RECONSTRUCTING RACE

Racism, Culture and Mestizaje in Latin America

Culturalist definitions of race have been central to the invention of Latin American nations. Key to those definitions has been the concept of racial mixture—*mestizaje*—which remains a highly contested concept.

Cuzqueños *celebrating the feast day of the Lord of Miracles in October 2000*

BY MARISOL DE LA CADENA

One of the most puzzling, disconcerting phenomena that the non-native visitor confronts while traveling in Latin America is the relative ease with which pervasive and very visible discriminatory practices coexist with the denial of racism. Although, of late, new social movements have challenged the "normality" of this practice, it has not subsided. The usual local explanation our traveler might receive—whether in metropolitan centers like Lima, Bogotá or Santiago, or in provincial cities like Cuzco, Cali or Temuco—is that the discriminatory behavior, practiced both by the elite and the dispossessed, is not racism because it is based on cultural differences and not on skin color or any other biological marker. Race is not important in Latin America, our foreign friend would also be told; it is ethnicity that matters.

These responses, far from whimsical or innocuous social conventions, are at the crux of Latin American racial formations. These modern practices that acquit discriminatory practices of racism, and legitimize them by appealing to culture, are expressions of the intellectual and political history through which, in most of Latin America, "culture" has been racialized and thus enabled to mark differences. Moreover, within this culturalist definition, race could be biology, but it could also be the soul of the people, their culture, their spirit and their language Thus, within the Latin American racial field, phenotype (skin, hair, and eye color as well as facial features) could be subordinated to "culture" as a marker of difference. If our fellow traveler ignores this background, she will be puzzled upon the realization that brown-skinned individuals can be white and Indian-looking fellows do not self-identify as Indians.

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To help our imaginary traveler understand the modern history of race in Latin America, I would invite her to start by reading the following dialogue (recreated by myself) between the French Anglophile Gustav Le Bon and the Mexican thinker José Vasconcelos.

Gustav Le Bon: The influence of race in the destiny of peoples appears plainly in the history of the perpetual revolutions of the Spanish republics in South America Composed of individuals whose diverse heredities have dissociated their ancestral characteristics, these populations have no national soul and therefore no stability A people of half-castes is often ungovernable.

José Vasconcelos Hidalgo, Morelos, Bolívar, Petion the Haitian, the Argentines in Tucumán, Sucre all were concerned with the liberation of slaves, with the declaration of equality of all men by natural right, and with the civil and social equality of Whites, Blacks and Indians In a moment of historical crisis, they formulated the transcendental mission assigned to that region of the globe: the mission of fusing all peoples ethnically and spiritually.[1]

Similar discussions were at the core of the creation of the scientific definition of race in the late nineteenth century. Although race was not questioned then, and disputes were not aimed at subverting its existence, Le Bon and Vasconcelos could not have disagreed more on their views of *mestizaje*. While North Atlantic thinkers, like Le Bon, imagined Latin Americans as hybrids and thus potentially—if not actually– degenerates, Latin American intellectuals tended to praise the benefits of racial mixture, and proposed "constructive miscegenation."[2] They thus reversed anti-hybrid arguments and, as illustrated in Vasconcelos' quote, placed the "spirit" at the center of their projects. Yet, since racial markers could include some biological aspects, physical characteristics were not canceled out. Rather, they were subordinated to the superior might of morality, which although innate, was perceived as susceptible of being improved through education. This brings me to a second invented dialogue—and intrinsic discrepancy—this time between Le Bon and the Limeño anarchist Manuel Gonzales Prada.

Gustav Le Bon: A Negro or a Japanese may easily take a university degree or become a lawyer, the sort of varnish he thus acquires is however quite superficial and has no influence in his mental constitution. What no education can give him, because they are created by heredity alone, are the forms of thought, the logic, and above all the character of the Western man. Our Negro or our Japanese may accumulate all possible certificates without ever attaining to the level of the average European. . It is only in appearance that a people suddenly transforms its language, its constitution, its beliefs or its arts.

