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**TWO ETHNO-RACIAL PARADIGMS:
BRAZIL AND THE U.S.
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LOCALIZING INFLUENCE

Talking about Africa in the New World and the influence of its traditions cannot simply be a matter of form, content and diffusion of cultural practices and beliefs. It must also be a matter of location and reception. Where is Africa to be found in the nation? What is its place in the national formation? How was the African element processed in the construction of each national society over time? How have African traditions found their way into history? There is no way to speak of Africa in the New World without locating it within the equation of the Nation. There is no Africa in the New World without a double hyphenation signalling its insertion in continental sub-sections and specific countries.

By the same token, there is no way to speak of the participation of Africa wherever it has flourished after slavery, without contemplating the variety of cognitive operations of discrimination and exclusion we blend under the common term "racism." African civilization and blackness bear upon each other; the place of Africa and the place of race in New World nations are mutually suffused in a complex articulation extremely difficult to disentangle. However, it is part of my contention here that this articulation varies according to national frameworks. The peculiar feelings that are at the basis of racism in each case are deeply ingrained in the structures of relationship developed through a particular national history, and have a lot to say, when disclosed, about the insertion of the bearers of African culture themselves in each particular national setting. The idea of a common Africa is attractive and strategic, truthful when it comes to form, content and diffusion, when backing color with some common content is the case, but misleading and, above all, inefficient when trying to appeal to people still well embedded in their local niches, engaged in their traditional, perhaps pre-modern or at least "hybrid" (García Canclini 1989) processes of production of subjectivity, entrenched in their own borders of alterity.

It is now due, I believe, an updated examination of the influence of African traditions in the New World of two emergent discussions in the literature. I refer here to two issues that have an impact on the way we come to understand the insertion of the African presence in the countries of this continent, presenting us with alternative avenues for that understanding. Depending on what side we place ourselves along the axes of these

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two questions, we will come out strolling along one avenue or the other. The first of these discussions can be synthetically portrayed as: is the stated ideal of miscegenation in Latin American countries a misleading myth or a legitimate utopia? The second: are the transnational political identities emerging under the pressures of globalization really representative of the shapes of alterity outside the centers commanding the process of their diffusion?

To these two questions, a third encompassing concern must be added. We may reasonably wonder if it is really possible to have a radical diversity of cultures in a full market regime or, what is relevant for us, here, to have Africa amidst America in a unified regime of economic rules.

These three broad questions are the indispensable framework within which it is possible to think the location of Africa in the nations of the New World today, and they will come about as I examine the presence of Africa within the Anglo and the Iberic national formations. I will use Brazil and the United States as paradigmatic examples in my analysis. These discussions are relevant because, in the first place, if we decide that the founding myth of Latin American nations is mere deception, then we have to endorse the notion that only after establishing segregation as the point zero of racial "truth" can we initiate a truly anti-racist politics and provide a legitimate stand for the African presence in our countries. Conversely, if we see, from our Latin American perspective, segregation, coming from the top or from the bottom, as a dystopia of conviviality, we will be compelled to envisage alternative political roads towards a society free of discrimination on the basis of race. We will also have to strive for a new consciousness of the pervading African presence in culture and society instead of a discrete African niche. Whichever choice we make, it urges a discussion of the contemporary trend that counterposes the multicultural matrix of the United States, which anchors minority politics in the field of culture on a substantive plane, to the now imputed "myth" of miscegenation and its denounced effacement of pluralism. It is my contention here that only within a well understood framework of national formation as idiosyncratic matrix of diversity is it possible to assess the fate of the African contribution in every national context in the New World.

Secondly, if we believe that all experience of alterity must be translated into identity politics, we will be ready to accept that traditional ways of interacting across the boundaries of race may be done away without a cost. However, we may choose not to believe this, and remain faithful to the idea that there is more than one modality of production of an African-related subjectivity and more than one strategy to defend the reproduction of Africa in the New World.

Finally, if we take the position that no Africa is possible within a full market regime, with all of its derivations, we will have to question our certainties concerning the worth of identity politics in a global world. This latter issue is probably the most decisive with regards to Africa, race and politics in the New World.

As an anthropologist, I am compelled, ethically and theoretically, to defend variety in human solutions, to disclose them, and to claim recognition and respect for them. However, to put it succinctly, if in other cases the moral dilemma has been how to introduce gender within the framework of race loyalties (see, for example, Williams 1996), here my dilemma is how to introduce nation within the African/racial struggle for rights. And I would even say that my difficulties are of a greater magnitude, since we live in an age

where the framework of the nation is looked upon and declared negligible as a variable in a world euphemistically represented as "globalized."

THE NORTH AMERICAN MYTH OF SEPARATION AND ITS CRITICS

In recent years, a handful of publications by North American authors have appeared assessing the situation of the African-American population in Brazil by comparison with the US. This generation of studies arrived to contradict and reject the views of a previous generation where the Brazilian "model," based on the idea of miscegenation, was considered to bring an alternative and, in that sense, to have an original contribution to make (Hellwig 1992). Contemporary authors not only contest the assumptions of economic determinism and the preeminence of class to explain exclusion in Brazil (see, for example, Nogueira's 1955, Andrews's 1991 and Winant's 1994 critiques of Fernandes 1969) but also dismiss the idea of a "mulatto escape hatch" (initially formulated by Degler 1971) to suggest miscegenation as a path to social ascension.

If a group of scholars, especially but not exclusively Brazilian (see, among others, Dzidzienyo 1971, do Nascimento 1978, Hasenbalg 1979 and n.d., Skidmore 1990, do Valle Silva and Hasenbalg 1992, and the collection of essays edited by Fontaine 1985) have contributed to critically dismiss miscegenation as a "myth," in the precise sense of a deceptive representation deployed to preserve the false notion of a Brazilian racial democracy, North American students have increasingly tended to focus on a comparison of the Brazilian situation with US's or, more precisely, to read the Brazilian scene from the North American perspective and experience using the latter as a model (see, specially, Gillian 1992, Winant 1994 and Hanchard 1994). Particularly revealing in this respect is the review by Anani Dzidzienyo presented on the back cover of Hellwig's book (1992): "... If as it is commonly argued, the United States is a standard against which other American polities are judged in the matter of race relations, then what more deeply felt source of insight than the observations of African Americans themselves?"

