

RUBIÃO BOVARY AND ‘BECOMING’ THE BLACKGAYMAN

RUBIÃO BOVARY E O ‘TORNAR-SE’ HOMEM NEGROGAY

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Abstract: *The present study is part of a much bigger one which aims to investigate the process of a self blackgayman construction in the core of the inter-racial and heterosexual family. Its hypothesis comes from the assumption that blackgaymen do not initially have positive identities which they could claim for; on the contrary, these identities are rejected by the “other”. Therefore, they have an identity condition given a priori. Nonetheless, the dialectical effort of the “I” and of the “Other” engenders the process of a self blackgayman construction. In this perspective, it is necessary to let go of the auto(biographical) method, having in mind that, when one goes towards another time of oneself, one finds the “poetry of self”, which is an experience of self-subjectification, breaking a narrative into pieces through memory and presenting it to construct a language that replicates the whole beauty of “being” someone. Three Baiano teachers took part in the whole research, however, it is presented here an analysis of a core meaning extracted from one teacher’s life story, a blackgayman, being called here Rubião Bovary. He emerged as the protagonist of this study due to the complexity of countless overlaps in his memorial report. It is focused on the family as a scenario of meaning for the color/race of Rubião Bovary. The results point that the family is confronted in its role of identity construction: the “being black” denied as part of an imaginary reality built from the desire of being “another”, close to “being white” as self-defense in face of the situation of the public stigmatization of being gay.*

Keywords: *Identities. Interracial Family. Color and Race. Autobiographical Research.*

Resumo: *O presente estudo faz parte de um estudo maior que visa investigar o processo de construção do self negrogay no seio da família inter-racial e heterossexual. Sua hipótese parte da suposição de que os negrogay não possuem inicialmente identidades positivas que possam reivindicar; ao contrário, essas identidades são rejeitadas pelo “outro”. Portanto, eles têm uma condição de identidade dada a priori. No entanto, o esforço dialético do “eu” e do “outro” engendra o processo de construção de um self negrogay. Nessa perspectiva, é preciso abrir mão do método auto(biográfico), tendo em vista que, quando se vai em direção a um outro tempo de si mesmo, encontra-se a “poesia de si”, que é uma experiência de auto-subjetivação, quebrar uma narrativa em pedaços através da memória e apresentá-la para construir uma linguagem que replica toda a beleza de “ser” alguém. Três professores baianos participaram de toda a pesquisa, porém, apresenta-se aqui a análise de um núcleo de sentido extraído da história de vida de um professor negrogay, denominado Rubião Bovary. Ele surgiu como protagonista deste estudo devido à complexidade de inúmeras sobreposições em seu relato memorial que tem como foco a família; cenário de sentido para a cor/raça de Rubião Bovary. Os resultados apontam que a família é confrontada em seu papel de construção identitária: o “ser negro” negado como parte de uma realidade imaginária construída a partir do desejo de ser “outro”, próximo ao “ser branco” como autodefesa diante da situação da estigmatização pública do ser gay.*

Palavras-chave: *Identidades. Família Inter-racial. Cor e Raça. Pesquisa (auto)biográfica.*

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A priori, explaining the asserted choices

“Memory of a time where fighting for your right is a defect that kills.”

(GONZAGUINHA, 1980, our translation)

In the early 1980's, under a perverse military dictatorship, Gonzaguinha (1945-1991) composed and sang the verses mentioned in the epigraph. For this reason, the “[...] narrative project is as difficult today as it was then [...]” (MORRISON, 2007, p. XIII), and for obvious reasons, it has become daring to propose a study emphasizing the identities of blackgaymen¹, teachers, written this way - blackgaymen² -, embodied under a singular term, unified by different stigmatizing experiences from their life stories. These experiences are tangential to the family-school relationship, within a conflagrated context in which some things are witnessed, as the ascension of the far right-wing; the strength of the religious fundamentalism in the March For The Family With God³; teachers being exposed to the refutable School Without Party⁴; and the profuse offensive declarations of the Chief Executive and his allies, against women, blacks⁵, gays⁶, poor people and *nordestinos* [northeasters]; therefore, the factual mockery, public and institutional, of the overlooked legions of our country. After these events, there is the compelling conscious in relation to who we are and what our country considers us to be, observing “[...] the whole sanguinary history [...] that makes us grasp its reality and to situate us in a lacerated society [...]” (SARTRE, 1967, p. 22, our translation).

The fear is settled on the conditions called by Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) as radical isolation, in which one cannot see or hear others, nor be seen or heard by them, what usually happens in tyrannical regimes; but also adaptable to the circumstances of the mass society “[...] where we see [...] each multiplying and prolonging the perspective of their neighbor [...]”. (ARENDR, 1958, p. 58) Therefore, it is justified that blackgaymen may fill the silent empty spaces of our time with reflections of their own perspectives and lives, saying what was once unspeakable, warning about the danger of “not-being”, because being afraid hallucinates “one-self”.

Therefore, one hopes at least to ensure the possibility of the blackgaymen to be seen and heard for who they are and perhaps becoming a kind of interlocution outside of this study (MORRISON, 2007) which is the reproduction of a part of the Doctoral Thesis, being built by the first author, linked to the Graduate Program in Family in Contemporary Society (PPGFSC) of the Catholic University of Salvador (UCSal), under the guidance of Professor Dr. Elaine Pedreira Rabinovich, the second author. The project – approved by CEP/UCSal/CAAE nº.: 37297620.1.0000.5628 – which gave origin to this thesis had as an object of investigation the process of the construction of “the self”, the blackgayman in the core of the interracial⁷ and heterosexual family, having as a hypothesis

1 Translator's note: even though in the English grammar the order of adjectives asks for the use of the word gay before the word black, it was decided by the author to keep the word black first, coming from the concept that being black, or mestizo, is something that can be seen first, it cannot be hidden, while being gay can somewhat be “hidden”, in the sense that one can avoid or dodge the question. For this reason, the term used throughout this research will be blackgayman.

2 The inspiration for the “blackgayman” neologism came from the writer Toni Morrison (1987), when she writes “whiteman” in the novel *Beloved*, for example, in the following passage: “[...] Two niggers lost? [...] and if a whiteman finds you it means you are surely lost.” (MORRISON, 1987, p. 434) Therefore, corresponding to a person with both identifying elements, united and grouped in an unbreakable way. It is worth mentioning that its use will be discussed over the text and that it will not appear in quotes nor in italics format due to the frequent use of the neologism, transformed into a research category. For this reason, it is free from any attempt to emphasizing it.

