



CORPOREAL CONSCIOUSNESS: THE TATTOO AS LIVED TEMPORALITY

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ABSTRACT (MAX 100 WORDS)

The purpose of this article is to explore the foundations of the Sartrean notion of corporeal consciousness. Sartre's philosophy rejects the idea of a substantial body or a separate repository of consciousness. Instead, body and consciousness are two interconnected instances, forming a unified whole. In this view, the body is a temporal and concrete condition essential to human praxis. The act of tattooing the body reveals a skin that is drawn, colored, and shaded. The experience of the tattooed body can be understood through the three ontological dimensions proposed by Sartre.

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1. From the notion of body consciousness integrality to the experience of tattooing

*I want to stay on your body like a tatoo. Which is to give you courage. To continue traveling.
And also to perpetuate myself [...] that you take, rub, deny. But don't wash [...]*
Chico Buarque, 1973, 2:51 min.

Considering that, in Sartre, there is no body without consciousness, just as there is no consciousness without a body, what we have is a *notion of integrality*¹. This, let us say, holistic, more integral dimension becomes a fundamental scope for exploring the experience of a body as an expression of a peculiar symbolism such as the experience of tattooing. Therefore, throughout this study, it will be presented by the following terms: **corporeal consciousness, body consciousness, and/or body/consciousness**². A body consciousness *in situation* that launches itself toward (something, someone, some place, some object), therefore, is *relational* (Sartre, 1943/2015).

Sartre (2015) asserts that understanding the notion of body-consciousness integrality is overshadowed by classical thinking, i.e., by traditional philosophy and science that postulate the principle that consciousness would be something internal driven by its own forces and intuitions and that the body - separated from consciousness (Cartesian dichotomous view³) - would follow, so to speak, the laws that govern nature as an object, matter. As Sartre observes:

[...] the body is a necessary characteristic of the for-itself; it is not true that the body is the product of an arbitrary decision on the part of a demiurge nor that the union of soul and body is the contingent bringing together of two substances radically distinct. On the contrary, the very nature of the for-itself demands that it be body; that is, that its nihilating escape from being should be made in the form of an engagement in the world (2015, p. 392).

Faced with the Sartrian assertion that the body is a necessary characteristic of the For-itself, our effort here is to show that the comprehensive analysis of the *tattooed body* will be undertaken through the *notion of body consciousness integrality*, a hypothesis to be supported here throughout the text. Because, in Sartre, there is not, on the one hand, a conscience and, on the other, a body, it is not a question of a union. For him, the “[...] being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness; it can not be *united* with a body” (Sartre, 2015, p. 388).

It is essential to mention that when Sartre writes about the For-itself, he takes it as being human existence itself in such a way that consciousness does not inhabit the body. Since the For-itself is entirely body consciousness, there is nothing behind the body or inside consciousness, and more, for Sartre, consciousness cannot, in any way, be substance since it is “pure appearance” (Sartre, 2015, p. 28).

In this way, speaking of the body consciousness integrality, from the Sartrian perspective, is dealing with an *embodied* or even an *incorporated consciousness*. Consciousness cannot “[...] fly over the world (like a ghost), it is not a consciousness separated from its corporeality [...] experiences require a body situated in the world, a spatialized and singular corporeal consciousness” (Pôncio, 2022, p. 51).

In this sense, the indication of a person’s possibilities lies in the fact that they are a body, a possible body of experimentation. What matters, describes Merleau-Ponty (1945/2006, p. 256-257): “[...] is how they use their bodies, [...] the psycho-physiological equipment leaves a great variety of possibilities open

¹ Referring to the notion of corporeal integrality proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Falabretti (2008) reiterates the understanding of the integrality of the phenomenon. According to the author, classical theories fail to understand such a totality since the *reading* of meaning cannot be restricted to the Cartesian dichotomous view: body-mind, internal-external. The author clarifies that, in Merleau-Ponty, there is only existence because there is a body. The body is the foundation of our existential unity. For this reason, the issue is not to establish strict limits for behavior, but rather, it is about understanding the meanings. In this sense, it is crucial to understand the structural relationship of the body: “[...] embodied in the world with natural things [...] with oneself and [...] with the other” - the body described from the concrete experience (Falabretti, 2008, p. 188). The description is not limited to a mere analysis of the organic body. Moreover, it is without metaphysical mistakes; it opens against the classical model; it is the description of the entire phenomenon, of the body and soul ingrained in each other (Falabretti, 2008).