Besides Howard Winant (1994), with his proposal of a "racial formation," where race is a fact that cuts across contextual boundaries, perhaps the most representative author of this latter group is Michael Hanchard. His views about racial politics in Brazil (1993, 1994) and his proposal of a divided, overtly racialized (instead of unified and disputed) public sphere (1996 a) have been forcefully contested from Brazil (Fry 1995 a, 1995 b, 1996, Bairros 1996) and he has been engaged in this polemic for a while (Hanchard 1996 b and c). In order to make myself clear, I will pick up the parts of Hanchard's argument that better reveal my discrepancies with the position he represents. In line with his perspective, for example, Hanchard regrets the fact that no racially divided Christian churches, in the modalities known in South Africa, pre-Zimbabwe Rhodesia or the United States, existed in Brazil (Hanchard 1994: 83). "Afro-Brazilians" - says Hanchard - "[...] did not develop parallel institutions" of the kind Afro-North Americans did, and the *Candomble* religious organization should not be considered as such (1994: 18). It is also suggested that to look at *quilombos* (communities of descendants of runaway slaves) or at other traditional African institutions as a source of reference and strength is a "backward glance" (1994: 164ff.), the kind of glance towards an already lost Euridice who decided Orpheus's death in the Greek

myth. Considering Quilombos as facts of the past, the author grossly disregards the contemporary growing struggle of Brazilian maroon populations for their rights to the land (Leite 1991, Carvalho 1996,1997). Denying Afro-Brazilian religions the status of African institutions, he demonstrates a complete lack of ethnographic sensitivity for the national scene of his research. And one is, therefore, led to wonder why should he so forcefully deny the idiosyncrasies of Brazilian Black history and strategies. Moreover, reducing the whole problem to the development of the public sphere, Hanchard does not take notice of a lineage of social analysts who have repeatedly emphasized the dualities of the Brazilian normative system, which combines modern civil standards with traditional pre-modern relational principles (da Matta 1988,1995, Soares 1996), and, as opposed to North American practices, puts a premium on solidarity and face to face settlements in detriment of universal, abstract procedures (Cardoso de Oliveira 1997).

While criticizing what he sees as the "culturalist" perspective of the leaders of the Brazilian Black Movement - in detriment to a real immersion in a "cultural process" - he asserts that "[...] many of the working poor do *not* have a 'hidden transcript' [...], that is to say, a strategic agenda of private, ideological interests that contradict public articulations of either consent or material compliance with dominant actors in a given society" (1994: 71). This is well in tune with Hanchard's dismissal of Afro-Brazilian cultural institutions altogether to which I referred earlier. And one is left speculating about what, in this case, would be the content of the "cultural process" or the "culture of a deeply political process" he refers to. One is also led to suspect that the thesis's main proposition would be the plain transference of Afro-North American slogans, strategies and objectives to Brazil.

Hanchard's view of "culture" does not differ much from the very "culturalism" he rejects. The problem with the leaders of the Afro-Brazilian movement is not, as Hanchard's suggests, that they value too much Afro-Brazilian cultural symbols but, I believe, that they value them too little, unable to hear the voices that resound in them as inspirational. As Hanchard says, culture has been taken no more than in an emblematic fashion in an effort to counteract the constant appropriation of African symbols by the whole of the Brazilian nation and their consequent nullification for a political identity (Hanchard 1993: 59). The question, however, is not to re-"appropriate" the culture, in a new act of cannibalism, but, after we accept that there does exist a sound Afro-Brazilian transcript, to become able to learn, through a honest act of ethnographic "hearing" and dialogue, what the voices inscribed in it have been saying all along. In other words, the move should not be to "infuse" new meaning in the emblems, "politizing" them, but to look for what is codified in them and where could one find a plausible political strategy within them. Symbols do not constitute an ornamental, epiphenomenal secretion but convey values, choices, and a metaphorically expressed philosophy that all too often contradicts, in its own terms, state hegemony. In short, a "hidden transcript" is exactly what the Black working poor do have in Brazil. And it is a hidden transcript different from what North American Blacks have, and I will refer to this "difference" below. However, before moving to that point, I would like to call the attention to the weaknesses of the separatist modality of contestation in Black politics, which have been pointed out from several points of view. A critique of the essentialist premise in the understanding of ethnicity was laid down by Michael Fischer (1986), and the disputable consequences of the essentialist injunction upon the subject were convincingly argued, for example, by Anthony Appiah (1990 b, 1992, 1994). In more radical terms, the perils of segregation as defensive political strategy has been described

by Gerhard Kubik (1994) as "an assignment" proposed by the White to which the Black may be uncritically yielding. The politics of multiculturalism has also been questioned for putting forward canned, marketable identities of ethnics as labeled consumers (Segato 1997 a and b), where the social value of the citizen and that of the consumer do not merely converge but above all become indistinguishable from the social value of ethnicity, which ends up by being reduced to the latter (ongoing discussions in Brazilian Afro-oriented meetings about the one year old fashion magazine "Raça Brasil" (Race *Brazil*), inspired by its North American twin publication "Ebony," may come to shed an interesting light on this issue when published). More recently, some voices have manifested how a new set of representations of transnational, ethnic identities have been induced by the influence of transnational agents (Mato 1997) or through the interpellation of the national state itself, under the pressures of the globalizing process lead by those same agents (Gros 1997 a:55-6 and b).