3 The Marcha da Família [March For The Family With God] unites protestant groups in the neighborhood of Recife. *Jornal G1 Pernambuco*, June 29, 2019. <<https://g1.globo.com/pe/pernambuco/noticia/2019/06/29/marcha-da-familia-reune-grupos-evangelicos-no-bairro-do-recife.ghtml>>.

4 Depois do esculacho, como fica a vida? [Life after the abuse] *Nova Escola Magazine*, April, 2018. <<https://novaescola.org.br/conteudo/11638/depois-do-esculacho-do-escola-sem-partido-como-fica-a-vida>>.

5 O racismo de Bolsonaro está para além das suas declarações [The racism of Bolsonaro is beyond his declarations]. *Mídia NINJA Newspaper*, March 21, 2019. <<http://midianinja.org/pedroborges/o-racismo-de-bolsonaro-esta-para-alem-das-suas-declaracoes/>>.

6 100 Frases homofóbicas de Jair Bolsonaro [100 homophobic declarations of Jair Bolsonaro]. *Lado A Magazine*, March 17, 2017. <<https://revistaladoa.com.br/2016/03/noticias/100-frases-homofobicas-jair-bolsonaro/>>.

7 About interracial family, I borrow the concept found by Lia Schucman (2018), as faced by a reasonable question:

the assumption that *blackgaymen* do not initially have positive identities which they could claim for; on the contrary, these identities are rejected by the “other”. Therefore, they have an identity condition given as *a priori*. Nonetheless, the dialectical effort of the “I” and of the “Other” engenders the process of a self *blackgayman* construction.

It is referred to the effort because, Within the interracial, heterosexual family, there is a replica of the racial and heteronormative hierarchical structure existing in society, which generates conflicts and tensions. That is because the children of interracial couples, the *mestizos*, witness complex processes related to the racial constitution and sense of belonging, becoming themselves an “obstacle” for being “[...] hybrid, by crossing supposedly different species, carries, according to some people, a pejorative connotation.”. (OLIVEIRA, 1974, p. 70, our translation) In this regard, the *mestizo* is a traitor, degenerated, an-almost white, a solution, it is one thing and another, it is or not. Definitely, it is the synthesis of the extreme existential ambiguity. (DAFLON, 2017; OLIVEIRA, 1974; SCHUCMAN, 2018; SCHWARCZ, 2012) A non-definition, also witnessed by the gay son in terms of a postponed homosexual identity, because the moment of coming out is expected to be pedagogic, since it teaches those who insist on the infamous “male-female” common sense. (MOTT, 1999)

Therefore, there is a gathering of different matters: blackgaymen identities, *mestizaje* [biracial, multiracial people], straight interracial family, teaching and auto(biographical) research, which articulate among themselves, and converge to one common doctoral thesis proposal. This gathering has not yet been focused by scientific research, indicating a problem characterized, similarly, by discrimination and prejudice, which must have been, at a certain degree, responsible for this gap. In this regard, the present study aims to occupy this empty space, specifically in family and education studies, illuminating the unveiled socio-personal dynamics.

Finally, facing the newness, singularity and originality of the doctoral thesis, this research is unique in the experience of revealing that, what comes from outside, as an example, family-school-profession teaching, meets our subjectivity and gives birth, starts a world, because one “is” only with the “other”. (RABINOVICH, 2015) The newness is that the research overcomes the (auto) biographical method, having in mind that, when one goes towards another time “of self”, one finds the “poetry of self” which is an experience of subjectifying oneself, by breaking a narrative into pieces through memory and presenting it as a language that replicates the whole beauty of “being” someone, despite these inglorious days.

Three Baiano [from the state of Bahia] teachers participated in this project. The first one is the main persona of this project: Rubião Bovary (with the name and last name of two important literary figures – Rubião, a character from the book *Quincas Borba*, by Machado de Assis (1839-1908), and Emma Bovary, from the classic book, written by Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), *Madame Bovary: moeurs de province*). The second teacher is called Gregor Samsa – a name inspired in the first character of *Die Verwandlung* [The Metamorphosis] by Franz Kafka (1883-1924). The third teacher stands for G.H. – title-character of the novel *A paixão segundo G.H.* [Passion according to G.H.] by Clarice Lispector (1920-1977).

During the narrative interviews, the teachers were encouraged to select and speak about significant events, from the determined historical frame, related to the process “of self” blackgayman construction in the existential ambiguity within an interracial and heterosexual family; analyzing them with three questions, elaborated by Passeggi (2010, p. 333, our translation): “[...] which facts have marked my life? What have they done to me? What do I do now with what it has done to me? [...]”. These were the trigger questions of the interview that, initially, had the aspect of “[...] more free-flowing, exploratory interview because your purpose at that point is to get a general understanding of a range of perspectives on a topic.”. (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 2007, p. 104)

To conclude, as stated before, the teacher Rubião Boravy, who emerged as the protagonist of this study due to the complexity of countless overlaps in his memorial report, became the fundamental text from which the analysis was organized.

[...] what do we consider an interracial family?”. (SCHUCMAN, 2018, p. 32) As the author herself recognizes the impossibility of starting from zero, I will start, then from some stereotypes. The first one, regarding the normative concept of family, and, the second one, about the classification of race, as, for this research, the parents must consider themselves as one being socially white, and the other black. (SCHUCMAN, 2018)

Who is Rubião Bovary?

“He wanted to see Barbacena. Barbacena was the first land of the world. [...] Rubião [...] had his homeland in himself: ambition, the vanities of the street, ephemeral pleasures, everything indulged to the *mineiro* [from the state of Minas Gerais] who missed the province. If his soul was anytime disguised, and heard the voice of the interest, it was at that time a simple soul of a man repentant of enjoyment and spoiled with his own wealth. [...] Rubião, not knowing why, and despite of his own luxury, still felt like the same old teacher of Barbacena...”

(ASSIS, M. de, 2020, *online*, our translation)

“[Emma Bovary] [...] got confused in the same suffering [...] She was irritated by an ill-served dish or by a half-open door; bewailed the velvets she had not, the happiness she had missed, her too exalted dreams, her narrow home.”