Manuel Gonzales Prada Whenever the Indian receives instruction in schools or becomes educated simply through contact with civilized individuals, he acquires the same moral and cultural level as the descendants of Spaniards [3]

For the French thinker, racial essences were inalterable, fixed and determined by heredity; thus education could only polish external appearances. Most Peruvians, whether anarchists or conservatives, could not have disagreed more. "Thanks to education, man can today transform the physical milieu and even the race. It is his most glorious triumph," asserted the Peruvian aristocrat Javier Prado, thus coinciding with his political rival, the radical Gonzales Prada. And these beliefs could become state policies.[4]

Culturalist definitions of race, which endowed education with almost eugenic might, were central to the invention and legislation of Latin American nations. They were supported by ubiquitous images in which erratic combinations of heredity, nature, climate, culture, and history resulted in distinctively identifiable spirits or souls of the races that peopled the world. In Peru, the case I know best through personal experience and academic analyses, the culturalist tendencies of racial thought were reaffirmed and sharpened by *indigenismo*. At the turn of the century this was a nationalist doctrine that anchored the Peruvian nation in its pre-Hispanic past, and most specifically in the Inca legacy. Artists, literary writers, and politicians, *indigenistas* are usually identified only after their pro-Indian leanings. Yet they were especially explicit in defining race through culture. Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, a Cuzco resident historian and lawyer, and the undisputed intellectual leader of this nationalist movement, was exceptionally clear in this respect. Valcárcel believed that the essential peculiarities of a people were determined by what he called their history. In his view, culture was the imprecise concept, yet powerful force, that determined races:

> The universal relationship between human beings and the natural world is resolved through culture We are the offspring, that is, the heirs, of a being that has been shaped by the interaction of Nature and Culture We repudiate the idea that spontaneous generation, mutation, or any form of biological life determine history because they lack history [5]

Referring to the interconnectedness of race and culture, the historian of anthropology George Stocking remarked that U.S academics, used "race" as "a catchall that could be applied to various human groups whose sensible similarities of appearance, of manner, and of speech persisted over time, and therefore were to them, evidently hereditary " There was, he said "no clear line between cultural and physical elements or

Townspeople of Maras, Cuzco dress as Inca warriors during the feast of Moray Raimi, a November ritual that gives thanks to the Earth

between social and biological heredity."[6] Peruvians therefore were not exceptional in conflating race and elements of what we now consider "culture." Neither were they the only ones to postulate the eugenic might of education to improve the races. In fact, this was common to other racial projects that optimistically rejected the dominance of heredity in determining race. What I find peculiar about Peruvian racial thought and racial relations during this period, is that there existed a tendency to subordinate manifest phenotypic markers to allegedly invisible racial characteristics such as "intelligence" and "morality." This attitude, in turn, was expressed through a certain dismissal of whiteness. For example, discarding European forms of whiteness as marks of racial status, the conservative writer Manuel Atanasio Fuentes reported: "In Lima, even those men who immediately descend from the European race have a *trigueño* color [literally 'like wheat,' light brown] which is pale and yellowed."[7]

Indeed, the Latin American academic ambivalence towards whiteness represented a significant difference with the experience of, for example, Franz Fanon, whose intellectual sophistication, he declared, did not remove the derogatory fact of his black skin: "No exception was made for my refined manners, or my knowledge of literature, or my understanding of the quantum theory."[8] In Peru instead, trigueño whiteness provided racial sanctuary to the mostly brown-skinned elites across the country. Yet, obviously, the sanctuary was not class-blind. Rather, it was couched in the ideology of decency, a racialized class practice, according to which an individual's skin color marked him or her depending on the moral standards reflected by his/her level of education. *Mestizos* started where decency ended: they were called "*cholos*"and were considered immoral and corrupted. Anti-mestizo daily life feelings were academically authorized by *indigenistas*, who borrowed from North Atlantic thinkers (those that they had otherwise contested) the idea that races degenerated if they were moved from their proper geographical places. "Every personality, every group is born within a culture and can only live within it," wrote Valcárcel, who finished his sentence: "the mixing of races only produces deformities." From this view, mestizos were ex-Indians who had abandoned their proper natural/cultural environment—the countryside—and migrated to the cities. There, Valcárcel claimed, they degenerated morally. The same author claimed: "The impure Indian woman finds refuge in the city. Flesh of the whorehouse, one day she will die in the hospital."[9]