Other authors have sensed the imposition of "hyperreal" or abstract identities to Indians, African-Americans or women (Ramos 1994, Mohanty 1984). And in influential texts, authors have pointed out the somewhat empty, artificially enforced regime of ethnicity in the US. Herbert Gans, in an already classical article (1979), termed "symbolic ethnicity" the reduction of ethnic traits to an almost merely emblematic function in the modern North American scene. And Werner Sollors (1986 and 1989) has emphasized how the North American classification of literary lineages in terms of ethnicity not only serves to keep borders in place but is quite devoid of content (in the United States, "the cultural *content* of ethnicity [...] is largely interchangeable and rarely historically authenticated," Sollors 1986:28). All this without even approaching the question of whether there is or not "whitening" in the US, since, despite the apparent loyalty to the "race" struggle on the part of African-Americans classified by descent, it is still possible to question the obvious and exemplary cosmetic "bleaching" of the artists of Black Entertainment Television.

From still a different set of concerns, Homi Bhabha criticized a dead, inert idea of "diversity" - in opposition to a dialogical and, of necessity, "hybrid" and lively production of difference - as being at the basis of "anodyne, liberal multiculturalism" (Bhabha 1994: 34). Peter McLaren tried to break through status quo notions of multiculturalism by suggesting a "critical" practice of it, which would imply a kind of difference in relationship, better propitiated in "border cultures" where a new *mestizo* consciousness or bric-a-brac subjectivity could arise. David Hollinger proposed a *post-ethnic* multiculturalist society where double ethnic loyalties would be possible and a matter of choice (Hollinger 1995: 21). Finally, writers like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy have stressed hybridity as an often silenced quality of African diasporic culture (Hall 1996 a: 472,474; Gilroy 1994:100)

The main point of my argument here, however, is not merely to pinpoint the pitfalls of racial politics in the U.S. but rather to emphasize the significance of the specific racial politics and "formation of diversity" (Segato 1997 a, 19976 b) within national contexts as the outcome of particular national histories. Although, as several authors have argued, it would not be correct to reduce race to ethnicity (see discussion in Goldberg 1993: 78), discerning racial conceptions, perceptions and patterns of discrimination in a national context provides us with strong clues about the place and role assigned to the African presence in that context. If, perhaps, racisms do not differ much in quantity or intensity, they do in the cognitive operations they imply. On the one hand, as Kwame Appiah (1990 a) has shown, they are grounded on implicit theoretical propositions of various kinds and,

on the other, as I contend, on encoded ethnic knowledge accumulated through diverse historical experiences. The paradigmatic cases of Brazil and the U.S. show that specific modalities of exclusion and ethnic conceptions are deeply related.

RACISMS AND THE PLACE OF AFRICA IN THE NEW WORLD: THE ETHNO-RACIAL PARADIGM FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND BACK

National Constructions of Race.

While the politics of minorities presents today a post-national, globalized trend very much influenced by the historical experience of African-North Americans, the features of racism are, as Stuart Hall has pointed, "modified and transformed by the historical specificity of the contexts and environments in which they become active" (Hall 1996 b: 472). So, not only nation cannot be disregarded as a frameworks for the production of particular forms of racism over time (as many authors have already pointed out, from Harris 1974 and Skidmore 1974 to an updated discussion in Sansone 1996) but, even more importantly today, local politics, strategies and slogans ought to be shaped out of these specificities. Not only diversity (ethnic or otherwise) is not a fact of nature but a production of history - where national constructions of diversity played a crucial role-, but also the tensions and discriminations along the lines of diversity have to be understood and dealt with accordingly. As far as Brazil and the United States are concerned, their race conceptions and racisms have been repeatedly reported as different in the literature. It is generally accepted today that race in Brazil is associated with phenotypical mark while in the U.S. it is linked to origin (Nogueira 1985); and that it depends on consent while in the U.S. it follows the compulsory rule of descent (Sollors 1986). For that reason, while the North American trend is to abolish ambiguity, in Brazil the road to ambiguous, negotiated and changeable affiliation is permanently left open. Color is open to interpretation (Maggie 1991, Sansone 1996, Viveiros de Castro 1996: 19).

Other characteristics place them apart as well. In Brazil, race is not a relevant factor in all and every situation, while in the U.S. it is an ever-present concern, a visible dimension of interaction, significant and discursively indicated in any social setting. For example, race is not a salient, recorded trait of Trade Union leaders or of the members of the Movement of Landless Workers, and introducing a segmentation by race in those popular fronts would be not only spurious but would also have disastrous consequences. Also, discrimination is never expressed, in Brazil, as a racism of contingents and enacted as aggression between belligerent groups, as in the U.S., but always assumes the form of virulent interpersonal aggression. Finally, while the Anglo-Saxon White is distinctly white in racial and genealogical terms due to the fact that racial mixture will inescapably signify exclusion from that category, the Brazilian White is polluted and insecure as a bearer of such status (Carvalho 1988) - for a variety of reasons involving either biological or cultural contamination, no Brazilian White is ever fully, undoubtedly white.

These differences are only understandable in relation to the ethnic formation in both nations. As Brackette Williams has shown, the nation has a decisive role in shaping its

internal diversity and fractures. She has spoken of "the process of nation building as race-making" (Williams 1989: 436; see also Allen 1995 for the origin of this structure in the racialization of the Irish by the British). From her observation of countries of Anglo-Saxon colonization (Guyana and the U.S.), Williams concludes that racial groups have been always constructed as a function of the unity of the nation, and have been expected to behave, then, as nothing less and nothing more than an "ethnic" component, the *Other* inside, in opposition to the so-believed "non-ethnic," dominant element (Williams 1993: 154). Seen this way, and within the histories studied by Williams and Allen, the circuit of nation and minority is circular, closed, self-feeding; a twofold, integrated reality; two sides of the same coin.