(FLAUBERT, 2007, p. 106)

It was during the Signification Nucleus of Rubião Bovary that it occurred me to call him by the well-known name. First, what induced me, as well said by Antonio Prata (2010, p. 17, our translation) – in the chronicle *Os outros* [The others] -, to feel a “[...] philosophical spasm, an ontological twinge [allowing myself to see] the world by his own eyes, [to feel] the weight over his shoulders, [having his] ancestors [...]”.

The readings of Bovary’s life stories worked as a “portal”, as the rabbit hole that dipped Alice down to Wonderland, and then, I was catapulted, launched to the world of Bovary in a “Heideggerian” way; meaning, being-in-the-world – time, place, family, appearance – without having chosen it and, in spite of that, *Da-sein* [be-there] in a world of another, looking to feeling in his being, thinking about his existence through his *Da-sein* [presence] that, in proportion to the narrative “of self”, reflected about one self. (HEIDEGGER, 1996) Compulsorily, “I became another” in some sort of “Bovaryism” – the second reason for the choice of the last name, because, as it is stated by the psychoanalyst M. R. Kehl (2018, p. 21, griffons in the original, our translation):

[...] the term was based on the most famous character of Gustave Flaubert, an ambitious and dreamy petty-bourgeois from a province, who, by the thrust of indulging her juvenile imagination with Romanesque literature, aspired to “become another” in relation to her predestined destiny. In this project [...], Emma Bovary devoted everything she could: her erotic life, her romantic imagination and [...] the little money earned by her husband, the mediocre doctor Charles Bovary.

Bovary resembles Flaubert’s character when, “fallen” into a heterosexual and interracial family, realizes that, in his childhood, facing, as he himself points out, “[...] a lot of problems related to the matter of acceptance”. Dark skinned father, light skinned mother; three brown skinned children – a girl and two boys. Bovary is the youngest of the children, something that he spoke of between contained laughter: “[...] I am the third child, the *caçulinha* [the youngest] [laughter]”. In this perspective, making use of Sartre’s premise (2014, p.38, our translation), the one in which, highlighting the situation of the man emphasizes his self-constitution, after all, as quoted by the existentialist philosopher “[...] he [the man] is not made beforehand, but by the choice of his morality; and the pressure of the circumstances is such that he cannot but choose one”. Facing this

pressure, Bovary “chose” “to become another”, at least in his imagination.

My father is black, he is dark-skinned, and my mother is white. Then I realized the difference, because I had the skin color more like my father’s than like my mother’s. This made me often anguished [laughter]. I remember I wished to have the same skin color of my mother [laughter]. [ANTONIO: How old were you then?] [BOVARY] Between five and six years old, which is the age I clearly remember from my childhood. So, that was the matter: I wanted to have the same skin color as my mother. [...] I wanted to be the white woman, that blonde who used to call the attention of the men when she passed by, right?! Then, I grew up with this notion, with this construction in my head, in my mind [...]. (BOVARY, R.)

Being the last child of a family crossed by racial matters, imposed by inflexible or even subtle forces, however, always tense, had Bovary understand himself as intersected, also by his femininity (from the mother and the sister) and masculinity (from the father and the brother). Therefore, listening to his memories of the context and these experiences was like seeing him, as Agamben states (1993, p. 53), “[...]re-enter the childhood as the transcendental homeland of history [...], just as experience, as man’s childhood and homeland. The return to homeland, allowed me to witness the effort of Bovary to merely stammer the “self” among the various “selves” who spoke in different ways and possibilities in his world, the Babel itself. (AGAMBEN, 2005)

Possibilities of being or not being, possibilities that, according to Heidegger (1996, p. 10), “[...] Da-sein has either chosen these possibilities itself, stumbled upon them, or in each instance has already grown up in them. [...] in the manner of seizing upon or neglecting such possibilities [...]”. As a being-in-the-world, Bovary was/is facing a world, which is forcefully an environment for the constitution “of self”. A limited world, marked by its restrictions personified in the liberty of the “others, *others*” (my griffon), therefore, as still pointed by Heidegger (1996, p. 51):

The expression. “bin” is connected with “bei.” “Ich bin” (I am) means I dwell, I stay near ... the world as something familiar [...] “I am”: that is understood as an existential, it means to dwell near..., to be familiar with... Being-in is thus the formal existential expression of the being of Da-sein which has the essential constitution of being-in-the-world. (griffon in the original)

Bovary presents himself as if he faced a “condemnation” for being free, “[...] condemned, because he did not create himself, and, [...] however, is free, as, once thrown into the world [...]” (SARTE, 2014, p. 24, our translation), he needed, at the expense “of the self”, to create his existential project from his personal experiences when he still used to live in a small town, living among familiar faces, coworkers from the school, and the morosely habitual everyday life.

However, when he moved, with all of his family to a medium-sized city, where the fantasy of being “another” intensified in a construction similar to *Rubião’s*, the character of the book *Quincas Borba* by Machado de Assis (2020), who, as *Emma Bovary*, has a provincial origin and, after receiving an inheritance, migrates from the little town Barbacena, located in the state of Minas Gerais, to the Corte – Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century – where, according to Kehl (2018, p. 32-33, our translation), the ordinary teacher Rubião “[...] tries to embody the idea of citizen of the world [...] progressively abandoning the provincial way of thinking and trying to [...] forge himself as another [...] from whom he felt very, very distant”.

Therefore, assuming to have introduced Rubião Bovary, even briefly, as well as the literary references that originated this name and its genuine meanings. With that being said, I will go through a more detailed analysis illuminated by the Self-dialogic.

Family: the scenario of significance for the color/race of Rubião Bovary

“My family did not discuss these matters. We did not gather to talk about the matters of gender, race, anything like that. I found this out with time, mainly in school. But, regarding the family, in our house, this identity did not exist inside it. Of course, I came to realize this matter of [small pause] race, of color, because of my parents.”

(BOVARY, R.)

Between the three blackgaymen, teachers, who narrated their stories to this study, Bovary was the only one that initiated communicating the term family. As if he intended to demonstrate his existential principle in the family, even though there was not exactly this discernment (yes, this is an inference), because my initial question alluded to family, but it did not treat it with exclusiveness. However, it is interesting to notice that, immediately, Bovary constructs a period in which the word family is mentioned two consecutive times.

