizing past. If this were not so, Europe would always be called the former Roman Empire, and the United States of America would be called the post-colony of England. Still, we consider it indispensable to remember not to forget and, whenever possible, to take into account various contexts as well as target audiences.

The denial that racism exists can still be found, for example, in the discourse of some political elites. In fact, contemporary developments in transportation, communications, and global markets have allowed, to a certain extent, a blurring of boundaries. However, there are several everyday situations that show us the opposite in informal conversations, in schools, but also in some police actions, accused of abusing their strength towards some individuals,

and in the discourses that are being aligned in the proposals of the new extreme right-wing parties, taking ground all over Europe, and in Brazil with the victory of the Social Liberal Party (PSL) in 2019, which see as a threat the new immigrants arriving every day. We definitely cannot give up, and we believe that reflective education for children can be an important mediation for social equity.

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