However, the articulations and the rhetoric of power within the nation and its internal cleavages in the countries of Iberic colonization are not the same. If we are to analyze, as Paul Gilroy did for England (1991), the ethnic bases for representing the nation in Brazil, we will have to accept that Brazil describes and institutes itself in its official texts as a nation of mixed blood. For example, when Gilroy states that "Phrases like 'the Island Race' and 'the Bulldog Breed' vividly convey the manner in which this nation is represented in terms which are simultaneously biological and cultural" where "the distinction between 'race' and nation" is erased (Gilroy 1991: 45), he exposes a difference with the Brazilian ethnic paradigm, where the "Brazilian race" is always presented as mixture, a "fable of the three races" (da Matta 1984). The representation of the nation puts a premium on blood mixture and a convergence of civilizations, whatever the practices that grow under that facade - a variety of authors have called the attention towards the role of miscegenation in the whole of Latin America as a deceptive racial ideology (see, for an updated discussion, Wade 1995; see also Maggie & Gonçalves 1995 for a sophisticated discussion of the Brazilian "triangle of the three races").

If, from top to bottom, the North American ethnic paradigm is based on separation under the umbrella of a common, colorblind myth of shared effort and meritocratic reward; in Brazil the ethnic paradigm is based on encompassing the other, inclusion is its strong motif, and the myth here is the colorblind myth of an interrelating people. I call the colorblind myth a unified field of belief, a hegemonic ideology or system of values, where everyone in a given society, independent of their position, may find expression. If separation is the lingua-franca of the whole society in the U.S., from top to bottom, relation is the key to access in the Brazilian social environment. To acknowledge this difference is not merely doing comparative ethnography but has important consequences when trying to deploy efficacious strategies for contestation.

The North American Ethnic Paradigm: reciprocating the gaze.

Analyzing the genesis of the *ethnic pentagon* that today organizes ethnicity in the U.S., David Hollinger recounts that the image of the *melting pot* was initially coined by Israel Zangwill to convey the idea of a social amalgam, that is, a single outcome from a variety of components. Nonetheless, it was later reinterpreted under the light of Horace Kallen's model of "cultural pluralism" with its analogy of a Symphonic Orchestra: "each instrument was a distinctive group transplanted from the Old World, making harmonious music with other groups. He emphasized the integrity and autonomy of each descent-defined group." This model prevailed and today takes the shape of an "ethnic pentagon" formed by African-Americans, Euro-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans and Latin-Americans. This is indeed a two-sided ethnic paradigm because, if today it is enforced as a way of controlling fairness in the distribution of jobs and other opportunities, it was originated from the process of "race making" described by Brackette Williams: "If the classical race theory of the nineteenth century is not directly behind the pentagon, this structure's architecture has its unmistakable origins in the most gross and invidious of popular images of what makes human beings different from each other. Yet it was enlightened antiracism that led to the manufacturing of today's ethno-racial pentagon out of old, racist materials" (Hollinger 1995: 32). Therefore, contestation is formulated, under that ethnic paradigm, in the same language as discrimination and, as I will show, that is not as removed from what happens in Brazil as Hanchard and authors of his generation believe. In this latter country, a paradigm of inclusion runs from the top to bottom of society, emanating from the classes that control the state as much as from those oppressed by them.

However, the main problem with the North American ethnic paradigm is not merely the consistency of the code of oppression with the code of contestation, but rather the fact that all the conflagrating parts strive under the same myth. This unification of the ideological field has grown steadily over time. So, we have a separated society but a common set of values, whereby, today, the excluded are not any longer protected by an alternative myth setting an alternative array of ends for life. Destitute from an alternative world, with its proper forms of solidarity and satisfaction, they are left abandoned to a nihilistic outlook (West 1993: 17ff.). At best, the nihilistic attitude can be interpreted as a practice of resistance (de Genova 1995), but always as reactive behavior rather than a positive proposition of withdrawal into a distinctive life-world. Within the hegemonic ideological frame of the North American nation, there seems to be no open avenue left for black dignity within alternative mores. We may be before a case of separation between *ethos* and *worldview*, where *ethos* has been reduced to diacritic, emblematic signs of separation as an interest group no longer related to the density of a specific worldview. With the unification of the ideological field, contestation becomes plain competition for the same ends.

Commenting on a media production, *The Cosby Show*, which is paradigmatic for understanding the unification of the ideological field, Herman Gray states that "*The Cosby Show* [...] appealed to the *universal* themes of mobility and individualism" (Gray 1995: 89). "It is a separate-but-equal inclusion. In this television world, blacks and whites are just alike save for minor differences of habit and perspective [...] African Americans face the same experiences, situations, and conflicts as whites except for the fact that they remain separate but equal" (Gray 1995.: 87). This is, evidently, the dominant, all pervading myth

of meritocratic individual achievement in the U.S.. But, contrary to what the author states, it is not universal. "America," as a set of national values stamped by its Anglo-Saxon, white foundation, seems to have definitely taken over. Only blackness is retained as a platform for claiming, but the claims themselves have turned "white."

Cornell West (1993: 17ff.) has described the "nihilism" of excluded Blacks in North America, and has also dated its origins to the post-civil rights era. In this sense, nihilism is coeval with the process of inclusion of African-North American in the market as producers and consumers of growing importance. His description of the lack of meaning and purpose, as well as of the self-destructive drive that has installed itself among poor, marginalized - newly peripheralized, in my own vocabulary - Black North Americans is touching. But, unfortunately, he falls short from analyzing the coincidence between the timing of unprecedented access to opportunities by a part of the Black North American population, and the fall into the nihilist attitude of the ones excluded from this process. It seems reasonable to conclude that the loss of a truly alternative set of mores, that is to say, the decline of an African American traditional space, speaking in properly ethnic terms, is directly linked to the expansion of the market rule. An analysis of this kind would certainly raise painful doubts about the true character of the achievements brought about by the struggle of the sixties, but would nevertheless lead to important, unavoidable questions as regards the kind of ideological commitments and compromises that came together with new opportunities. Without a thorough examination of the myth lurking behind the jobs, professions, privileges, responsibilities and obligations now embraced by the Blacks, no Black North American activist is fully entitled to address Brazilians in the patronizing tone adopted by Hanchard and others, lest the self-destructive nihilism described by West reaches to the farthest corners, where alterity still has a place and the negative experience of being at the margins of the rule of the market has not yet fully taken over.