Thus, while opposing terminal racial hierarchies, the culturalist definition of race had room for discrimination flowing from purist racial-cultural views and their dictum of sexual morality. Mestizaje was the impure consequence of rape or female sexual deviance. It had resulted in mestizos: sexually irrepressible, culturally chaotic, and therefore immoral social beings. Hence, cholos represented not biological, but moral degeneration, stirred by the alteration of the original order, by an inappropriate cultural environment, and furthered by a deficient education. The elite, regardless of skin color and of cultural mixture, were sheltered from the stains of mestizaje. They were educated, occupied their racial proper places—both geographically and socially—and thus lived within the dictum of moral order. They were *gente decente*, decent people, people of worth. Men were gentlemen, their women were ladies, and as such they displayed appropriate sexual behavior. *Caballeros* were responsible patriarchs and *damas* virtuous women, but more importantly *decencia* inspired them to fall in love with each other, thus preventing the transgression of racial boundaries. Sexual disorder was not normal among gente decente; it was the attribute of urban commoners, the mestizos. Being mestizo in Peru was a racialized class fact, where class was not only judged in terms of income but of education and origin.

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None of the above means that mestizaje lacked supporters in Peru. On the contrary, it was championed by a broad array of politicians, from reactionary partisans of General Francisco Franco to anti-imperialist supporters of César Augusto Sandino. Yet it never became an official, state-led, nation-building project. This might have been the result of its exclusionary class nature, according to which only commoners were mestizos. But it could have also been one of the hidden legacies of *indigenismo*. Valcárcel became Minister of Education in the 1940s, and since then, either overtly or surreptitiously, *indigenismo* has inspired significant official educational policies. Key to *indigenista* success and relative consensus might have been Valcárcel's idea of "unity in diversity" which he presented as the context for his rural education program in a 1946 speech to the national Congress. Through this program, the Minister of Education expressed his desire to preserve Indians as agriculturalists, yet to offer them the benefits of civilization through bilingual Quechua and Spanish literacy programs, agricultural training, and hygiene lessons. While these policies might have prevented mestizaje from becoming official nationalist rhetoric, they did not invalidate it. Valcárcel's project could have been ambiguous enough as to bring consensus into the assortment of ideas proposed by the politically heterogeneous and even antagonistic champions of mestizaje.

In the years to come, and under such ambiguous slogans as "unity in diversity" the state promoted purist manifestations of indigenous folklore, emphatically discouraging those considered "inauthentic" or "mestizo," while at the same time "modernizing" the countryside through development programs. In the meantime, intellectuals faithful to the teachings of Valcárcel—most of them anthropologists—continued to blacklist pro-mestizaje efforts. For example, as late as 1965, in a conference entitled "Ideas and Processes of Mestizaje in Peru," the founder of the Institute of Peruvian Studies, José Matos Mar, defined mestizaje as "an imposition from the colonial past, an idea replete with racist prejudices, aimed at the extinction of indigenous cultures."[10] In the same conference, the celebrated Quechua writer Jose María Arguedas—who had worked with Valcárcel in the Ministry of Education—presented for the first time in public a version of what Peruvian anthropologists call "the myth of Inkarri," a story predicting the return of the Incas.[11] Three years later, in 1968, when the military regime issued the Agrarian Reform, they used the label "Inkarri" to name a major annual event.

In relative contrast, and during the same period, Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Ecuador implemented "assimilationist" policies that promoted Spanish literacy and explicitly or implicitly fostered the elimination of vernacular languages and indigenous cultures. Obviously, I do not think the Peruvian state represented the Latin American pro-Indian vanguard. Nevertheless, I want to link this Peruvian idiosyncrasy, to another one: While in the countries that I have just mentioned powerful ethnic social movements have emerged since the late 1970s, similar efforts in Peru are still very marginal.

