



Trauma theories make oppressed people sick

Most people on this earth are traumatised: being untraumatized is a rare privilege. Most people live in an unsafe world where they struggle to survive. There are 7 billion people in the world, only around 1 billion have day-to-day lives where they are mostly not subjected to violence, war, hunger, state abuses, patriarchal abuses and poverty.

And yet the people who write psychological theories claim that suffering the impact of trauma is an illness. Those who write the theories belong to the mostly-safe 1 billion, and within that 1 billion, they are those who had the additional privilege of tertiary education. They are a population who benefit from the oppression of the 6 billion, from cheap labor, cheap mineral resources, even from war.

Their theories are based on their lives of relative safety, where being vigilant is unnecessary, and certainly may be a sign of illness.

But they are imposing an ideology on the majority, the 6 billion, who mostly live in poor countries but also those abused in families and institutions in their own country.

It's an ideology that claims that the majority of the world are sick, and the privileged minority are well. It claims that ongoing fear is unreasonable, because the danger has passed- when for the majority of people the danger has not and will never pass: our lives are not lived in safe places.

What this 1 billion minority call post-traumatic illness is in fact the normal state of most humans. They have pathologized the norm. In the theorists own countries this allows them to deny continued violence against the oppressed and tell the individual that they are ill for being vigilant, rather than being normal, and being the same as the 6 billion majority of the earth.

It means that I have been told by a western psychologist that I am ill for being afraid, when I am attacked most weeks walking home. I am hyper-vigilant for avoiding known rape spots. I have 'poor affect regulation' for crying when another friend is bashed and the police do nothing because she is indigenous and black.

Trauma is the normal human condition. Yes I have nightmares, yes I feel terror even when there is no danger. So do 6 million of us. It is normal, not exceptional. It is how most people are- but not how most people who write trauma theories are.

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