

The Psychosis of Race: Exploring Lacan's Psychotic Structure

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The Psychosis of Race: Exploring Lacan's Psychotic Structure

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Abstract

This paper explores the persistence of race and racism through the conceptual framework of Lacanian psychoanalysis, arguing that race can be read through Lacan's *psychotic structure*. Drawing on Lacan's evolving theories of psychosis, the analysis foregrounds key concepts, such as, the *objet a*, foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father, and the certainties of paranoia. Race is theorized as a psychotic formation wherein the *objet a*—typically foreclosed in psychosis—appears in reality, inscribed onto bodies as phenotypic difference and mediated through fantasies of racial essence. Rather than being overcome through knowledge or education, racialization persists because it is structured by delusions, anxieties, and paranoias embedded in the Symbolic order. The foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father, central to psychosis, is shown to produce a 'desireless' relation to the Other. The paper also addresses racial paranoia as a form of psychotic certainty, wherein race functions as a delusional anchor stabilizing both white supremacist and racialized subjectivities. Through examples from *Get Out*, *Beloved*, *Candyman*, and Cornel West's critique of Obama, the paper demonstrates how paranoia both critiques and reproduces racial logics. Ultimately, the paper calls for a psychoanalytic confrontation with race as a delusional formation that organizes subjectivity and sustains our racial social order.

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