In his classic essay on the relevance of Gramsci for the study of race and ethnicity, Stuart Hall forcefully argues against the view that the economic foundation has a unifying impact with regards to social subjects. In his view, capital not only does not make the socio-cultural field homogeneous but can even prevent this uniformization: "[...] what we actually find is the many ways in which capital can preserve, adapt to its fundamental trajectory, harness and exploit these particularistic qualities of labour power, building them into its regimes. The ethnic and racial structuration of the labour force, like its gendered composition, may provide an inhibition to the rationalistically conceived 'global' tendencies of capitalist development. And yet, these distinctions have been maintained, and indeed *developed and refined*, in the global expansion of the capitalist mode" (1996 b: 436). Hall's view may hold true for Britain, the Caribbean or even Brazil. In Britain, particularly, a strong labour movement shares today the political arena with minorities' political awareness. However, in conditions of extreme market enshrinement as one can witness in the U.S., where the imperatives of productivity and profit scarcely leave room for a residue of gratuity or gift in human social relationships, the full market economy is not innocuous anymore for the field of culture. What I mean is that it is no longer clear whether, under the totalizing shadow of the market (which is nearly the present situation in the U.S.), any kind of socio-cultural arrangements can continue flourishing disencumbered. I would say that, from the point of view of culture, full market rule is monopolistic. Enshrined and sacralized, ruling above any other set of values, the market does not allow for lesser gods. And other gods are needed to have a plurality of cultures in a radical sense, a multiethnic

society. This is so because the economic system is not, as it is increasingly seen, outside, above and exempt from the cultural realm, but in itself a cultural choice, intertwined with other cultural aspects in society.

Adapting Habermas' expression, the market economy has thoroughly colonized the life-world and, in this condition, one does not see where and how values other than the maximization of productivity and profit can find a legitimate place under the sun. This situation, I think, is new, and allows for an understanding of globalization as the expansion of the rules of the market to encompass all aspects of social life and overdetermine not only locality but *also* minority groups. In other words, I cannot envisage how, under this pressure, a group can subsist bearing a different view about the meaning of resources, their mode of production and destination in human life. And divergent conceptions about what are resources and to what end they serve are better indicators of ethnic plurality than those of who seize them in society. What Stuart Hall calls "the differentiated terrain" of ideology, with its "different discursive currents, their points of juncture and break and the relations of power between them" (1996 b: 434) should not refer merely to discrepancies with regards to who accedes to profit, but about what profit is and how is to be obtained and used. Only this would be able to provide for a radical diversity and multiculturalism in a strong sense.

From my Latin American situated perspective, my perception is that this terrain of true cultural dissent is being progressively banished from the social field, and the U.S. leads this process, even when its intellectuals and activists disseminate a racial politics based on the particular experience of Blacks in the U.S.

Moreover, Hall's insistence in acknowledging heterogeneity (of class, gender, race, etc.) within the capitalist economy does not imply that Blacks, just because of the color of their skin, will safely secure a territory of culture. That is, it does not imply that blackness, by itself, guarantees difference and ethnicity. When the "structures of feeling, producing, communicating and remembering" that Paul Gilroy (1994: 3) calls the "black Atlantic world" cease to be foundational for the constant reproduction of an alternative (though constantly negotiating and dialogical) niche of culture, and become just an ornamental residue of a previous difference in the strong sense, then, a fashionable tribal diacritic set of signs take over and start behaving as market emblems linking particular "ethnically" marked merchandise to a population of "ethnically" marked consumers - in a more constrained and less creative relationship between consumption and citizenship than the one proposed by Nestor García Canclini (1995). This "canned" ethnicity so characteristic of the U.S. does not necessarily correspond to an ethnic discourse, and does not constitute a real alternative to total integration and the thorough eradication of marks of difference.

From the perspective I am talking here, in a context like the North American one, ethnic politics within a unified ideological field must of necessity mean competition for the same resources, and not the properly political conflict between diverging views on resources. This is true for a society where hegemony, in Gramsci's terms, is totalizing, and where, despite outward appearances, diversity, in the strong sense of diverse conceptions about resources, their production and usufruct, have been overridden. Even religion, which usually plays the role of warranting diversity in this strong sense of content, has been largely homogenized behind the façades of ornamental diacritic: "in the United States of America [...] a particular form of Bible interpretation has served as a rationale for the whole country as well as for many ethnic groups"(Sollors 1986: 39). Individual dropping out is

the only available road to escape. In strictly anthropological, Geertzian terms, a difference exists not only when a distinctive style or ethos is present under the form of diacritical signs, but when there is some form (even hybrid from the point of view of the cultural materials it incorporates) of alternative conception with regards to the finality and meaning of social life, that is to say, a non integrated system of values and worldview. This alternative conception will certainly involve priorities other than maximization of profit and productivity and will certainly imply a degree of dysfunctionality with the rule of the market (as Hall points out). Continuing with this line of argumentation, when a minority group fights for or expands its access to its rights to a larger share in profit and power, what matters is not the amount of wealth or power that becomes available to it but to what extent it imposes a change on the meaning and destination of that profit or power. An example of this is provided by Paul Gilroy (1991:32) talking about the "New kinds of solidarity and new patterns of communication" imprinted by the participation of women in the English coal strike of 1984-5. My point here is that, under certain conditions of extreme pressure by the rule of the market as is the case of social movements in the U.S. today, it becomes increasingly unattainable for gender and race struggles to preserve such forms of alternative solidarity, and the radically diverging values that support them are inevitably receding