The first one was preceded by a particle that indicates possession, a personal feature – “[...] my family [...]” -, a life core from the perspective of the son-narrator who demonstrated the immediate preoccupation to stand in the world as a cell of extensive bond among all of them, by the family (biogenetic identities) and, consequently, by society (cultures, stories). “My family [...]”, represents the attempt to construct for the self what the sociologist Donati (2008, p. 135, our translation) has called “[...] meaning to the existential nexus that familiar bonds have for each one in their social life.”

The second one, “[...] it was a family [...]”, has a marked function in the past, in a time that is only possible to access through “memory” of “what was lived”. (RICOEUR, 2007) Choosing to point it out this way, Bovary seems to have the desire to narrate: “Once upon a time there was a family [...]” and, then, linking to a story telling of any classic for children which, given the proper proportions, are so alike. It is also similar the fact that, in the story of the three teachers, the blackgaymen, who compose this research, as well as in my own story, family is always remembered as the *locus* where the matters of gender and race are “wrapped around” through silencing; thus, says Bovary: “We did not gather to talk about the matter [...], anything like that. I found this out with time, mainly in school.”

The inexistence is read as a fissure in something that should be handled through the mediation of the family, however, it is mainly filled by the school. “We did not gather to talk about the matter [...]”, ratifies the perspective of family as a mediator, meaning, an instrument located between the parts. Bovary shows his comprehension that the family is the means (the common thread) between the I-subject and the I-in-the-world, operating “[...] as intermediary, combining the terms [...] *mechanism of reference or attribution of meaning* [...]” (DONATI, 2008, p. 136, griffon in the original, our translation).

Attending to the fact that I am apprehending Bovary as an individual integrated in a familiar relationship, placed among other individuals and constituting a system, I am, with this, comprehending that this system/family is also inserted and integrated within a bigger social context. Therefore, the family dynamically participated in the social relationships. Being amid “[...] a life of paradox and contradiction [...]”, as stated by Berman (1988, p. 13); or even in the fluidity of the old ways, liquefied in “[...] patterns and figurations which, albeit ‘new and improved’, were as stiff and indomitable as ever [...]”, states Bauman (2000, p. 6-7, griffon in the original). In this manner, Petrini concludes (2008, p. 18, our translation), “[...] these elements, among others, have reverberated in various ways in the constitution of the contemporary family and its relations.”

To elucidate the silencing of Bovary’s family, it is necessary to study it as a phenomenon conditioned by the matters encapsulated in prejudice, meaning, matters centered in the intrinsic relationship between psychics and social aspects, constituted in a non-congenital action; since it is socially constituted, installing itself within the development “of self” as an individual that is a result “[...] from relations between psychic conflicts and stereotype of the thought [...] and the stereotype, which indicates that elements specific to culture are present.”. (CROCHÍK, 1996, p. 47,

our translation).

Consequently, the conditions that result in such involucre are found in the historical reality that falls upon the socialization system. The influx that comes from this cultural external process has, in the individual's unique interiority, the place to adapt and to constitute new ways of structuration; that is, to be or not to be prejudiced, which implies giving back to the external world the repercussion of an identification, replicating the prejudice or the rejection that opposes it. In this sense, to oppose, it is necessary for the individual to reflect about himself and "others" in experiences established in the profuse circumstances of relational life. So, the absence of a reflected experience is the preamble of prejudice (CROCHÍK, 2011).

In this way, when Bovary says that his family "[...] did not gather to talk about the matters of gender, race, anything like that [...] [finding this out] with time, mainly in school [...]", he pronounced the obvious, meaning: the silence, in this case, is a reaction without reflection "[...] that consists in one pretending to be dead when facing an object that causes strangeness. It is a reaction analogous to that of the animal that emulates nature to defend itself from the predator; it shows a fixed glance that, as it is looking beyond someone is no longer able to see them back" (CROCHÍK, 2011, p. 16, our translation).

Something similar has happened to me, because there was no discussion about gender, race, or class in my family gatherings. Today I have the consciousness that the living experience of all kinds of exclusion accumulated in the life stories of the matriarchs of my family are, definitively, evidence of a non-existence in a social manner because they were women, non-white, poor and poorly educated. (SANTOS, 2002) Additionally to these elements, there was the social context of that time, which did not help the constitution of any identity flag of representation; it was a rule, in that small town in the *sertão baiano* [a semi-arid climate region in the state of Bahia], to follow accordingly the position of silence and non-reflection; consequently, there were resections experienced in the social context with reverberations in the private life.

It was in school that I also had access to the first systematized content that, in my personal case, tried to explain, through the perspective of hegemonic cultures, what was already part of my daily life, even contributing with the subtle process of denying my blackness. Something that had initially started within the family in an inaudible way, hidden unconsciously, achieved its climax at school; after all, "[...] who doubts that the school [...] has performed this role [...] which, in exchange to the written code that it teaches, [...] has let the students ashamed of their parents and environment, has lowered their self-esteem?". (MOURA, 2003, p. 19, our translation) Who doubts that, in childhood, my history classes had this following aim:

[...] to transform the visible African invisible and sloppy, from the ethnographic and anthropologic perspective. There were classes that smelled like enslaved black blood, with the exposure of horrendous and brutal illustrations of black men being spanked, and having their dignity violently lashed. The textbooks pages were filled with subliminal prejudice, against black and indigenous people who were never pictured as protagonists and, when they were shown, there were mentions that made them inferior in comparison to white people. I do not recall having seen, through Science textbooks, black men or women running roles of high prestige. The pictures, generally, depicted the black servants executing "less noble" and submissive roles. Why could only white people be scientists? How to perceive yourself as black through a segregationist euro-centered education, combined with racial stereotypes, relating black kids to diseases and white kids to hygiene and health? (SOUZA, 2018, p. 21-22, our translation).

