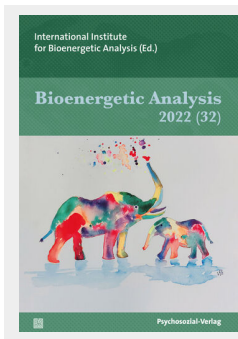


*Maria Cristina Francisco*

## Pluralities



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# Pluralities<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstracts

Plurality is a conceptual tool that makes diversity explicit. Its importance lies in the theoretical field of studies. Plurality encompasses social values, collective lifestyle, ethics, respect, justice, knowledge of various cultures, and the impact of physical and psychological suffering created by prejudice and discrimination. Understanding the different types of knowledge and the mechanisms that keep them concealed and that affect them can contribute to reducing prejudice, fear, and insecurity in the face of the unknown. A confrontation occurs in the presence of insecurity. Fear and anger emerge, and violence becomes an act of eliminating that which is considered threatening. Moreover, the contemporary context adds technology, competition, and speed to this equation, and the result impacts our lives, disconnects us, and anesthetizes our social and emotional bodies. As a principle of plurality, diversity is key to our lives. There is no survival without transformation. We and the world are in constant change. This involves action, learning, and both personal and social experience.

*Keywords:* body, plurality, diversity, emotion, transformation

### Pluralidades (Portuguese)

Pluralidade é uma ferramenta conceitual que torna explícita a diversidade. Sua importância reside no campo teórico dos estudos. Pluralidade abarca valores sociais, estilo de vida coletivo, ética, respeito, justiça, conhecimento de várias culturas, e o impacto do sofrimento físico e psicológico criado pelo preconceito e pela discriminação. Compreender os tipos diferentes de conhecimento e os mecanismos que os mantêm escondidos e os afeta, pode contribuir para reduzir o preconceito, o medo, e a insegurança em face do desconhecido.

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1 Panel Presentation at the 26<sup>th</sup> IIBA Conference, October 2021.

Um confronto ocorre em presença da insegurança. Medo e raiva emergem, e a violência se torna ato de eliminação daquilo que é considerado ameaçador. E ainda mais, o contexto contemporâneo soma a tecnologia, competição e velocidade a esta equação, e o resultado disto impacta nossas vidas, nos desconecta, e anestesia nossos corpos sociais e emocionais. Como princípio de pluralidade, a diversidade é a chave para nossas vidas. Não há sobrevivência sem transformação. Nós e o mundo estamos em constante mudança, Isto envolve ação, aprendizagem e experiência tanto social como emocional.

### Pluralità (Italian)

La pluralità è uno strumento concettuale che rende esplicita la diversità. La sua importanza risiede nel campo teorico degli studi. La pluralità comprende i valori sociali, lo stile di vita collettivo, l'etica, il rispetto, la giustizia, la conoscenza delle varie culture e l'impatto della sofferenza fisica e psicologica creata dal pregiudizio e dalla discriminazione. Comprendere i diversi tipi di conoscenza e i meccanismi che li tengono nascosti e che li influenzano può contribuire a ridurre pregiudizi, paure e insicurezze di fronte all'ignoto. Il confronto avviene in presenza di insicurezza. Emergono paura e rabbia, e la violenza diventa un atto di eliminazione di ciò che è considerato minaccioso. Inoltre, il contesto contemporaneo aggiunge tecnologia, competizione e velocità a questa equazione, e il risultato ha un impatto sulle nostre vite, ci disconnette e anestetizza i nostri corpi sociali ed emotivi. In quanto principio di pluralità, la diversità è la chiave della nostra vita. Non c'è sopravvivenza senza trasformazione. Noi e il mondo siamo in costante cambiamento. Ciò implica azione, apprendimento ed esperienza personale e sociale.