We fall back into the trap of some kind of formulation of a "culture of poverty," where, by means of the action of the overpowering rhetoric of the myth of individual achievement and unlimited profit, poverty is the only thing left as culture to the Blacks who do not participate in the White myth. Where is Africa, then, in the US? Shall we accept once and for all the equation of Africa with poverty? Is there nothing left as "African" outside of material deprivation? Is there anything at all in between this and its assigned reversal of a minority-within-a-minority of achievers in White terms? Is politics to be merely reduced to a struggle for a share in the profit, while forgetting to reflect about the very nature of profit and satisfaction? Is this not the shipwreck of Africa, left over by the American myth? To find an alternative, to find a true territory of culture, we have to find alternative mythical spaces, with alternative sets of values, and produce, from it, a carefully articulated alternative rhetoric: a politics of radical difference. This myth will not be an encapsulated, solipsistic myth, because none of the working myths are, but a living one: a myth in relationship, a negotiating, conversational platform; hybrid by the interlocutory inclusions processed through history; an inscription of ethnic history and aspirations, and also a commentary on the *Other*, an encoded inscription of White history in ethnic terms. I contend that, in Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, radical alterity - in these non fundamentalist, non essentialist terms - still exists, and that the Afro-American world continues to be truly diverse and diverging, and continues to speak of a lively Africa.

The Brazilian Ethnic Paradigm: repatriating the gaze.

A similar analysis of the Brazilian case will certainly shed light on what I have said so far. In Brazil, the market has not colonized life to the extent it has in the U.S. Besides the problem that is usually called exclusion or social apartheid, which alludes to the population who live at the margins and under the shadow of the market economy as a periphery in relation to it, there is an *other* population. This does not mean that this *other* population is closed upon itself, unrelated to the market economy, but that is not fully engulfed by its myths and continues to comply with its own traditional values. By the same token, it is possible to say that, while some parts of Brazil, those fully engaged in a quest for modernity, can be said to be a periphery - economically, socially and culturally - of the technologically developed world, there still is a cultural *Other*. This *other* culture becomes interpreted as a culture of poverty, exclusively defined by lack and default, only when seen from the perspective of the economic centers - Post-colonial writing also sometimes implies the idea that the periphery is the only available space (geographical, cultural, ideological) for otherness. But it is important to recognize the existence of an *other* space, where material indigence may be the case but also cultural density and symbolic wealth of an *other* kind. So, although, through the process of *globalization*, the simultaneous engulfing and peripheralization of the radically *other* world is a growing reality, it is also true that, as long as there remain autonomous enclaves not fully engulfed by the inexorable logic of the market, there will be alternative myths, with incompatible conceptions of resources and exotic notions of what to do with them and how to reach satisfaction. These conceptions are seen, often, by modernizing agents as simply "dysfunctional beliefs."

The Afro-Brazilian traditions are one such set of conceptions and a very important niche of culture preservation and creativity. These traditions have inscribed a monumental African *codex* containing the accumulated ethnic experience and strategies of African descendents as part of a nation, as well as the record of their perception of that national setting and their place in it. This *codex* tells us, in its own metaphoric language, not only about religion but, also, about the relationships between Blacks and the White State (Segato 1995 a, 1995 b). It contains a most stable repertoire of images that make up a truly alternative myth, and the forms of conviviality they enforce spread far, affecting the society at large, well beyond the niches of orthodoxy where the work of elaboration and preservation of this *codex* takes place. In this sense, this codex operates as a stable reservoir of meaning from which flows a capilar, informal, and fragmentary impregnation of the whole of society. At certain corners of society, its presence becomes diffuse and tenuous, but it is there.

Evidence of this, for instance, was gathered by Yvonne Maggie (1992) in the courts of Rio de Janeiro, from the trials for witchcraft between 1912 and 1945, showing that judges and defendants shared a common set of beliefs. It is always visible and at hand for everyone, under the form of therapeutic services, aesthetic inspiration, as a source of answers about the meaning of the most varied circumstances of life, or even as a symbolic repertoire to locally process the materials of other religions (I refer here particularly to popular Catholicism and the varieties of Pentecostalism proliferating in Brazil, Segato 1997 a). A similar idea is also supported by Gilberto Velho (1992), when he sees belief in spirits and the experience of possession as the most extensive and agglutinating practice of the Brazilian social scene as a whole. This loose (in the sense of not really organic,

consistent or rationally articulated) penetration in all levels of Brazilian society depends, in turn, upon the existence of enclaves of orthodoxy preserved by the most conservative temple-houses. They do not dominate the cultural scene of the country but are among the references that secure its heterogeneity in the field of culture. Also, these enclaves guarantee the non-peripheral kind of alterity whose space is receding in the U.S., after the market economy and its own, inexorable, precepts took over the black enclaves and made recede positive "dysfunctional" forms of traditional solidarity, gratuity and gift.

However, as I have contended elsewhere (Segato 1995 a, 1995 b), the philosophy and the politics espoused by this *other* codex cannot be racialized and transformed into a racial politics, though this should not be understood as an indication of weakness, as Hanchard would have it, but as a consequence of strength. Paradoxical as it may seem, the philosophy contained in this codex resists racialization because it perceives itself as bigger than race and aspires to universality. Significantly, it perceives itself as encompassing, embracing the White. All Whites are seen, sooner or later, knowingly or unknowingly, as subject to its logic. Its recent process of expansion towards new, "white" territories in Argentina, Uruguay, Spain, Italy and Portugal proves this aspiration well founded (Segato 1991, 1996). The introduction of Afro-Brazilian religious lineages into a country like Argentina, where African presence had, as generally accepted by historians, mysteriously faded away (Andrews 1980), shows the strength of an "African ancestry" not based on commonality of blood, in North American terms, but on commonality in belief and on philosophical community. Indeed, the part of Brazil that more forcefully expanded into the so-perceived "white" countries of the South in the last years is the Black part. African Brazil is seen by many there as a source of Religion, Art, well being, Philosophy, therapeutic knowledge and civilizing potential. Black is also an exporting force, through trade with the South, though informally in most cases, in the paraphernalia related to the cults. The expansive potential of Afro-Brazilian culture and the ability of its brokers is evidenced by the highly elaborated altars of the newly formed cult-houses of Montevideo and Buenos Aires, where twenty years ago there were none.