² To reaffirm the notion of body consciousness integrality in the Sartrian perspective and break with the Cartesian dualistic view, we will not use the hyphen in our text to separate the terms *body consciousness*. We understand that using the hyphen proposes the idea of a body that needs to be linked to conscience, and this opposes the notion of integrality (Pôncio, 2022).

³ In Descartes’ dualistic perspective, which radically differs from the Sartrian one, the notions of body and consciousness are presented dichotomously, i.e., in the Cartesian perspective, there is a union between two distinct poles. We suggest reading the work *Discourse on the Method*, by René Descartes, published in 1637.

[...]” the use that a person “is to make of his body is transcendent in relation to that body as a mere biological entity.”

For us, in the context of this research, what is important is knowing that: it is that a person constitutes themselves *in the world* and *in relation for and by the body* consciousness. Furthermore, if consciousness is an *act*, it happens while it occurs. Thus, Sartre attests: “the essential thing is to start from a problem” (Sartre, 1971/2013, p. 8). And so we will do: the central objective that involves the problem of our research is revealed through the following guiding questions: 1) how the theory of the notion of integrality body consciousness, existential psychoanalysis and the progressive-regressive method of French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre can offer Clinical Psychology theoretical-methodological support to effectively understand a person's existential project? 2) What is the importance of the tattoo as an expression of lived temporality to be the focus of attention of psychology professionals in their practices as psychotherapists?

In the search for the answer, we will paraphrase Sartre (1943/2015) because the psychologist acts as the one who, by *principle, looks*. The clients/patients' *tattooed bodies* are characterized by: 1) carrying the *lived time*, which continues to be expressed through the art performed by the tattoo artist; 2) being *objects* for our gaze (of the Other), and; 3) being psychophysical and social experiences experienced by the singular/universal. In short, they are tattooed bodies situated in a world and in relation to others and things.

In the tattooed body, there is a lived experience that is also current, a phenomenon to be studied and understood. It is about bringing to light the experience of a lived time, that is, of a temporality, whose elements (past, present, and future) merge into an “original synthesis” imprinted on the body (Sartre, 1943/2005). This synthesis reveals, and reveals itself through the condition of *ongoing totalization*, given that corporeal consciousness is always located in time and space (Bocca, 2021; Pôncio, 2022). Thus, if all a person's actions are temporally demarcated, they are historical. The *tattoo*, therefore, presents a past that presents itself as an absolute temporal dimension; it is there, and it is visible. A choice “printed” on the skin, seen with the naked eye.

Although the tattoo is substantiated, it is what it is, visibly imprinted on the skin, without ceasing, however, to open up to the understanding that this corporeal consciousness has a future as a possibility, including the removal of the tattoo itself. In other words, the future of this embodied consciousness has to be to the extent that it may not be (Sartre, 1943/2005). Therefore, the body needs to be more than observed; it needs to be *understood phenomenologically*.

This is why a psychotherapy session requires the professional to have an understanding look *at and through* tattoos as a form of *expression lived temporarily* toward the project of being. Only then will it be possible to understand the existential movement of that person. In the very context of “Sartrian existential psychoanalysis,” it is a question of interpretative, hermeneutic work. According to Lefebvre (1978), we will only know concrete reality if we first *observe* it.