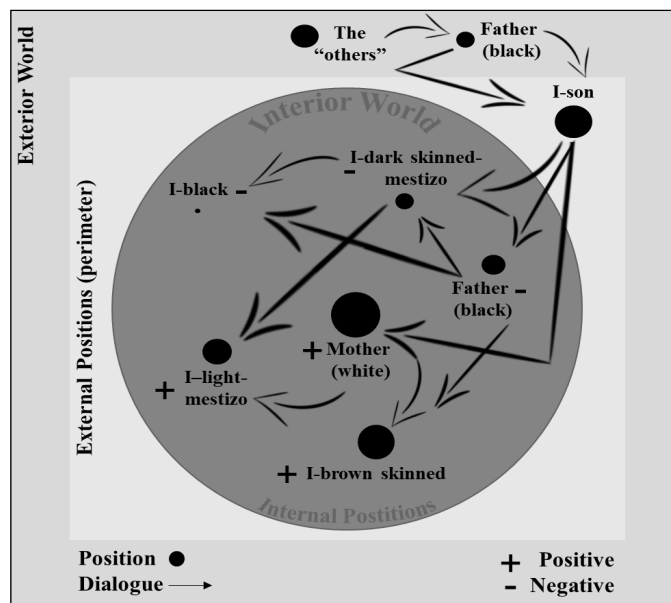
Bovary is not explicit, nor does he offer greater details, that would sustain an analysis about an eventual participation of school over his acknowledged difficulty of acceptance. However, it is possible to assume that his conflict has its origin in the "other", who, when speaks, performs certain authority that impacts, in the I-child of Bovary, an adulterated self-conscious; since that,

this revelation through the “other” has, according to the sociologist, historian, philosopher and political activist W. E. B. Du Bois (2005, p. 7) “[...] this peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the measure of a world that stares in amused contempt and pity.”

Bovary tells that, between five to six years old, when people associated his skin to the blackened color of his father, he felt disturbed, anguished – sensations never spoken, but only felt in this interior world. It was, as he says: “[...] a certain rejection [...] I was growing up and this matter was also getting bigger [...] I won’t lie: I didn’t accept who I was [...] I didn’t accept being black [...] I even accepted being called *moreninho* [light brown skinned]”. In this perspective, to paraphrase Du Bois (2005), Bovary feels a duplicity – being white, being black; two souls, two comprehensions, two conflicts, two opposed ideas in a *mestizo* bifurcated body; amalgamating his duality of being *moreno-claro* [light brown skinned], without letting the condition of being a “racialized”⁸ person in hierarchical preconditions which overflow the values of whiteness⁹ in detriment to blackness.

This perspective brings up the aspect of the “other” included in the Self of Bovary. In fact, there are two “others” – those “others” who verbalize and announce the impertinent *darkened-mestiza* [black skinned] color of paternal succession; as a consequence, the father is also an “other” in Bovary’s experience, as much as Bovary himself is an “other” within the reflexive conscious “of self”, because, through the memory of what was lived, there is the projection of the “self” narrated as an “other”, the narrative of the Self (RICOEUR, 2006).

Image 1. The narrative Self of Bovary¹⁰



Source: Bovary’s narratives. Elaborated by SOUZA (Salvador, 2020).

It means that, when narrating, Bovary identifies himself with the author (Self-author); a condition that allows the “I”, in the lived scenario, to delineate the thread of his memorial narration in the “here-and-now”, observing the “there-and-then” of the “me” – the main character – the

8 In this research, the term racialization comes from the study of the sociologist Octavio Ianni (1996, p. 2, our translation), therefore, as a process of racialization of the social relationships, “[...] social relationships which are sometimes extremely complex and inextricable, produced along migrations, slavery and other forms of forced work, pacific conviviality, unexpected conflicts, persecution of minority groups, genocides, revolutions, wars”.

9 The concept of whiteness is here assimilated as proposed by Lia V. Schucman (2012, p. 17, our translation), so, whiteness is “[...] an ideological construct of power, in which whites take their racial identity as normative and standard, and in this way other groups appear sometimes at the margin, as deviants, as diminished.”.

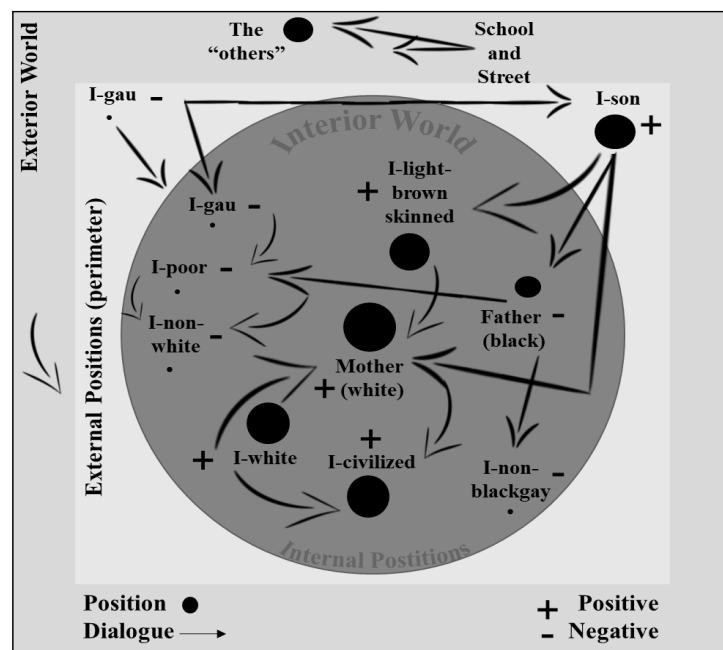
10 Positive or negative positions implicate the placement of the self when facing an obstacle. Positive: self-affirmation, self-maintenance, self-protection, etc. (position of the “I” directed at the center); negative: directed to the “other”, frustration, for example. (FREIRE; BRANCO, 2016, our translation)

actions, the thoughts and speeches/voices in an auto-dialogical, without prevailing hierarchy between the “I” and the “me”; because the one of now is the one from before, the one of the action is the one that reflects the action. (IRIART; BASTOS, 2014; RICOEUR, 2006; SOUZA; GOMES, 2009)

In summary, the rejection “of self”, declared by Bovary, is an image witnessed by a self-connoisseur; who, aware of the actions of the “me”, knows himself “situated” in the world and therefore, places himself in the non-acceptance and then re-positions, through the creation of a “other”-me; who, even being a created and imaginary character, is gifted by a certain autonomous voice, with the ability to interact in the story with other characters/voices, exchanging information about his intrinsic various “me” in their worlds. (HERMANS, KEMPEN; VAN LOON, 1992) It is the dialogical perspective of the Self that, by decentralizing the “I”, allows his profusion in movable positions, working in characters with a voice that, when telling “of self”, moves within the complex structured Self, for instance, in the fragment of Bovary’s narrative:

[...] I did not want to be black, because being black was being small in society [...]. As I was already labeled as homosexual, the gayzinho [a pejorative way to diminish gay people, like faggot] of the school street, the viadinho [another pejorative way to designate and diminish gay people] [...] I was name called because of my sexuality. [...] I did not like it; I did not want that to be true. I did not want people calling me by those names, so I created a character. I wanted to be someone I was not, as a form of defense. Then, they would look at me as a person from a high social standard. [...] If someone would think of calling me viadinho, they would see “look at who he is!” [...] The denial of being black was a defense, because I did not want to be seen as poor. [...] I am not going to say I am black; I am moreno claro [light brown skinned], but I have standards. (BOVARY, R.)