### Pluralités (French)

La pluralité est un outil conceptuel qui rend la diversité explicite. Son importance réside dans le champ théorique des études. La pluralité englobe les valeurs sociales, le mode de vie collectif, l'éthique, le respect, la justice, la connaissance des différentes cultures et l'impact des souffrances physiques et psychologiques engendrées par les préjugés et la discrimination. Comprendre les différents types de connaissances et les mécanismes qui les maintiennent cachés et qui les affectent peut contribuer à réduire les préjugés, la peur et l'insécurité face à l'inconnu. Une confrontation se produit quand il y a insécurité. La peur et la colère émergent, et la violence devient un acte d'élimination de ce qui est considéré comme menaçant. De plus, le contexte contemporain ajoute à cette équation la technologie, la compétition et la vitesse, et le résultat impacte nos vies, nous déconnecte et anesthésie nos corps sociaux et émotionnels. En tant que principe de pluralité, la diversité est la clé de nos vies. Il n'y a pas de survie sans transformation. Le monde et nous-mêmes sommes en constante évolution. Cela implique l'action, l'apprentissage et l'expérience personnelle et sociale.

### Pluralidades (Spanish)

La pluralidad es una herramienta conceptual que hace explícita la diversidad. Su importancia radica en el ámbito teórico de los estudios. La pluralidad abarca los valores sociales, el estilo de vida colectivo, la ética, el respeto, la justicia, el conocimiento de diversas culturas y el impacto del sufrimiento físico y psicológico creado por los prejuicios y la discriminación. Comprender los diferentes tipos de conocimiento y los mecanismos que los mantienen ocultos y que los afectan puede contribuir a reducir los prejuicios, el miedo y la inseguridad ante lo desconocido. En presencia de la inseguridad se produce un enfrentamiento. Surgen el miedo y la ira, y la violencia se convierte en un acto de eliminación de lo que se considera amenazador. Además, el contexto contemporáneo añade a esta ecuación la tecnología, la competición y la velocidad, y el resultado impacta en nuestras vidas, nos desconecta y anestesias nuestros cuerpos sociales y emocionales. Como principio de pluralidad, la diversidad es clave en nuestras vidas. No hay supervivencia sin transformación. Nosotros y el mundo estamos en constante cambio. Esto implica acción, aprendizaje y experiencia personal y social.

### Pluralitäten (German)

Pluralität ist ein konzeptionelles Instrument, das Vielfalt explizit macht. Ihre Bedeutung liegt im theoretischen Bereich von Forschung. Pluralität umfasst soziale Werte, kollektiven Lebensstil, Ethik, Respekt, Gerechtigkeit, Wissen über verschiedene Kulturen und die Auswirkungen von physischem und psychischem Leid, das durch Vorurteile und Diskriminierung entsteht. Das Verständnis der verschiedenen Arten von Wissen und der Mechanismen, die sie verbergen und beeinflussen, kann dazu beitragen, Vorurteile, Ängste und Unsicherheiten angesichts des Unbekannten abzubauen. Wenn Unsicherheit herrscht, kommt es zu einer Konfrontation. Angst und Wut kommen auf, und Gewalt wird zu einem Akt der Beseitigung dessen, was als bedrohlich angesehen wird. In der heutigen Zeit kommen zu dieser Gleichung noch Technologie, Wettbewerb und Geschwindigkeit hinzu, deren Ergebnis sich auf unser Leben auswirkt, uns abkoppelt und unseren sozialen und emotionalen Körper betäubt. Als Prinzip der Pluralität ist die Vielfalt der Schlüssel zu unserem Leben. Ohne Transformation gibt es kein Überleben. Wir und die Welt sind in ständiger Veränderung begriffen. Dazu gehören Handeln, Lernen und sowohl persönliche als auch soziale Erfahrungen.

### Плюрализм (Russian)

Плюрализм – это концептуальный инструмент, который делает разнообразие явным. Его значение лежит в теоретической сфере исследований. Плюрализм охватывает социальные ценности, коллективный образ жизни, этику, уважение, справедливость, знание различных культур, а также влияние физических

и психологических страданий, создаваемых предрассудками и дискриминацией. Понимание различных типов знаний и механизмов, которые их скрывают и влияют на них, может способствовать уменьшению предрассудков, страха и неуверенности перед лицом неизвестного. Противостояние обусловлено неуверенностью. Возникают страх и гнев, и насилие становится актом устранения того, что кажется несущим угрозу. Более того, современная ситуация добавляет к этому уравнению технологии, конкуренцию и скорость, и результат влияет на нашу жизнь, разъединяя нас и обезболивая наши социальные и эмоциональные тела. Как принцип плюрализма, разнообразие – ключ к нашей жизни. Без трансформации невозможно выжить. Мы и мир находимся в постоянном изменении. Это предполагает действие, обучение, личный и социальный опыт.