Given the above, Sartre's thesis regarding the *notion of body consciousness integrality* is presented in **three dimensions** (Sartre, 1943/2005, p. 441). It is worth remembering that, in this situation, they are separately presented because they are distinct, just as Sartre himself defined them. However, they occur concomitantly.

- 1) **“I have my body”** – this dimension concerns the *lived experience* - the body for-me. In other words, it is the body experienced every day, revealed to be tattooed, which carries the marks, the impressions, and the inscriptions made on the skin in a *given situation*, located at a given *time*, and in the *corporeal space*. Its temporality is made toward the future, a *relational body*, taken by concrete psychophysical experimentation, which is accessed by “[...] perceptive and spontaneous consciousness” (Fuck & Pinto, 2009, p. 37), i.e., by unreflected conscience (Bocca, 2021, Pôncio, 2022). In this perspective, the body as *being-For-itself* is directly related to the world (Sartre, 1943/2005).
- 2) **“My body is used and known by the other”** - this dimension deals with the *body-for-other*, i.e., the body being seen by the other. According to Sartre (2005), the psychological experience of the we-object always arises in a concrete scenario. Therefore, in situation and in relation to the other, given that the phenomenon of being looked at and being captured by the other concerns the dimension of being-For-other. In other words, there is

a tattooed body at the mercy of the eyes of others, a body that will be appreciated or not, given the social situation surrounding it. Furthermore, just as I can observe the other, I can also be in the position of being captured by that other; they are two distinct prisms but indicate that the body is necessarily for-other (Sartre, 1943/2005; Bocca, 2021; Pôncio, 2022).

- 3) "While *I am For-other*, the other reveals themselves to me as the subject for whom I am an object [...] it is about my fundamental relationship with the other" - in this sense, it is understood that the constitution of the self happens in the relationship with the other, i.e., with the third ontological dimension, Sartre (2015) highlights the body-For-itself mediated by the Other (body-For-itself-For-other). The body of others *is everywhere*; it is possible to observe in the very indication of objects, and in this relationship, the styles and the designs printed *on the skin* are linked to social factors. In other words, the meaning attributed to a tattoo coincides with the referential nexus; it concerns how the subject sees themselves from the *body seen* by the other. Let us note that the understanding we have of our own body is mediated by the other, and it is through the gaze of the other that we can aim to have a tattooed body no longer or, as the shy one quoted by Sartre: "to be invisible" (Sartre, 2015, p. 444). However, this is precisely the third dimension proposed by Sartre: I exist for myself as seen by the other as a body (Pôncio, 2022).

Since, as mentioned above, we are dealing with a subject who appears in "flesh and blood" via tattooed skin and who is always *at play* in relational fields, constituting themselves from the intentional experiences they exercise, the body consciousness is an event in the world - in relation (things, others). It is a condition of human experience and conscious existence. In this way, Sartre (2015) argues that we are not simply a physical object, but -instead- a consciousness that is aware of itself as a body, in addition to highlighting that the body is a part of the physical world and that it is in direct contact with it, allowing us to have our experiences in the *world*.

Bringing to light the tattoo phenomenon and the embodied consciousness, we can allude that the tattoo is an inscription on the skin and can materialize as a record of biographical experiences, a record composed of meanings, senses, and existential projects in a universal-singular-universal dynamic.

Thus, in a psychotherapeutic process, the body reveals itself to communicate meanings directly. Through it, the client/patient can phenomenologically describe their existential movement in the world. The tattoo carries an essential part of that person's history. It has a unique sense *of* and *for* the moment it was performed. And, in a psychotherapy session, the person has the opportunity to reveal their intention when choosing that tattoo, at the same time that the tattoo itself can also *reveal* its meaning in the psychotherapeutic process (Rodriguez & Carreteiro, 2014).

In this sense, the notion of *integral body consciousness* from Sartre's perspective allows us to have a necessary dialogue regarding the phenomenal understanding of the tattooed body, at the same time that it allows us to understand a person's dialectical self and the world.