Image 2. The Self blackgayman of Bovary



Source: Bovary’s narratives. Elaborated by SOUZA (Salvador, 2020).

Bovary identified himself as “being of color”, but he did not want to be like that, he did not accept having the dark skin color of his father (black). Nevertheless, he tolerated the persona, the idea of being “moreno claro” [light brown skinned]. At least *moreno* [brown skinned], because it

was closer to the light skin of his mother (white). In this signification, the *mestiçagem* [mixture of races] and *morenidade* prevails, if not for pride, at least because of the fragile privilege originated with the idea of origin and ancestry of his *mestiza*-white-mother, who is considered white by Bovary when in contrast to the *mestizo*-black-father. (SCHUCMAN, 2012) However, if this “triumphant” whiteness is contrasted to the white “*métier*” it will, according to Schucman (2012, p. 84, griffon in the original, our translation), be revoked, receiving the deformation of being kind of “dirty-white”, because “[...] there are characteristics of *mestizaje* that rank, so to speak, this whiteness. In the subcategory that claims having European origin, there is the distinction between the ‘Brazilian white’ and the ‘original white’.”

Given the dialogic conception of Self, the I-author of Bovary is fragmented into different voices when resigned by light brown skinned – what, definitively, does not mean to be white –, externalizing a comprehension: “[...] *but* I have standards [...]” (griffon by me). The conjunction “*but*” puts in perspective the self-image of being light brown skinned, that is: the Self of Bovary, being compulsorily crossed by an ideal of whiteness, feels obligated to create for himself an ideal identification that conflicts with the biological characteristics of his non-white body. (COSTA, 1983)

The non-white consciousness “of self” conflicts with the placement of the “me” that, according to the sociocultural conventions, comprehends black as being “small in society”; in other words, black is poor, degenerated, hideous; therefore, whether in life Bovary behaves as a man who has “standards”, he cannot be black. (FANON, 2008) Then, the “I” that leads the narrative action and grants the interpretations is the “me”, that contemporizes the dubiousness and ambiguities of the *mestizo*, transpiring the insistent prejudice that “tolerates” the *mestizaje* for being, in the result of the hybridization between black and white, the only possibility of becoming the “civilization agent” = “person of high social standards”. (COSTA, 1983) In this perspective, Bovary, when considering himself “light brown skinned”, emphasizes his “being *mestizo*” with white hereditary preponderance, dispensing – by defense, because he was already labeled as homosexual – the fact that miscegenation whitens, but it also darkens. (RISÉRIO, 2017)

Consequently, it was reassuring to feel white through his mother’s skin color, ascending to another level in the “evolutional scale”; since, assuming being “of color”, more like the father, would mean to succumb to a negative position, an unbearable condition for the Self of Bovary, who, at this narrative moment, emerges in disorder due to his homosexuality. To be or not to be black causes a polyphonic conversation between the “I” and the “me”; as in a symphony – in which, being all the sounds together, it receives an instrument of a new category during the composition – or in the linguistic of Bakhtin (2010), which indicates the placement of new voices (lines of characters) inside an already existing plot. In this perspective, the polyphony is constituted from an ontological function, defining the Self “[...] as a multiplicity of positions of the “I” which dialogue with each other, however, in a common space, where the simultaneity of voices involved in the dialogue is the expression of the decentralization of the self”. (SOUZA; GOMES, 2009, p. 370, our translation)

The complexity of the Self of Bovary is the same identified in his life story, which is part of an even more complex historical and social construction, responsible – among other things – for forging the hybrid blackgayman in many non-existence logics and excrescence forms which equates the black to the gay. (FANON, 2008; MUNANGA, 2003) As a result, the “I”, the “me” and the “my”/ positioning/repositioning of Bovary are in contrasting and situational interaction, because they emerge from a context of socio-affective relations and experiences in hetero-dialogists amidst “others” – in which it is felt, for instance, the weight of melanin. (FANON, 2008; FREIRE, BRANCO, 2016; IRIART; BASTOS, 2014; SALGADO *et al.*, 2007) About this matter, Bovary adds to the narrative:

When I walked on the street, when I was in other environments and with other people, I tried to be nearer white people. I did not want to be near people with the same skin color as me. Because I did not accept myself. As I did not accept myself, I also did not accept that other people of my own color would sit near me at a table or at a restaurant or even in school. I always looked for people with a light skin color. Light skin in a sense, between quotation marks, white. I really did not accept this thing of being black (BOVARY, R).

Bovary, at this narrative timing, seems to diverge on his ideal of “I” which, according to D’Adesky (2009, p. 41, our translation), “[...] has a big role in comprehending group psychology, because, paralleled to its individual aspect, it also has a social character”. In this sense, it is worth saying that Bovary had his secret: he was bipartite, a blackgayman. Being gay was a perceptible “discrepancy” from the moment he presented himself in social life, among the “others”, facing the “normal” people; meaning, he was “discredited”, because his stigma was rapidly known (I will develop this idea ahead). (GOFFMAN, 1963) What did not happen to the black-*mestizo* being, since, in this merging, it was aspired that the black being would disappear within a torrent of white *mestizaje*; simply desiring to become whiter in the whiteness of the “other”. Therefore, it was possible to “avoid” the immediate perception of these “others” about his “dirty-white” skin color (SCHUCMAN, 2012), through what Goffman (1963, p. 55) has called “[...] careful non attention [...]” with “other” people of your own color.