### 多元化 (Chinese)

多元化是一个辨析差异性的概念性工具，它的重要性体现在理论研究领域。多元化包括社会价值、集体生活方式、伦理、尊重、公正、各种文化下的知识，由偏见和歧视产生的对身体和心理的影响。理解那些让它们保持隐藏并影响着它们的不同类型的知识和机制，有助于促进减少偏见、恐惧和面对未知的的不安全感。在感到不安全的时候冲突会发生，恐惧和愤怒出现，暴力变成了一个被认为是具有威胁性的灭绝性行动，更多的是，当代的背景又添加了技术、竞争和相应的速度，其结果是影响我们的生活、隔离我们，麻木我们的社会性和情绪性的身体。作为多元化的一个准则，多样化是我们生活的关键，没有转化就没有生存，我们和世界在持续的变化，包括行动、学习和个体和社会经验等方面。

## Pluralities

We are social beings, and this human particularity reveals how we live collectively in different territories, with different lifestyles and experiences. Therefore, there is no uniformity. We are diverse. Diversity identifies the existence of cultures and groups and their various expressions and types of language.

Plurality is a conceptual tool that makes diversity explicit, a tool of this multiplicity of social groups that coexist (or not) in the same space. It is a way of understanding elements and recognizing their value and the potential of each individual and a collective through their learning process. When diversity is marked by inequality, prejudice, and discrimination, plurality points to elements that can help us understand these differences, seeking respect as an expression of human dignity. Therefore, being familiar with the concept of plurality is directly connected to understanding and welcoming differences.

In a contemporary society such as ours – which is highly technological, marked by a hyper-valorization of images and selfies on cell phones – we get more

pleasure out of seeing ourselves than in seeing the existence of others. Our way of life is fast-paced and promotes competition and individualism. Basic human needs are overlooked, and we have become vulnerable. All these issues affect our bodies because culture constitutes us and dictates how we think and act. This separate way of denying the existential humanization processes that occur within collectiveness and disconnects us from one another due to the weakening of our bonds. How we are in the world has become automated and drives us to alienation. We are no longer a collective but a manipulated mass. This immediatist view, aimed at the here and now, where it is every man for himself, distances us from the importance of the past, ancestral culture, from the meaning of history as a formative element of human beings, and from understanding the meaning of social integration: integration with ourselves, others, our emotions, our spirituality, and with nature. We have incorporated the discourse of results and convenience, the discourse of the market, materialism, and technique. The capitalist way of production prevails to the detriment of all social relations. Immediate satisfaction and omnipotence come first, and others mean nothing. This has consequences: human beings who are physically and psychologically wounded, technologically hyperconnected and insensitive, disoriented, with no sense of meaning in life, and hostages to prefabricated needs.

All these conditions eventually produce insensitivity and intolerance towards others. They numb our emotions and twist our perception of reality – additionally, the social problem of being a country marked by colonization and enslaving of bodies creating paradoxes. On the one hand, as stated by Cortella (2020, Location 114), “Brazil is one of the countries with the greatest cultural, natural, geographic, and biological diversity in the world. It gathers people of all kinds, origins, genders, accents, and religions.” On the other, it is deeply affected by violence, confrontations, and discrimination rather than representing the sum of our differences. We are a people living in strain, conflict, and fear, and one of the psychological foundations of discrimination is fear, which manifests itself as insecurity. We have undergone a long alienation process due to colonization, experienced as apathy and indifference towards others that dehumanize and rank relationships because it prolongs itself and involves one generation after another.