Some analysts have interpreted the absence of "ethnic social movements" in present-day Peru to reflect indigenous "assimilation" and cultural loss. According to this perspective, Peruvian Indians are either behind in terms of ethnic consciousness or have yielded to dominant mestizaje projects. This perspective places indigenous Peruvians within the bounds of "an ethnic group," and forgets that ethnicity is only one among the host of social relations—race, gender, class, geography, generation (to name commonplaces)—that organize (and disorganize) indigenous and nonindigenous life processes. But, most importantly it disregards that "indigenous culture" exceeds the scope of Indianness. I know this sounds strange, but I will tell you what I mean and how I learned about it.

From the 1950s to the mid 1970s, indigenous peasant leaders from all over the country, but most specifically from Cuzco, led a long political insurrection against the traditional hacienda system. The conflict, organized in alliance with leftist parties and waged under the colors of class struggle, destabilized the political order and eventually forced a military coup and a radical Agrarian Reform in 1968. Blinded by the success of class rhetoric, leftist social scientists have ignored the indigenous cultural aspects of the struggle,

The Marketing of *El Cholo Toledo*

In 1990, the now infamous Alberto Fujimori ran for president against the renowned writer Mario Vargas Llosa calling upon *"chinitos"* (an allusion to himself) and *"cholitos"* (working class Peruvians) to join forces against *"blanquitos"* (Vargas Llosa and the elite circles surrounding him). *El Chino*, as he came to be known, promised a government that would promote "technology, honesty, and work." Once in power, he implemented a neoliberal economic plan and requested that the chinos and cholos forget their collective battles and instead struggle individually against poverty by becoming micro-entrepreneurs. The 2000 electoral campaign, the first act in the year-long drama that finally drove the increasingly corrupt and dictatorial Fujimori from office, pitted him against Alejandro Toledo, a Peruvian of working class origins, whose campaign evoked the complexity of Peruvian *mestizajes*.

Migration and education, like in most stories of mestizaje, play a crucial role in Toledo's public life story. This emphasizes his poor origins in an Andean village and his success in earning a Ph.D. from Stanford University. However, rather than using education to silence his origins, like the ideology of decency would have indicated, throughout his electoral campaigns, Toledo loudly claimed cholo identity. Yet, this identity is not simple. On the contrary, *"el Cholo Toledo"* is multifaceted; the images he uses to fashion his electoral persona draw—perhaps independently of his intentions—from the historical rhetoric of Peruvian mestizaje and its multiple meanings.

At the most obvious level, Toledo's electoral campaign connects with the Incanist, anti-mestizo tradition promoted by Valcárcel's *indigenismo*. As the symbol of his political party he chose the *"Chakana,"* described as an Inka symbol that signaled the dawn of a new era. Within the same script, very important political gatherings have been held in Cuzco, where the candidate opened the demonstrations with a ritual salute to the Andean deities that surround the city, and Eliane Karp, (his anthropologist wife) addressed the crowds in Quechua, the indigenous language. Not surprisingly, "el Cholo" has also been labeled Pachacutec, allegedly the most important Inca.

Less obviously, but summoning the attention of a crucial sector of the electorate, Alejandro Toledo's image wearing a *chullo* and a tie connects with indigenous views of mestizaje—those that, for example, see Quechua and vernacular Andean practices as compatible, even coming to fruition, with a university degree and economic success. However, and notwithstanding the candidate's reverberant claims to a working class cholo identity, he also connects with elite views of mestizaje. His university degree, his "studies abroad," (and of course his marriage to a foreign white woman) loom large, and thus "Alejandro"—as his elite peers familiarly call him—represents an "ironed" choloness, one that has been tamed by education and is a useful political strategy. Alvaro Vargas Llosa—the writer's son—praised Toledo's "cool calculating mind of a Stanford and Harvard academic" and his ability to "understand life from a viewpoint rooted in analytic rigor and scientific information." Coinciding with his son's opinion, Mario Vargas Llosa, expressed his support of Toledo by describing him as a "modern Indian, a cholo without grudges or inferiority complexes."

But Toledo's mestizo identities aside, and considering the historical trajectory of race (and racism) in Peru, a question remains: What happened at the end of the twentieth century that allowed for the profusion of racial images in a country used to silencing the racial identity of public figures and to the denial of racism? Attributing this effect to Alberto Fujimori would be too simple, and would have probably disappeared with the now fugitive ex-President. That this has not been the case obliges further explanation.