However, this “[...] situation can become tense, uncertain, and ambiguous for all participants, especially [to] the stigmatized one”. (GOFFMAN, 1963, p. 55, griffon by me) Because of that, the effort to reunite the forces of the mind and body – in the oscillation between the *mestizo* in hesitant and doubtful controversy (to be or not to be) – to escape the stigmatization as well as the isolation, through the collaboration of the “*mestizo* artisan” who shapes himself to the “normal ‘other’” to deserve one’s special distraction in relation to the secret/his “defect”. (DU BOIS, 2005; GOFFMAN, 1963)

The perception of the I-child of Bovary is constructed by the presence of his mother, his father, and then by the presence of “other” pairs; or even better, all the “other” individuals extrinsic to the familiar community. (COSTA, 1983) Such perspective reminds me of the corporeity of the *Da-sein*, concept created by Heidegger – taken from the book *Being and Time* (1996), in which he explains the *Da-sein* [presence] in reference to the human experience. It means that the man is a being-with, in a relationship that is “being” always with the “other”, existing in the world-with the “other”. (HEIDEGGER, 1996)

Pursuing a common matter, Sartre retakes Heidegger’s idea, to elaborate the question of the “being” existing; meaning, when one is already immersed in the world, the man constitutes himself in the perspective of “being-for-the-self” a human existence that implicates a project that “is in course”, “being-for-the-other”, since it is historical; it is, according to Sartre, the essence of mankind. (SARTRE, 1997) Therefore, I want to affirm that Bovary is a temporal and historical body; meaning, a body that, through the physiological – the ontic character, the own physical existence of the being-with open to an existence, in the world –, results in a body that assumes the ontological place of the being-with; the way of being in the existentiality among the “others”, because, by being-in-the-world, one is. (KAMPFF, 2018) There is a bond between the ontic existence – the physiological and biological mechanisms of the *mestizo* body, for instance – and the ontological of Bovary that happens in his being as existence, in a relationship to the being, comprehending his being and the other beings in the surrounding world (COSTA, 2018).

In this perspective, according to Fanon (2008, p. 121) “[...] the family environment is projected onto the social environment. It is a fact that children [...] used to a certain set of rules laid down by the clan, will be surprised to discover that the rest of the world behaves differently [...]”; for this reason, when saying: “We did not gather to talk about these matters [...]”, the family is, at some extent, confronted in Bovary’s narrative about its indispensable responsibility related to the inaugural phase of Bovary’s identity constructions as an individual. However, we are aware of the duet, initially reserved to the familiar perimeter, that suffers interruptions along its subsequent relationships; (COSTA, 1983) therefore, Bovary – a child of color – grows up in the midst of a common interracial family in Brazil, and despite that (and perhaps because of that), he became a conflicting child “[...] at the slightest contact with the white world.”. (FANON, 2008, p. 122)

Therefore, Bovary’s family, in his early childhood, is the inaugural scenario of positive and negative movements and significations about the color of the skin; and, for that reason, following the direction of Fanon (2008, p. 120, griffon in the original), I tried to consider the family “[...] as the ‘psychic object and circumstance’. [...] The family represents the way the world reveals itself to the child”. However, as it was not evident in Bovary’s narrative if the distorted image projection of being black in his inner world happened, for example, somehow like manifested sayings within his familiar

life by prejudice thoughts; by discourses profusion; or by teasing and daily debauchery, “soften” by presumed “jokes”, which would have degrading effects and abusive consequences in Bovary; thus, revealing a morbidity amidst the family context, “[...] an analogy [...], a repetition or a copy of conflicts born within the family constellation.”. (FANON, 2008, p. 121) However, as I have said, this did not appear spontaneously, and so, at a certain moment I asked him:

[ANTONIO: About your father, did you hear him saying he was black?] [BOVARY] No, no, not these matters. He never, ever said that. [ANTONIO: So, where does the anger you mentioned about having your skin color like your father's come from?] [BOVARY] I was very influenced by the media. When I was a child, I had open access to television, so I watched, I liked, not liked, I do like movies, soap operas - today not that much -, but I was addicted. And the media featured black and dark skin people as sufferers. The poor ones never had any advantage, but were always at a disadvantage. I started looking at my familiar context, because I associated, a little, the context presented by the media with my own familiar context. And I did not want to be that poor person, that is why I avoided having contact with people that were not in the same social level I was. Even with relatives who came from poorer places. (BOVARY, R).

Bovary's answers, one more time, addressed me to the relational approach by Donati (2008) to which the origin of family is subordinated. The mentioned sociologist ratifies family as a relational body of familiarity and relatedness, emphasizing its relevance in the lives and mediations between these individuals. Although, he recognizes that, in social contexts profoundly modernized, family is crossed by society, compromising its obligated function: that of mediating. About this particular aspect, (2008, p. 139, griffon in the original, our translation) declares:

Family becomes an ‘informatively open’ system, penetrated by external communications (mainly by media), even though operationally it acts on the bases of its own internal set of rules (when it manages to elaborate them; apart from that, the family-system goes into crisis, and it verifies itself into the transition to new configurations). Mediations start being [...] more uncertain and vulnerable. The family continues mediating, however, with increasing difficulties. [...] The family is defeated precisely when it cannot identify and perform its mediation function.

When answering to me, declaring to have received media influences, Bovary affirms that the public scenario has agglutinated to the extremely laborious and costly identity process because they depend upon the family-relation – in this case, genitors, and children -, in a private relationship between generations, between sexes, between individuals and ambivalent situations. (DONATI, 2008). What he does not fully pronounce, rather he does it in between the lines, the persistent notion of “becoming” white as a blessing, a corporeality (being-white) that transcends the whiteness, whereas, even in Brazil's current days “[...] it continuous to be a manifestation of the Spirit, of the Idea, of the Reason.”. (COSTA, 1983, p. 5, our translation)

Consequently, there is no disagreement between the national project, which seeks to increase white families, that in Bovary's case, is also wanted to be as whiter as possible (Society ←Bovary→ Family) (FANON, 2008); thus, there are “[...] propositions [that] slowly and stealthily work their way into an individual through books, [...] school texts, [...] movies, and radio, and shape one's community's vision of the world.”. (FANON, 2008, p. 131, griffon by me). Just like Bovary, I was also, in my childhood, taken by the vision of this world that, as I wished to be white, prevented the presence of a black expression in me. The difference lies in the fact that in Bovary's case the vehicle responsible to emit this fetishism, which idolizes the white and his whiteness, was the media;

in my case, however, it was through school and, mainly, by literature, unfortunately in its most inappropriate format for being for children and young people.