The "encompassing," universal element of Afro-Brazilian culture is inscribed in the religious *codex* as a precept for inclusiveness, preventing, as I said, racialization and hindering the participation of the bearers of the African tradition in Brazil in any politics based on an ethnic divide. As a prestigious priest told me, recently: "that would be overtly political. Our *ase* (power) lies somewhere else." This inclusive determination could be read as a text expressing the perception, on the part of Afro-Brazilians, of three historical processes that are characteristic of the Brazilian formation.

The first is the syncretic, pan-African substratum that must have begun constituting itself inside the slaveships during the very journey from Africa to America, and continued in the New World structuring an African environment in Brazil along the lines of artificially architected religious "nations." In this recreation of Africa in Brazil, openness to individuals of any origin was and continues to be the rule and, also, the clue to understanding the survival and gradual expansion of the whole system. The second speaks of the thoroughly mixed breeding that forms the basis of contemporary Brazilian population, including the elites, with regards to their racial composition; that is to say, the perception of the formation of Brazilian society through massive miscegenation. The third speaks of the deep mingling and interpenetration of the European environment of the landowners by Afro-Brazilian culture, mingling that took and continues to take place in the

intimacy of so-called "white" households, starting early in life and long ago in history with the socialization of white children by Black nurses.

The popular voices that speak in the Afro-Brazilian codex take notice of these three processes and transform to their advantage the ethnic, biological and cultural mergings that took place in history, turning them into a fundamental piece of their philosophy, as evidence of the strength and scope of the African presence in Brazil. If we are to apply the Gramscian view that there are ethical, moral and cultural aspects of hegemony, we conclude that, in Brazil, the *ethical state* has failed in raising "the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling class" (Gramsci 1971: 258, quoted by Hall 1996 b: 429). In this sense, the state was forced to, at the least, share this encompassing, *ethical*, function with Black enclaves that actively produce and expand African culture through the nation and beyond.

Perhaps we have here a peculiar aspect of what Stuart Hall, in his forceful criticism of essentialisms (including even the "strategic essentialism" proposed by Gayatri Spivak) has described as the inherent dialogic and hybridity of Black culture (1996 b: 472 and 474) but, in this particular case, I believe, transformed into the pillar of its very strength. In its specificity, this codex in no case presents the essentialist "mystical Africentrism" or "anti-assimilationist unintelligibility" Paul Gilroy (1994: 100) criticizes as a trait of some hard-line Black music styles but hammers precisely on the opposite key: its universality. This is so not because it denies its Africanness (as in the anti-essentialist position also mapped by Gilroy), or because it is hybrid and dialogical as a product (as Hall and Gilroy say of diasporic Black culture), but because it intends to talk for all and it represents itself as an all embracing and agglutinating tradition - its messages assumed to be relevant as much for an African Brazilian as for a Chinese person. In this also lay its capacity for survival and growth in the most adverse circumstances.

However, I need to emphasize that it is not the fact of these multiple mergings that is at stake here, but its perception and transcription into an encoded knowledge. Charles Lemert, in an article investigating "the dark side of self," reports on a North American clinical case that can be considered to be very close to the Brazilian experience. A white, middle class, North American male discovered in therapy a black caretaker who played the role of a mother-figure in his childhood: "David came to realize that, if he had an emotionally satisfying relation with an adult in his family of origin, it had been with Annie [...] Annie was, in effect, David's mother. David is white. Annie is black." So, Lemert wonders: "If Annie was David's mother, in whatever sense, in what sense is David White?" To conclude: "This is a question about which our culture does not permit us to talk. For David to consider that in *some* sense he might think of himself as something other than white, perhaps even black, is a thought that contradicts strong-we claims at their foundation" (Lemert 1994: 110). And this is exactly where the divide lies with the Brazilian environment. In fact, the African codex in Brazil does tell the White of this "dark side" (literally and metaphorically) of their self by appointing it the tutelage of an African deity, by encompassing it within the African tradition, by offering it engagement in an African religious genealogy. The problem is that, within the North American cultural climate, the self will have to produce, sooner or later, a "narrative of conversion" (Sollors 1986: 31). That is, it will be mandatory to opt, sooner or later, into a clear and exclusive identity affiliation, either within a strong-we position (identified with whiteness and universality) or

a weak-we position (identified with an ethnic mark). While in Brazil this option is not mandatory or even meaningful and the possibility of a permanent ambiguity will remain open. In fact, the "dark," African self will constantly and explicitly aspire to particularity and universality simultaneously. The model is not mechanical, allows for ambivalence and multiple affiliations, and places a premium on transits.

Moreover, though in Brazil any strong sense of self of the White is impeached by the African codex, Blacks do not imitate the movement of the White self into a concretion but simply undermine the pretension of "purity" in ethnic identity, challenging the blood principle and all racial determinations (Segato 1995 b). In this way, the philosophy of the Afro-Brazilian religious *codex* can be said to avoid the pitfalls of what Anthony Appiah calls "intrinsic racism," with its "moral error" (Appiah 1990 a:12) and its fallaciously restrictive "familism." In Brazil, religious genealogies open to all and anyone through a ritual vow, together with the universal value attributed to the orixas to speak about human personality and predict behavior, create a sense of community and solidarity available to all, independently of origin. Supported by these two pillars, this philosophy counterposes a true alternative to Whiteracist essentialism, setting itself free from the trap the latter poses to a Black sense of self - a trap that confines it within a rigid, essentialist, substantive definition of selfhood and identity, typical of the monological dominant style of Western civilization.