In 1998, in my annual summer visit to Peru, I was surprised by the outpouring of denunciations against racism set off when the employees of four separate night clubs and a coffee house in Lima barred entry to several persons seemingly because they perceived them to be nonwhite. The anti-racist saga was complex: The Institute for the Defense of the Consumer had taken on

which were abundant. Ardent insurrectional speeches were delivered in Quechua, and the massive demonstrations in the Plaza de Armas of Cuzco were attended by peasants wearing *ponchos* and woolen caps—*chullos*—clothes that express indigenous identity and which were specially and symbolically worn for those occasions.

I would not have paid attention to the significance of these symbols without the help of Mariano Turpo, a self-identified indigenous leader, active since the 1930s, who took part in the 1960s-1980s struggle for land. From him I learned that indigenous utilization of class rhetoric was a political option that did not represent the loss of indigenous culture, but was rather a strategy towards its empowerment. The huge peasant meetings in the Plaza de Armas, and the struggle for land that they were part of, expressed a political practice that was not an either/or choice between ethnicity and class. Instead it coupled both. Don Mariano Turpo's personal experience illustrates this. He is a *paqo*—an Andean ritual specialist, somewhat like a diviner. During the years of the struggle, this role was crucial in his capacity as a regional politician. In his own words: "They did not follow anybody but me; they accepted me because I was the only one that knew. I consulted the Apu Ausangate [the regional

the denunciations and had leveled fines against the businesses accused of discrimination. Revealing that the state is not monolithic (and also making visible the corruption that affects its practices) several judges were bribed into revoking the Institute's sanctions. Against this backdrop, another state institution, the Human Rights Commission of the National Congress, organized a public audience to discuss the pros and cons of penalizing "racism" constitutionally. Throughout the process, I could not but think: Why denounce racism now? And the crucial response came from man named Alejandro Falla, a lawyer from the sanctioning Institute:

"People believe that the free market has no laws. But let me tell you, the free market has one law, and that law is that as consumers we are all equal. The free market does not tolerate any form of discrimination against consumers. Every individual, regardless of gender, religion, ethnic, or racial identity, has the right to participate in the free market."

A Toledo electoral pamphlet.

And a law was passed unanimously in 1999 to legally sanction discriminatory actions for the first time in Peruvian history. The hegemony of Peruvian racism—its mute reign—was apparently over, and although this did not mean it would disappear, it did mean that it could be publicly censured. Racism's silent rule, however, was being challenged by the potential hegemony of neoliberalism and its embrace of the excluded as consumers, regardless of their self-identity.

Indeed, the cholo image that Toledo casts is highly compatible with the persona that neoliberalism requires: a solitary achiever, able to succeed without the intervention of the state. The public version of the candidate's life story describes him as a micro-entrepreneur since his childhood, working as a shoe shiner, a soda and popsicle vendor during Sunday soccer games, and a door-to-door peddler of the tamales his mother cooked. This boy, the story tells us, can become the President of Peru, and even if he does not, he lives a comfortable life. Thus, Toledo also plays into the hegemony of neoliberalism, and its promotion of a consumer who can come from any background, provided that he/she can buy and sell. The economic identity that neoliberalism requires, and the social success it offers, is not measured by the "refinement" standards imposed by "decency," because with globalization as one of its premises, identities can be multicultural.

Obviously, I do not think neoliberalism needs to raise anti-discriminatory banners, or to generalize the advocacy of multiculturalism. Yet I do think that in countries like Peru, neoliberalism has a certain amount of seductive room for selective class-blind multiculturalisms. Alejandro Toledo's "market economy with a human face" can also come with a cholo face. Thus, it potentially decouples the dominant identification of popular classes with immorality and perennial marginality. In so doing, it connects with popular mestizaje projects and promises an historically unprecedented possibility for the inclusion of the "unrefined" members of the "popular classes" in official politics.

