

sexual heterodoxy to the fore, and ensure that they will remain prominent in Latin American cultural studies for years to come.

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Race/Ethnicity

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In the approach to cultural studies that traces its roots to Birmingham and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), the problematics of race appeared at the end of the 1970s. Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy are the two most notable figures in this approach to cultural studies, which has since focused its attention on aspects related to race and ethnicity. On the whole, the elaborations of race and ethnicity developed in this context stemmed from challenges to economicist reductionism, which is peculiar

to "vulgar materialism," and to its opposing view, discursive reductionism, which is associated with certain textualist movements.

The challenge to economicist reductionism consists of a departure from the different theoretical framings that had subsumed the analyses of race and ethnicity into a simple reflection of class or economic aspects; it was argued that race and ethnicity were relatively autonomous with respect to other components of social formation in general, and that they were irreducible to economic aspects in particular. This challenge to economicist reductionism, however, did not signify that this approach to cultural studies would adhere to those more extreme sociologically oriented movements that rejected any relationship between race or ethnicity and the material conditions of economic production and moreover disregarded class relations within a given social formation. According to such movements, race and ethnicity were autonomous social phenomena, comprehensible in their own terms. That is to say, race and ethnicity constituted a particular case of social relationships, whether in the establishment of differences and hierarchies within a particular society or in the juxtaposition (generally by force) of different social orders. Although this approach to cultural studies concurred with these sociological movements in not considering race and ethnicity simply as derivatives of economic aspects, it differed from those extreme views that flatly rejected any economic conditioning whatsoever. The categories of "articulation" and "overdetermination," imbued in the works of Laclau and Althusser, offered theoretical inputs to this approach to cultural studies so that it might elaborate theories of social totality and determination that took into account the material conditions of existence of social formations while circumventing the problems peculiar to "vulgar materialism" and economicism (Hall, "Race").

In its elaborations of race and ethnicity, this approach to cultural studies has also questioned discursivist reductionism. This reductionism derives from an overinterpretation of the "discursive turn" that considers race and ethnicity reducible to the discourses that constitute them. Although this approach to cultural studies is squarely in agreement with the affirmation that social reality in general, and race and ethnicity in particular, are discursively constituted, it distances itself from those who thereby conclude that discourse is the foundation of intelligibility to which everything social can be reduced. This approach to cultural studies does not consider the discursive dimension of race and ethnicity to be merely an aggregate that in due course integrates formerly constituted nondiscursive relationships and practices. Consequently, this approach is not limited to a discursive

analysis, nor does it fail to recognize the relevance of the nondiscursive dimensions of any practice or relationship in a particular social formation. Less still does this approach concur with those movements that reduce what is discursive to a formalist conceptualization of language, while treating race and ethnicity as either systems of social classification, concepts that are "good to think about," or systems of the exchange of signs.

In addition to challenging economicist and discursivist reductionisms, this approach to cultural studies underscores the historicity of race and ethnicity. In other words, it argues that race and ethnicity are historically and contextually constituted (Hall, "Problem"). Rather than fixed and immutable entities that are found in every time and place, race and ethnicity are products of concrete historical conditions, and they vary in substance from one social formation to another. Consequently, this premise of historicity signifies challenges to both biologicistic and culturalist essentialisms. This approach to cultural studies questions biologicistic essentialism which supposes the idea that race may be a biological reality and would therefore be an expression of "human nature." Contrary to biologicistic essentialism, this approach to cultural studies concurs with a preponderance of contemporary academic opinion in its supposition that the idea of race as a biological entity traces its origins to the European colonial expansion with its Eurocentric topologies and hierarchizations of human beings and of nature in general. Although this notion of race as a biological entity has been refuted by the biological sciences since the middle of the last century, the idea has persisted in various forms in the collective imaginary and as common sense, prescribing an interweaving of practices of differentiation, regulation, normalization, exclusion, and control. These multiple and changeable practices, relationships, and representations, which constitute race as if it were a biological entity within a particular social formation, are examined from the perspective of this approach to cultural studies.