It is quite understandable that my former teachers wanted, with their best intentions, to insert me in the literary universe through the characters of Monteiro Lobato. However, I could never guess if they were lucid about the images published in those books which, generally, depicted a black and submissive servant, presenting them as a vexatious role in the plot [...] As a child, I did not have enough maturity to recognize the vehemence into the disqualification of the black men and women in a literature destined to children and the youth. However, I now recognize how much my blackness was disfigured, making me believe that being black was not glorious, causing distancing and exclusion of one's identity. Because those representations modeled and inserted the character of aunt Nastácia into a marginalized social imaginary, projecting her into a 'non-existence' and, 'not-being', so she could only 'be' a 'wild-beast' with rough and negroid features, only as 'the black thing, ignorant, and with thick lips, one who could only express disgust, or even revulsion (SOUZA, 2018, p. 22-23, griffon in the original, our translation).

In Bovary's life story, it is possible to find consequences that could also be observed in my narrative fragment, namely: the incapacity to consider yourself black. However, there is a phobic behavior in him, because, facing the object that originates phobia, he (Bovary) dodges, he avoids them due to fear and aversion. (FANON, 2008) In his familiar plain, Bovary refuses to have contact with relatives who were not part of his nuclear family – constituted normatively by a heterosexual couple (the parents, married) and their three natural children (the sister, the brother, and him). (DONATI, 2008) The components of the Bovary's latent phobia were the poor relatives (black by association) who extended beyond the core-family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) and who composed an extensive format of family. (FLEXOR, 2015) He told me:

When we visited my grandparents [...] who lived in a small farm, on the way [...] I would see those very poor little houses and would say: 'I do not want to be from this background!' [laughter] While I was a child, I would say: 'I do not want to be from this social class!' And this was changing me, and I was isolating these people, these relatives. And when I arrived in my grandparents' farm, I did not want to make contact with the local children. Never to play! It was an insult to me. So, I wanted to be near people who stood up, economically and racially. I wanted to have contact with white people (BOVARY, R).

In the quotation above, the phobia becomes more unequivocal in the description of the social (little poor houses, small farm) and biology (non-white people). When saying: "[...] It was an insult to me. [...] I wanted to be near people who stood up, economically and racially. I wanted to have contact with white people [...]", Bovary goes to the last consequences, because he sees himself outraged by an origin designated to the black, poor and without notoriety, disturbing his "postural" scheme of behaving as a white man, as well as with his pretentious project of becoming white. (FANON, 2008)

My head was fertile [laughter]. Do you know what I created? I created an image of them [the parents] [laughter]. I associated them with rich people. [...] So, I saw myself as a medium-class person, rich, right? I started creating this in my mind as a defense [...] My mother's family is white and has more

financial condition than my father's. People from my mother's family are people that like to study, right? They were like people with a degree, even a higher education, with their enterprises and farms. I did not see this in my father's family. In my father's family, black was predominated, and they did not have the context of my mother's. They were the ones that had to struggle at work. They should choose to either work or study. [...] I had contact with my father's family, as people that had to struggle, to get up early, they had to make an effort, they did not like to study [laughter], they were not fond of going to school, they would go out of obligation [laughter] [...] On the other hand, my mother's family brings me a context that I wished for, in that time, to have and to be. (BOVARY, R.)

The I-child of Bovary faces feelings of antagonist orders. In this movement of signification (to be or not to be), he ends up inventing a being in detriment to the real one who, for being black-*mestizo*, is rejected and denied. The perception of his light brown skin color functions as the access to the differentiated and privileged status in a chromatic hierarchy. Bearing an almost white skin color, behaving as such, while he imagines himself in a complete whiteness. In this sense, the poor relatives, with darker skin, more distant to the blonds, red-haired, and to the brown skinned – who, at some level, would be closer to the Hellenic aesthetics that regulates what should / to whom should be designated the products of media – were opposed to his white ideal or indulgent approach to white; the execution of these two options involves the rejection of being black. (D'ADESKY, 2009)

Outcoming

Bovary is a black-*mestizo*, which he “does not know”, because he is also a white-*mestizo* in his mother's family. However, he knows that he is also black-*mestizo* because his father has the *negroid* skin. He tries to stand out and behave as a white man, making himself forget his blackness. How does one do that? As long as one exhibits the “anomalous” part, one gets rid of it. It is as if one is asking the “other” not to look at the mixed skin, the kinky hair, or any other trace of this undesirable “being”. Instead, why not aim for his white qualities?

This affected me very much, because I had to invent a character, to invent other beings, right? To stand out. [...] It was a highlight to [small pause] cover a problem, a ... how can I say that? [small pause], to cover the real Bovary, the one who was abused, ridiculed; then, I had to invent these characters. So, I grew up inventing characters for myself, right? [...] things that in my daily life I must camouflage. I must show a strong Bovary, right? A superior Bovary, right? (BOVARY, R.)

The complete absence or the presence of *negroid* features, or of the social condition of Bovary, permanently embodied/interpreted in media vehicles by *mulattos*, *morenos*, *sararás*, *jambos* [different names for dark skinned people] etc., by black *mestizos* submitted to the criteria of undervalued hierarchy, caused in Bovary a rejection to his family's popular origin; that is, in his perspective, the confirmation of the collective “unconscious”, meaning that black people are badly educated, indolent, immoral, wild.

Conclusion: Bovary can only be white by the collective “unconscious” and by the almost integrality of his own “unconscious” and singularity. (D'ADESKY, 2009; FANON, 2008) Hence, he justifies his identification to the white members of his family (the mother's side) and the link of “being black” as a disadvantage; part of his parallel reality was invented as a self-defense and repulsion to his black ancestry (the father's side) and, consequently, to the relatives that “corroborate” these stereotypes.

The family is confronted in its essential role of constituting identities, because it is its psychic, symbolic, biological, and genetic field, it is a territory of movement, signification, and invention of the

neglected and denied “black being”. In this sense, the binding of the “black being” as a disadvantage is part of a parallel reality invented as a self-defense and repulsion to the black ancestry represented and embodied in the relative members who “confirm” the negative stereotype.

Therefore, the familiar dynamics, its structures, emotional experiences, and familiar exchanges overly influence the process of construction “of self” *blackgayman* in an emancipation sense (to be) or the interdiction (not to be). In this sense, there is in the *blackgayman* hybrid category, internal relations between the subjectivities, the social context, the experiences, and the ways of subjugation that become equal. That being said, the *blackgayman* goes through a persecutory relationship between the subjectivity, the identity, and the body, composing then, the vicissitudes “of self” *blackgayman*.

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