In Brazil, racism is diffuse but effective enough to marginalize Blacks and assimilate Indigenous people. This process diminishes and dehumanizes them, causing traumatic experiences in the everyday lives of these marginalized people. Our country implemented the policy of whitening the population, working to attract European immigrants after abolishing slavery to try to eliminate the black color in people. Genocide has always been a part of Brazilian history; however,

the number of deaths among Black (Vasconcelos, 2020) and Indigenous (Garcia, 2021) people is increasing. Brazil is the country where more homosexuals are murdered (Bortoni, 2018), and the richness of our diversity is seen as a barrier to our development. As far as the environment is concerned, diversity is driven by exploitation ever since the European colonial invasion, not to mention the brutality against the female gender. Prejudice and discrimination are pervasive and increase our social inequality.

Without a doubt, the peoples who are discriminated against suffer from fear of annihilation and angst. The pain is acute. Fear and anger are constant in the context of intimidation and humiliation. Illnesses emerge as a result of the emotional restraint that must be exercised in this hostile and threatening environment. Victimized suffer from foolishness, ignorance, and emotional vulnerability and can only stand because they see themselves in terms of racial supremacy. They see those who are different as strange, weird, and threatening. This condition produces fear, and when faced with an alleged threat, in extreme cases, they attempt to eliminate the other both physically and existentially. The presence of this feeling increases the distance when it comes to coexistence.

The importance of plurality lies in working cross-sectionally, bringing information to various fields of action: social, institutional, educational, and artistic. It involves presenting knowledge about human rights, the environment, and the inequality produced by relationships based on domination and exploitation, subordinating a culture.

In addition to living in a realm of automatic actions in our contemporary society, prejudice restricts our thoughts. We are twice affected: first by losing our capacity for critical thinking, and second by becoming insecure, unrooted, and vested in restrained emotions. This perpetuates the silence and neutralizes our differences. We are trained to listen to and read a single story that perpetuates the colonizer's hegemonic discourse, which is based on erasing and demonizing the cosmic vision and knowledge of Indigenous peoples and trafficked Black people, who are the formative social elements of this country.

It is essential to reveal what has been concealed and the concealing mechanism. This increases our critical thinking. Education is a vital resource that adds plurality to our narratives. Broadening our knowledge also broadens our understanding.

African philosopher John Mbiti popularized the term "Ubuntu", which means: "I am because we are and because we are, I am" (Tamosauskas, 2020, p. 244). This idea, which is essentially also practiced and, at the same time, a desire, can be found under other names in different cultures: "Hunhu", "Botho", "Munhu", "Omundu". What happens to one person happens to the group; what



happens to the group happens to one person. This sense of collectiveness reduces the helplessness in which we live. We begin to welcome and embrace others as being part of the story. Sharing experiences gives us the feeling of safety and protection. Partaking in experiences evokes a wealth of diversity. It is a very enriching heritage. We can prevent ignorance by broadening our repertoire of knowledge and our listening, letting ourselves be affected by what happens.

Psychotherapy also has an essential role in plurality. As Reichian therapists, we know that individual psychotherapy should not be separated from the social realm because social events and inequalities impact our minds and bodies. Bestowing legitimacy to suffering, to the narrative of cultural experiences by ancestral people through listening and understanding one's value helps people find inner and outer resources for transformation. It improves self-esteem, sharpens one's sense of justice and social inclusion, and helps overcome the restrictions imposed by oppression. Plurality implies attitude and change. According to the ancestral philosophy of African peoples such as Nagô and Yoruba, this union takes place in the body: "The term *axé* has to do with strength and action, the quality and condition of the body and its capacities for realization" (Sodré, 2017, p. 160).

Institutionally, in the professional field, by reviewing the range of references and bibliography I have been using and paying attention to my actions, I can help establish a dialogue about commitment and social justice ethics that favors a type of psychotherapy that goes hand in hand with a sense of justice. This results in me recognizing myself as a therapist embedded in a social context and different realities and experiences. These are principles of tolerance perception and change in mentality. Another focus of plurality and diversity is that they are essential to our lives. There is no survival without transformation, without collectiveness. We and the world are in constant change. This ongoing construction involves action, learning, and both personal and social experiences.

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