Along the same lines, the historicism of this approach to cultural studies also questions culturalist essentialism. According to culturalist essentialist thinking, ethnicity and race appear as expressions of a few primary cultural features that are preserved as immutable throughout history. This vision could not be more distant from that of cultural studies, which does not explain ethnicity and race as resulting from isolations and emanations of primary cultural nuclei that are rooted in a supposed collective unconscious. Instead, cultural studies treats ethnicity and race as resulting from interactions that are situated historically in contexts of power relationships constituent of groups, identities, and particular subjects.

The distinction between the two categories is another aspect to consider in the elaboration of race and ethnicity in the view of cultural studies associated with Birmingham, and especially with the work of Stuart Hall. Although he analytically distinguishes ethnicity from race, Hall believes that there are analogies and superpositions between these two categories. Generally speaking, in Hall's view, ethnicity is a concept that has been associated with a social location (the language of place) and articulated by means of "cultural features" ("Question"). Race, on the other hand, has been related to discrimination, employing somatic characteristics that operate as racial diacritics ("Conclusion" 222–23).

Nonetheless, Hall transcends this simple opposition between race and ethnicity, further noting that although "biological racism" utilizes corporal characteristics as diacritics of race, these characteristics connote social and cultural differences. In the last few decades, this notion of race has been displaced by an explicitly cultural concept. More extreme notions of biological race, expressed in eugenics, social Darwinism, and fascism, "have been replaced by *cultural* definitions of race, which allow race to play a significant role in discourses about the nation and national identity" ("Question" 618). This displacement of racial thought from somatically based racism toward a culturally based form is represented in Paul Gilroy's concept of "cultural racism" (*There Ain't*).

As far as Hall is concerned, in ethnicity "the articulation of difference with Nature (biology and the genetic) is present, but displaced *through kinship and intermarriage*" ("Conclusion" 223). In Hall's view, these discourses of ethnicities and races (biologically or culturally sutured) are strongly interrelated, even if they constitute distinguishable systems of discursive practices and subjectivities that divide and classify the social world with its specific histories and its modes of operation. Despite their particularities, these discourses constitute two registers of racism: biological racism and cultural differentialism ("Conclusion" 223).

Racism inscribes ineluctable and naturalized differences and hierarchies onto a social formation: "Racism, of course, operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness" (Hall, "New Ethnicities" 445). Racism should be understood as a type of practice whose specificity refers to the ineluctable naturalization of the segregation, separation, and hierarchization of difference: "Racism is a structure of discourse and representation that tries to expel the Other

symbolically—blot it out, put it over there in the Third World, at the margin” (Hall, “Ethnicity” 16). Racism must be analyzed as a series of practices more or less institutionalized in specific social formations. The deployment of these practices guarantees the inscription of relationships of inequality, asymmetry, and exclusion onto the social and individual body. Having established this, as he did with notions of race and ethnicity, Hall emphasizes the plurality and historicity of racism, arguing for the existence of a plurality of racisms rather than one sole racism.

In Latin America, there are multiple elaborations of race and ethnicity that can clearly be considered in dialogue with cultural studies. Among the most relevant are the work of Claudia Briones in Argentina with her conceptualization of “aboriginality,” that of Marisol de la Cadena concerning the “indigenous mestizos” of Peru, and, focusing on the coloniality of power, the body of work associated with the doctorate in cultural studies at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (UASB) in Quito, coordinated by Catherine Walsh.

Briones proposes transcending the increasingly sterile debates anchored in discussions about decontextualized semantics, which tend to presume the given character of categories such as “ethnic group” or “race.” In Briones’s view, it becomes theoretically and methodologically important to emphasize a *pragmatics of social uses* that is linked to specific historical contexts (257). In this regard, Briones suggests that the notion of “aboriginality” be explored as an analytical alternative in the context of a political economy of cultural (difference) production (242–43). Accordingly, “aboriginality” may be understood from a processual and relational perspective with two focal points: the coproduction of others (marked-different) and us (unmarked-different), and their inscription onto a social framework of exclusions and inclusions that belong to the dialectics of the permanent reproduction and contestation of hegemony and subalternity.