Undoubtedly, the markers of indigenous mestizaje that Toledo used throughout both his campaigns represent an unprecedented public challenge to "decency," and this has provoked the explicit revulsion of the upper classes. Thus, while neoliberalism may appropriate multiculturalism, the practices of indigenous mestizaje are not for its consumption only. Insofar as they connote images that defy exclusion, they can be used by the new social movements to resignify the traditional cultural politics of race and class in Peru. Whether this resignification serves the market or the people is a historical matter. And by history I do not mean the past. I mean present-day people acting politically.

—MdlC

Girls from the Huayruro community leaving school in the Valley of Urumbamba in Pisac, Cuzco

Andean deity] before going on any strike, before signing any document."[12]

Don Mariano, who speaks Quechua and Spanish, has signed many documents. In one of them, written while imprisoned under the charges of being a Communist, he urged his compañeros to "learn how to read and write, as being illiterate, makes us more Indian, easy preys of the *hacendados* and their lawyers. We have to stop being Indians to defend ourselves." Indeed, I was surprised at this call for de-Indianization. Yet, I gradually learned from Don Mariano—and from many other indigenous *Cuzqueños*—that "not being Indians" did not mean shedding indigenous culture. Rather de-Indianization implied shedding a social condition entailing absolute denial of civil rights. This definition of Indianness was reinforced when, in the midst of the struggle for land, and while state cultural activists were busy promoting indigenous folklore, other state representatives—the police—used the label "Indian" to deny peasant leaders their rights to public speech while torturing people like Don Mariano. De-Indianization meant—as Don Mariano had urged in his letter—becoming literate, being able to live beyond the hacienda territory, in general obtaining civil rights. And none of this meant shedding indigenous culture. On the contrary it meant empowering it, and thus pushing it beyond the scope of disenfranchised Indianness.

After my lessons with Don Mariano, it was impossible for me to assume that "the loss of indigenous culture" explained the lack of ethnic movements in Peru. Don Mariano helped me realize that the absence of overt culturalist (or ethnic) political slogans during that period may have resulted instead from the need to distance the movement from state-sponsored *indigenismo* and its allegedly pro-Indian, and highly anti-mestizo language. I thus returned to the notion of mestizaje and found that it had had more than one trajectory, and more than one meaning. Indigenous Cuzqueños have appropriated the mestizo identity and given it an alternative meaning: They use it to identify literate and economically successful people who share indigenous cultural practices yet do not perceive themselves as miserable, a condition that they consider "Indian." Far from equating "indigenous culture" with "being Indian"—a colonial label that carries an historical stigma of inferiority—they perceive Indianness as a social condition that reflects an individual's failure to achieve educational improvement. As a result of this redefinition, "indigenous Andean culture" exceeds

the scope of Indianness; it broadly includes Cuzqueño commoners who claim indigenous cultural heritage, yet refuse to be labeled Indians. They proudly call themselves "mestizo," without, however, agreeing to disappear in the cultural national homogeneity that the current dominant definition of mestizo conveys.

Thus, despised by prominent intellectuals, and lacking an overt official life, mestizaje was embraced by the working classes as an empowering identity project. Yet, adding to its multiple meanings, mestizaje in its popular version—what I have called "indigenous mestizaje"—may correspond to some of the demands for multiculturalism leveled by the Maya or Aymara social movements in Guatemala and Bolivia respectively. Indigenous mestizos in Peru use their vernacular languages along with Spanish; they combine formal education and indigenous practices; and they commute between city and countryside, and are versed in both ways of life. Most importantly, these grassroots forms of mestizaje cancel the immorality imputed to cholos, and they stress instead their proud endurance of, and struggle against poverty and adverse social conditions. Indigenous mestizaje is not meant to be resolved in "either Indian or mestizo" evolutionary choices imposed by modern concepts. Rather, as lived experiences, they distance themselves from conceptual abstractions and present alternatives that at first sight may seem oxymoronic to modern minds. "People can be different and similar at the same time. I practice indigenous culture but I am not an Indian," an indigenous woman in Cuzco told me. And many others echoed her.

