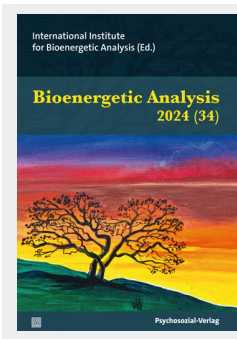


Maria Cristina Francisco

Times of Challenge and Diversity



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Thank you for the invitation to speak to analysts in my home country. It is not an easy place; it is a challenge when addressing the themes of body, voice, and racial issues in a country marked by violence. In 2017, I spoke at the 24th Congress of the International Institute of Bioenergetic Analysis in Canada about “Racial Issues and the Future in Bioenergetics”, internationally introducing this topic. Some may wonder, again? Yes, because human lives are still at risk.

My visible presence is not innocent; the color of my skin is political and carries subjectivity in this place. For many years, I lived with my voice suppressed. Personal analysis exposed this, but it gained strength and autonomy alongside the knowledge (of the analyst and myself) of the social events that affected me. Bodies speak; why are they silenced and who tried to silence them?

What bodies are we talking about in times of diversity? Giving voice to the body means providing a listening space in the relational realm. Do we listen? Often, we choose not to see or hear those who affect us; thus, we deny their existence, and both my voice and that of others is muffled. If I do not listen to others, I am not listening to myself; I distance myself from identity conflict. This results in stratification of thinking, feeling, and acting.

What is the color of Bioenergetic Analysis? Look at yourself and around. What bodies constitute this institute? Because when we look around, we notice that dissident bodies are few and some are invisible. Exclusion is normalized. We need to question, for there is a standard body in certain spaces. Where are the dissident bodies? They are made invisible and silenced; they are strangers from my perspective and society's. They are bodies with social markers of difference, with special needs, with black skin, with LGBTQIAPN+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Non-binary ...) gender, refugee immigrants and their culture, indigenous, Africans, and the worldview placed in

disqualification, dehumanization, racial hierarchy, and psychic suffering. There's discrimination trying to maintain control in society, a "social order" in the name of normativity. Who benefits?

Brazil is a country where over 56% of the population is made up of blacks (both black and brown shades) and, on the other hand, indigenous, Asians, and whites. We are part of Latin America, colonized and enslaved by Europeans. In the difficulty of encountering one another, we became racialized, marked by the terror of violence called racism. Racism demarcates territories, marks boundaries, restricts movement and social rise, generates prejudice, discriminates, and perpetuates social inequality.

We are all descendants of colonization and enslavement, whether from the "Casa Grande" (Big House) or the "Senzala" (Slave Quarters). However, the wronged and humiliated cry out for a voice of liberation and dignity, while the lords in their class armor do not speak, they give orders. When we act, the unexpected happens, discomfort will arise, and those who are socially comfortable will block this movement out of fear. In this context, we enter the realm of whiteness, a place usually made up of phenotypically white people in Brazil, who reproduce colonial behaviors updated in their time.

This constructed place defines privileges, where white subjects occupy privileged social places, such as material resources (access to education, housing, employment) and symbolic ones (superiority, beauty, intelligence, honesty), generated initially by colonialism and slavery, resulting in social segregation. Thus, on one side, we have the presence of domination, the body conditioned to automatic thinking, and on the other, a body in submission under conditions of humiliation and helplessness. In this state of humiliation, subjectivity appears as traumatic marks and the feeling of the constant threatening presence of everyday violence, mercilessly imposed socially, driving their speaking bodies to exhaustion.

In this relational complexity, the subjectivity of bodies is crossed by the socio-political formation of society. In the body-analytic field, it is necessary to have critical reflection, to have knowledge, to listen and to hear, to think and feel this barbaric social reality, enabling the understanding of this tension and its anchors in the vegetative muscular system imposed by racism, and to act, which makes visible and reveals a subject. There is a need to highlight the participation of whiteness, which maintains social stratification, guardians of their conserved places, so that they recognize and perceive the presence of their unconscious fear, the feeling of threat, guilt, and shame in their condition.

Social movements have given voice to these bodies, but who listens? The institutional body, within its theoretical ethics aiming for bodies with autonomy, is being invited to speak, review knowledge and theory, as these issues involve actions and positions in the face of diversity and plurality. Absolute institutional silence will objectify and stratify us. We need an involved Bioenergetic Analysis.

In the Latin American social context, reflections on the marked places of submission for black bodies, LGBTQIAPN+, those with disabilities, indigenous, and the exploitative environmental devastation are being seen and denounced by social movements. Likewise, the civilizing pact of whiteness to not recognize the presence of the other is being questioned, the narcissistic pact of whiteness, this unconscious alliance of not seeing the other as a fellow being. These unconscious attitudes craft compromise solutions of interest between more than one person, ally to uphold the maintenance of privileges, revealing in this intrapsychic space complex ties aiming for a conservative consensus. In this condition, reflective thinking and conflicts are avoided, leading to the limitation of the mind and body. This conservatism makes invisible, demonizes, and erases the knowledge of different peoples and cultures. There are no romanticisms; there will be tension against the barbarity introduced and currently maintained. It will be necessary for the hegemonic mask of the supposed white supremacy to fall. Open spaces so that the stories of perversion, cruelty of racism are revealed by the silenced voices, as they carry with them discourses, gestures, speeches, prejudiced looks, stereotypes, discrimination that must be reviewed, elaborated, resignified by all of us in the name of truth and social justice and relief from psychic suffering.

We must recognize other knowledge, as other peoples possess the understanding of the body and guiding them to their place of belonging are necessary conditions to give voice in its fullness.

We are a people, as a whole, sickened in different places. Everyone's life is under threat.

To give voice to a body in challenging times implies a Bioenergetic Analysis, which should be listened to analytically in the face of issues of whiteness and its implications on individual and social psychological suffering, involved in its ethical commitment to Social Justice, revisiting its theory, expanding knowledge, and cosmic wisdom from other peoples in the name of respect, transformation, change, and the rescue of the autonomy of that body, providing institutional prosperity, as its technical and theoretical possibility is emancipatory.

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