For her part, Marisol de la Cadena has been working from the perspective of a historicization of the notions of *mestizaje* that have operated at different times in the twentieth century in Peru and elsewhere in Latin America. Her analyses of the discourses and practices of local articulations of *mestizaje* and Indianness have shown how cultural features such as education, manner of dress, and urbanity serve as racial diacritics, making “race” a category that can invoke either the sphere of culture or that of biology. De la Cadena suggests a methodology of radical contextualism and historicization, employing “dialogism” as epistemological mode to explore the multiple meanings inscribed in the genealogy of the identity

label ‘mestizo,’ and its related political ideology, *mestizaje*” (“Are Mestizos Hybrid?” 262).

Finally, also significant is the body of work affiliated with the doctorate in cultural studies from UASB because of its novel approach to race and ethnicity as viewed from the intellectual and political project of modernity/coloniality (Walsh, *Pensamiento*). Working from the elaboration of an “other” mode of thought that questions Eurocentric foundations of modernity and Western knowledge, this approach demonstrates how racial thought has played a key role in constituting coloniality. Consequently, it seeks to intervene in the very terms from which the geopolitics of modern/colonial knowledge operates, casting away the racial thought that subalternizes other experiences, selves, and knowledges. To that end, indigenous and Afrodescendent social movements are articulated from a standpoint of colonial difference, offering alternatives to modernity and providing epistemic, ontological, and existential stratagems geared toward decoloniality.

Inspired in part by cultural studies in Latin America, an equally copious body of work has been advanced to address race and ethnicity with a focus on Afrodescendent populations. Research by Livio Sansone concentrating on Brazil, Jean Rahier on Ecuador, Kevin Yelvington on the Caribbean, and Peter Wade on Colombia addresses the relationships between representations of power and ethnic/racial alterity that operate in constructs of blackness, nation, and diaspora. For example, Sansone demonstrates the different racial articulations in Brazil and in “black culture,” taking into account the impacts of the global circulation of images and objects. Consequently, this work highlights the analytical importance of the influences of transnational networks in local racial articulations. Based on Stuart Hall’s notion of representation, Rahier’s detailed discursive and visual analysis of an Ecuadorian magazine illustrates the different tropes of hegemonic racial thought concerning blackness. Rahier’s study therefore constitutes an interesting illustration of what can be achieved methodologically with a discursive and visual analysis in race/ethnicity studies. In one of his articles, Yelvington introduces a relevant challenge to the notion of diaspora, which tends to be taken for granted rather than be subject to an historical examination of how it is, or is not, constituted in concrete terms and in highly specific situations, as exemplified in his case study of the reaction in the Caribbean to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Finally, Wade presents one of the most complete studies of racial dynamics in the regional inscriptions of race and in the nation-building project demonstrating the imbrications between the notions of race, *mestizaje*, and difference. Combining

ethnography and document analysis, Wade underscores the significance of thinking relationally and contextually about the formation of racial differences and hierarchies.

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Representation

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(TRANSLATED BY ROBERT WEIS)

In the most basic sense, representation is the result of a cognitive act that produces a sign or a symbol that serves as the "double" of the supposed "reality" or the "original." In other words, representation occurs through a process of perception and interpretation of a referent, the represented object. In the word "representation," the prefix "re" indicates a new presentation of what has already been presented. To re-present is to *present again*, to *put in the present something that is no longer here now*, to reconstitute it through re-presentation. In one sense, then, intrinsic to representation is a certain temporal disparity that marks the distance between the two moments implied in the very structure of re-presentation: as if something were being presented for the second time. In another sense, the prefix "re" also supposes an iteration, a repetition, another placement, which, unlike the temporal distance, indicates a sort of artificiality. Representation, then, is an event through which something is repeated, re-produced in the present, and, therefore, reconstituted artificially in and by its representation.

Both meanings coexist in the word "representation" and have a relationship with the essence or the pre-essence of things. Representation makes or allows things to come back to the present (where to represent is to return to presence), whether by making things or letting things come back to the present (where represent might make possible the return of a presence), or by presenting them again in the form of a double, an image, an idea, a thought, or, more precisely, through a "representative"—something or someone meant to substitute or stand in for another.

Representations have been the object of study in diverse disciplines. In the humanities and social sciences, they are linked to the study of society and culture. On the one hand, representation designates fundamental codes of culture, symbolic constellations meant to order social discourses and practices: images that produce subjects that participate in determined cultures and epochs. On the other hand, the gesture of articulating epochs through "representations" implies that a *representational idea about representations* governs the representation—the *ensemble of images that are the*

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