2. The tattoo as a possibility of accessing a person's project of being

It is only in a world that there can be a body, [...] the body is what I immediately am. In another sense, I am separated from it by the infinite density of the world; it is given to me by a reflux of the world toward my facticity, and the condition of this reflux of the world toward my facticity is a perpetual surpassing.

(Jean-Paul Sartre, 1943/2015, p. 411).

It is true to say, intending to expand knowledge about the existential movement of a person in a psychotherapeutic process, that professionals in psychological science can use different "auxiliary techniques" (Lefebvre, 1978, p. 71) for a better investigation and understanding of the "fundamental project" of those who seek them.

However, before thinking about the *technique*, it is necessary to talk about a methodological outreach program. What program is this? The Sartrian methodological program in two approaches: the "existential psychoanalytic" (Sartre, 1943/2005) and the "regressive-progressive" (1960/2002).

We start from the first psychoanalytically and existentially centered approach- *Existential Psychoanalysis*. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943/2015), Sartre discusses this method of investigation. A descriptive phenomenological method capable of understanding the senses woven into each person's *lived experience*. In other words, a method whose purpose is to reveal the existential project of an analysand/client/patient. Likewise, *existential psychoanalysis* is carried out as an exercise in understanding this project.

For Freitas (2011), a person expresses themselves according to the social context *in* and *of* which they are a part. From this, it is only possible to understand the project of being of a given analysand through reflection and purification of the temporal situation and sociomaterial in which it is inserted (Bocca, 2021, Freitas, 2011).

Let us talk now about the *Progressive-Regressive Method*. This method is totalizing since the singular subject is apprehended as a universal totality. The understanding of the person is always as a whole, regardless of the plan (Sartre, 1960/2002). The totalizing condition indicates that the subject is *led* to fully find themselves in each manifestation (Bocca, 2021).

In this way, however, we can state that the *progressive-regressive method* is a process of simultaneous understanding; it is “[...] progressive (toward the objective result) and regressive (I go back toward the original condition)” (Sartre, 1960/2002, p. 97). However, it should be noted that understanding is always based on looking at the concrete subject, situated in a singular/universal way - temporally in the world.

The meaning pointed out by Sartre in his *existential psychoanalysis*, and his *progressive-regressive method* makes it possible for the psychological practice to go further, to escape the bonds of determinism. Through this path, it is possible, in the psychotherapeutic process, to purify the fundamental choice and recognize the unifying synthesis of the client's actions (Bocca, 2021; Pôncio, 2022).

Therefore, the methodological path proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre allows the professional to know a person's *lived experience*, intending to objectively abstract their movement in the world. Such a program “presents itself, to Psychology, and other areas of human sciences, as a possible resource to investigate and understand aspects of the lived experience of a person or a collective” (Bocca & Silva, 2022, p. 17).

The Sartrian program, from the point of view of the second methodological approach, *progressive-regressive*, is composed of different moments, namely:

(1) the *phenomenological description* and *understanding* of the situation to be studied and researched; (2) the *analytical-regressive* moment, which consists of revisiting the history, the context of the individual, the collective, or the theme researched; and, finally, the (3) *synthetic-progressive* moment, which consists of moving from past toward the present [...], and, in the creation and reinvention of possibilities (Bocca & Silva, 2022, p. 30).

It is, therefore, a program whose principle is the search for totality. After all, in Sartre, “man is a totality and not a collection” (Sartre, 1943/2005, p. 696). A person, says the philosopher, expresses themselves entirely “in even his most insignificant and his most superficial behavior,” i.e., “there is not a taste, a mannerism, or a human act which is not revealing” (Sartre, 1943/2005, p. 696).

Given this, psychotherapy is shown to be a space for investigation and deciphering of the revelations of human conduct that symbolize “in its own way, the fundamental choice to be elucidated” so that the psychotherapeutic process of Sartrian inspiration “can cause the emergence of the unique revelation” that all a person's choices express. Therefore, the professional cannot “[...] ignore the indications contained in a gesture [...] a word”, nor make mistakes “on the revelation which they carry” of their clients/patients, since each act “[...] nevertheless possesses *a priori* the meaning of the revelatory value” of its fundamental project (Sartre, 1943/2005, p. 696).