At the same time, the cultural materials are hybrid and malleable themselves, as Hall and Gilroy point out, incorporating elements from other religious traditions like Catholicism, native Indian beliefs and even, lately, Eastern religions. The universalistic pretension is matched here by a great dynamism in the proliferation and appropriation of materials for the symbolic repertoire. Therefore, with regards to its contents, it does not represent an essentialist position either. However, its originality lies in its militant proposition of an idea of a universal Africa, which, though ever changing, Brazilian and diasporic, can be located as a reservoir of meaning for all. Finally, it never slips into an Africentric position, due to its radically pluralistic outlook. Of course, the main question remains of whether there exist Black and White traditions or if there are only people of different origins participating in varied traditions. The culture I have dealt with seems to be clear in stating that it represents a corpus of knowledge originally created by Africans and African descendants in the New World but which has been adamant to include in its lineages people from any ancestry.

With regards to the "White" elites, of course they are in an extremely fragile position under this flexible, diffuse resistance. Their apprehension of the various mergings with the Black component has important consequences, to the extent that it can be maintained that white racism in Brazil is not, as in the U.S., the outcome of a barrier that separates and excludes "We" from "Them," that is to say, a discrimination of two mutually exclusive cultural, ethnic, social territories with its political and economic implications. "Racism" in Brazil, denominates a quite different cognitive operation, whereby a great proximity, intimacy and even identity with the Black "other" has to be exorcised - hence the extreme virulence and passion it sometimes involves - always on an individual, interpersonal basis and never as a confrontation of one community against another so characteristic of U.S. racist behavior. It is the outcome of an I/thou, intimate interracial relationship that was there, continues to be lurking in the background of "white" self formation, and it has to be repelled. Racist hatred, in Brazil, is the outcome of the horror caused by this very private secret carried by

families: the twilight memory of the black great-grandmother, the violently repressed oedipal love for the Black wet nurse. Racism in Brazil is a purge that starts from the inside of the "white" being, a fear (and uncertainty) of being contaminated somewhere. It has to do with intimacy, with relatedness, not with ethnic distance and fear of aliens. "Whiteness" in Brazil is impregnated by "blackness." "Whiteness," in Brazil, as a sign of safe, uncontested status, is never fully achieved, never certain (Carvalho 1988). These complexities would call for a politics able to touch the Achilles' heel of such a structure, a structure leaning more on a psychological and status based, pre-modern (patriarchal) organization, than on a categorical, modern, contractual one.

My analysis takes us, undoubtedly, close to Gilberto Freyre's classic thesis of 1933, also supporting the idea of a Brazil, in his terms, fully contaminated by the African presence. A White Brazil that hides a black spot, a mark of Africa in the skin, concealed somewhere. A Brazil where Black and White do not estrange each other to the extent they do in the U.S. This thesis' ultimate meaning was identified with an attack on modernity and modernizing forces (Needell 1995), and Ricardo Benzaquem de Araujo (1994: 133) also asserts that, in Gilberto Freyre's account, with the modernization of the economic forms of exploitation and the transformation of the traditional slave-owning household, the "casa grande," into the modern wealthy mansion, the "sobrado," "the less patriarchal they grew, the more *excluding* they became, turning into a more conventional type of aristocratic domination, founded on difference but also, and mainly, on separation." Therefore, the entrance into a full modernity, here, becomes related to a particular kind of race relations that follow the apartheid pattern. The pre-modern, traditional system, as known in Brazil, was and continues to be marked by interpersonal hierarchical relationships. They are based on different assumptions and work according to different systems of rules. Racism, in this sense, is an entirely modern attitude, a correlate of the modern laws that enforce equality and freedom for all.

In fact, in the Freyrian model, the Brazilian traditional arrangement for race relations appears opposite to the "modern" American landscape, where two social groups with clear borders compete for resources of various kinds. In the former, power is exerted amidst promiscuity and intimacy ("excess" in Benzaquem de Araujo's vocabulary); in the latter, in open confrontation.

However, there are several substantial differences between my contention here and what could be perceived as neo-Freyrism. Though I will not enumerate them all, two are the most relevant for the scope of my present argument. The first has to do with the fact that I do point at the existence of a virulent racist attitude and feeling in Brazil against people of black color, while suggesting the examination of the complexities and ambivalences of the subject of such feelings and attitudes. My focus is on a critique of the kind of mental and affective processes that are at stake, and my contention is that the cognitive, psychological operations at work in Brazil are of a different kind and embedded in a different structure of relationships than those in the U.S. But my ultimate end takes me far apart from Freyre's in that I intend this whole comparative exercise as a contribution for the formulation of an adequate politics to fight racism in Brazil. Any good strategy will only result from awareness of this difference and therefore demands an adequate examination of the peculiar processes that lie behind the Brazilian form of racism. The second difference between my thesis and that of Freyre and the neo-Freyrians is that I contend that the people identified with the Black enclaves of the Afro-Brazilian religious

orthodoxy are themselves claiming that their culture encompasses White culture. The scope and pervasiveness of African culture in Brazil, according to my interpretation, is inscribed in the Afro-Brazilian religious codex itself. Therefore, though I seem to confirm Freyre's idea of Brazil thoroughly impregnated by Black presence, this is not understood as a benign, conceding trait on the part of the land-owning elite, but a revindication of Black discourse by itself, and for itself. Accordingly, my point here is that what I found in the field of Afro-Brazilian religions is that the agents of Black culture themselves raise this point, thus changing the ideological sign of this statement. If an equivalent of the American "soul food" of the Southern Black is absent in Brazil, in the sense that the whole of the population eats from it (Fry 1982), this is not the outcome of a process of expropriation and cannibalization of Black symbols by Brazilian society at large but, much to the contrary, the result of a strong African presence that has invaded and conquered the White cultural space in an irreversible process. Any wise politics for a racially fair society in Brazil, I argue, has to take advantage of this precedent. Either we take this piece of popular wisdom and translate it into political discourse, into the stuff of which slogans are made of, or anti-racist politics will either twist and colonize the Brazilian environment or never reach a capacity for interpellation able to mobilize people outside the group of Brazilian Black intellectuals who, following the North American agenda, have lost contact with their cultural and social basis.

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