Let us go back to technique. Not infrequently, the technique is the biggest concern of those starting their psychotherapist practices. Yes, the way of “*doing*” (technique) and the psychotherapeutic “path” (method) are essential and will depend on the epistemological (thought matrix) and methodological perspective used by the Psychology professional. When developing his dialectical, *regressive-progressive* method, which Sartre used as a basis for the breadth of his psychoanalysis, Henri Lefebvre highlights the importance of using “auxiliary techniques” to *map* the historical and anthropological situation of the concrete

reality of each person. Only in this way the professional will avoid that their analysis is deterministic, reductionist, conceptualist, classificatory, and abstract (Lefebvre, 1978, p. 71).

To this end, like Lefebvre (1978), we understand that psychologists who work with Sartrian-inspired psychotherapy must contemplate, in their understanding analysis, the *different aspects of the daily lives* of those who seek them. Only in this way will they understand the “concrete totality.” How? Starting from the *observation* and *phenomenological description* of each *act*, each *gesture*, each *expression*, and each singular/universal *choice*. You see, it is of fundamental importance that this “mapping” occurs through the apprehension of how the **body consciousness** reveals itself to them and the world. In this study, the body consciousness that interests us is the **tattooed one**.

We can say that the *revealed* and *revealing* tattoos that appear *on* and *from* the bodies of the analysts/clients/patients constitute a kind of “visual auxiliary technique” (Lefebvre, 1978). At the same time, enable an “original synthesis” (Sartre, 1943 /2005), pointing to the temporality *lived* by each person.

Such synthesis can be used as a visual observation technique that expands the perception (not only visual) about essential issues in a psychotherapeutic process, namely: a) the singular/universal, b) the dated history of each tattoo⁴, c) what they reveal, d) the issues of temporality that involve each one of them, e) the affective and social weaving network pointed out by them, f) the knowledge of being, g) the project of being; and also, h) about the emotional impasses experienced and which are declared through each tattoo.

In our understanding, the *tattoo* needs to be understood by the universal/singular bias, as proposed by Sartre in his *progressive-regressive* method. It is worth remembering that the philosopher’s objective regarding his method was not only “a complement of his existential psychoanalysis” but also to fill the “gaps in Marxism” (Bocca, 2021, p. 195) since the “object of existentialism – through the shortcomings of the Marxists – is the singular man in the social field [...]” (Sartre, 1960/2002, p. 103).

For this reason, electing the *tattoo* as an act that expresses a person’s concrete choices is to agree, once again, with Sartre’s thought that the body consciousness concerns the way of *existing in situation*. There is, therefore, no possibility of thinking about the existence of consciousness without a body to situate it. Well, however, in Sartre, “[...] there is not a substance body or that is a deposit for a conscience, but - yes - two correlated instances, [...] two instances that are *in situation* - ‘one only’” (Pôncio, 2022, p. 105).

Therefore, when we look forward to understanding the revelation of the project of being through the tattooed body, we cannot reduce our understanding to abstract meanings, ready-made, and decontextualized interpretations, or just the universal meaning about them. On the contrary: each person’s original choice “will give us strength and life” to understand how each person reveals themselves and, at the same time, *what* they reveals through the tattooed body (Sartre, 1960/2002, p. 103). The focus, therefore, is on understanding the person’s body consciousness situated in a context with their *history*, meaning, and choices.

Speaking of history itself asserts Jaires (2011, p. 37), the history of tattooing “was depreciated by the traditional paradigm and is now having the opportunity to give a ‘new version’ from the perspective of a *relativist look* [...] in contemporary times.”

Because the tattoo is:

[...] a good that carries meanings, a consumer good [...] the goods are used as markers, and once the tattoo is considered good, it can contain private marking [...], it turns out that the tattoo appears as an individual mark in contemporary societies, but on the other hand, it can also be seen as a public marking, that is, it can act as a collective mark when it represents belonging to a specific tribe or group. (Jaires, 2011, p. 179)

It is in this context of a relativist perspective that, in some cultures, tattoos are characterized as “consumer goods.” Being an ancient practice, it exists in many different cultures worldwide. The first

⁴ According to Peres (2015), historically, it has been challenging to demarcate a specific moment regarding the etymology of the word tattoo. However, some studies indicate that the term’s origin comes from derivations of the language of the Pacific Ocean, more specifically in Polynesian languages (Tahitian). Therefore, *tatau* means to mark or make marks on the skin. Interestingly, in 1771, an English captain, Mr. Cook, led an expedition to the Pacific to visit the Marquesas Islands in Tahiti. Such islands were inhabited by the *Marquesan* people, who lived in small villages with a culture and customs distinct from other peoples in the region. The *Marquesans* repeatedly struck the skin with a series of sharp objects, thereby generating “skin marks.” Such marks were made from needles stuck in pieces of wood which produced a timbre that generated the onomatopoeia *tatau*. Thus, Captain Cook began to call it “*tattow*” and later “*TATTO*” (Peres, 2015).

reports of tattooing date back to approximately 5,000 BC in Ancient Egypt, where mummies were found with marks on their skin. In Polynesia, for example, tattooing was a common and highly valued practice, a form of artistic, religious, and social expression (Peres, 2015).

In contemporary times, tattoos are one of the many possibilities for consumption, becoming an act freely exercised by each person. Therefore, it is clear to state that it is through the tattoo that a person can inscribe their own history on their body and, by doing so, enters a web of meanings present at the moment and/or situation in which it was made (Jaires, 2011).

Furthermore, if, in Sartre, the concrete praxis of each person “is the organized unity of a plurality of oppositions reciprocally surpassed” (Sartre, 1960/2002, p. 100), we can say, however, that our concern with this study is, at this moment, the search for the *place of the tattoo* in the existential context of the project of being of a person by the temporal, situational, and relational dimension. Paraphrasing the French philosopher, “[...] we demand of general history” of tattooing “[...] restore to us the structures of the contemporary society, its conflicts, its profound contradictions and the overall movement which these determine” (Sartre, 1960/2002, p. 103).

In Pôncio (2022, p. 106), the body “[...] is in sight [...]”; therefore, a person is “[...] completely in the totality of their “acts.” What does that mean? That the tattooed body/consciousness *appears* - it is there, and it is this *appearance* that the psychotherapist must consider as a possibility of understanding the concretely *lived experience*. *Tattoos* are not apart from the history of the analysand/client/patient. They are not distant from the social context. The inscriptions on the skin are choices made in the face of their own networks of references, so we can say that *tattoos* are lived experiences and meanings.

In this sense, it is in the relational dynamics established between analysand/client/patient and psychotherapist, that we will find conditions to understand the person's lived experience through their biography, which is also composed of their tattooed body/consciousness, which is present in the world and which appears as an existential expression.

Now, Sartrean-inspired psychotherapy, through its existential psychoanalysis and its progressive-regressive method, aims to promote in the analysand/analyst a *thetic* (reflective) consciousness (Sartre, 1936), about his/her project of being (fundamental project, original project), thereby enabling effective changes in their existential praxis. It is therefore necessary to emphasize, during the psychotherapy process, the conservation of the original choice, its possibilities, limitations, modifications, contradictions and overcoming (Castro & Ehrlich, 2016).

Thus, we can say that understanding the phenomenon of tattooing is extremely important for an existential and experiential understanding of psychological care.

In this context, the notion of *body-consciousness integrality*, taken in a Sartrean-inspired psychotherapeutic process, considers the person's biography always in situation and in relation. Therefore, the analysand is a being in relation, with his tattooed body, with the psychotherapist, with the world that transforms and is transformed dialectically. The psychotherapist reveals himself as a mediator between the analysand and the positional consciousness of self or his experience, in this case of his tattooed body. The psychotherapist “is not only the one I see, but the one who sees me” (Sartre, 2005, p. 297).

3. Final considerations

The investigation of the notion of *body consciousness integrality* in Sartre's thought is denoted here, in this study, as a central point for the discussion and understanding of the theme of the *tattooed body* and the manifestation of a person's existential project in the world.

In Sartre, the concept of *body/consciousness integrality* breaks with the concept of positivist philosophy, the medical model used. It brings the Cartesian dichotomy of mind/consciousness and body, i.e., the separation between them. Understanding analogous to Sartrian thought.

The notion of *body/consciousness*, in the Sartrian perspective, considers that the subject is body and consciousness simultaneously, i.e., there is no place where consciousness dwells. Therefore, it is possible to state that, for consciousness to exist, it is necessary to have a body (In-itself); just as for a human body, there is an existential consciousness, the being (For-itself) is the intentional consciousness of something.

The subject does not *have* a conscience; they *are* a conscience. If when experiencing the emotion of sadness, the expression of the face is sad, the posture, the movements, the whole being is an expression of sadness, there is nothing behind the body; everything is given, manifested, and revealed.

The body (matter) is the first mediation of a person *in* and *with* the world; it is essential to the singular constitution. Thus, the way this relationship takes place brings information about how the experience lived by the subject was and is still being appropriated by them and how they are subjectivizing (singular) the objective (universal) dimension of human reality.

Since the body/consciousness is an essential mediation of the being *in* and *with* the world, we can understand that the *tattoo*, chosen design, and marked on a person's body reveals their being and their existential project.

Therefore, the choice of tattooing, the date, with whom to tattoo (professional), the meaning of the design, and the *a priori* meaning of definitive, via cutting the skin on the body, is not random. There is a reason for it, an intention, a why that manifests the synthesis of the dialectic experienced by the person.

For Sartre, all manifestations of a person are revealing. The immediate appearance of the *body being seen* matters in this study; it brings it for itself, the knowledge of itself, about itself, even if it is not for this subject at the level of reflective, positional consciousness of the I. For-itself is an expression of being that is in-itself (physical, given, objectified), and for-itself, process, dialectical, ongoing (never ready/determined) constituted in perpetual transcendence–transcended.

In Sartrian existential psychotherapy, the *tattoo* is an essential means of access to the subject assisted, offering assistance to the psychotherapist in what is being described as a *technique* of observation of the subject aiming at their project of being, this being one of the many ways of getting to know the subject *in situation* (context), considering that the subject under analysis must always be understood *in situation*. In this way, generalized and reductionist interpretations that do not contribute to the knowledge of the phenomenon, which is unique and singular, will be avoided.

Making oneself unique, however, does not alienate one from inseparable, universal affectations (the world, time, relationships among others), on the contrary: the person experiences themselves, all the time, in relation to things, with the world, and with other people. Logically, dialectizing in a singular-universal movement, in which the subject subjectivizes the objective universe, i.e., appropriates what is given in the world and makes it subjectively (psychological dimension) and constantly, in an *ongoing totalization*.

Considering the manifestation of human existence as *movement*, carried out in a spiral (non-linear/determined), the methodological program proposed by Sartre in his *existential psychoanalysis* and through his *progressive-regressive* method is defined as comprehensive, analogous to the explanatory method (of nexus causal) of positivist and structuralist philosophies, whose movement starts from the universal to the singular.

To get to know a person, who is always being and doing themselves *in situation*, requires, first of all, considering the socio-historical reality, the given meanings, the imposed truths, etc., their biographies (facts and lived experiences) to, in the background, verifying the appropriate subjectivation by them. The psychological dimension in this theoretical view is not primary; it is constituted from other relationships.

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