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Obviously, dominant definitions of mestizaje, and the evolutionary racial-cultural projects those definitions entail, have not disappeared from the national political scene. They have remained latent both among leftist and conservative ideologues. The celebrated writer Mario Vargas Llosa revived them when he said:

> Indian peasants live in such a primitive way that communication is practically impossible It is only when they move to the cities that they have the opportunity to mingle with the other Peru The price they must pay for integration is high—renunciation of their culture, their language, their beliefs, their traditions, and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters After one generation they become mestizos They are no longer Indians.[13]

Although used to promote mestizaje, Vargas Llosa's words illustrate the survival of earlier *indigenista* culturalist rhetoric, this time dressed in the evolutionary ethnic lexicon to which Peruvian anthropology resorted when race was evicted from scientific discourse. Within this new framework, Indians were an ethnic group that represented an earlier stage of development and were culturally different from mestizos. This allegedly nonracial yet evolutionary lexicon, which allows for images of "indigenous improvement" and speaks of hierarchies of reason, is facilitated by the "culture talk" provided by certain notions of ethnicity. It also gives a nonracist allure to images like those produced by Vargas Llosa, and leads to the current denials of racism in Peru.

A 1947 remark by the Argentine populist dictator Juan Domingo Perón prompts some final thoughts:

> For us race is not a biological concept For us, it is something spiritual. It constitutes a sum of the imponderables that make us what we are and impel us to be what we should be, through our origins and through our destiny It is what dissuades us from falling into the imitation of other communities whose natures are foreign to us For us, race constitutes our personal seal, indefinable, and irrefutable [14]

Culturalist visions of race have been pervasive among Latin American thinkers, and their efforts have not necessarily been aimed at separating race from culture. As the quote from Perón makes clear, the Latin American political contribution has consisted in emphasizing the "spiritual" aspects of race, and in privileging "culture" over "biology" as its defining essence. When the international scientific community rejected race as biology, it did not question the discriminatory potential of culture, let alone its power to naturalize difference. The Latin American tendency to explain and legitimate racial hierarchies through culture preserved its authority as a rhetoric of exclusion, discrimination and dominance framed in the apparent egalitarianism of culture talk. Unveiling the discriminatory potential of "culture" and its historical embeddedness in racial thought is important; it can shed light on Latin American culturalist forms of racism which are neither exclusive to rightist politicians nor limited to academia. This understanding goes a long way towards explaining the puzzle—racism accompanied by its denial—confronted by our innocent traveler in the Americas ■

A Bitter Taste

1. Many plantations are in isolated rural areas, a long way from the nearest market. Therefore, workers often rely on the owner to have cornmeal and other food supplies for sale on the plantation. Not being allowed to buy food on the plantation forces union members to make long trips into town to go shopping.
2. "Guatemala: la fuerza incluyente del desarrollo humano," *Informe de Desarrollo 2000*, Sistema de Naciones Unidas en Guatemala.
3. The Guatemalan Labor Code explicitly identifies the man's wage as the primary source of family income and labels the earnings of women and children as supplementary. Many employers use this language to justify paying women and children far less than men. Currently, at the coffee plantation Santa Anita, owned and run by former guerrillas, women are paid the same wage as men. They have been strongly criticized by surrounding plantation owners for this.

Just a Little Respect

1. This is the number of women that appears in the official records. However, it could easily surpass 100,000. María Eugenia Ramírez, "También Tenemos Derechos," Human Rights Team, ILSA, March 2001.
2. Interview with Author, August 2000.
3. "Cabildo Abierto por Santa Fé de Bogotá y la Reestructuración de DABS," document presented by the Movement of Neighborhood Homes and the Union of District Workers (SINTRADISTRITALES) in August 1997, p. 9.
4. María Eugenia Ramírez, "También Tenemos Derechos."
5. Interview with author, Bogotá, August 2000.
6. María Eugenia Ramírez, from author interview, Bogotá, August 2000.

Reconstructing Race

1. Gustav Le Bon, in Alice Widener, ed., *Gustave Le Bon: The Man and His Works* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979 [1913]) p. 240; and José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997 [1925]), p. 16.
2. Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
3. Gustav Le Bon, *Gustave Le Bon: The Man and his Works*, p. 289 and Manuel Gonzáles Prada in Jorge Ruedas de la Serna, ed., *Manuel Gonzales Prada: Una Antología General* (Mexico City: SEP, 1904), pp.173-174.
4. Javier Prado, "Memoria del Decano de letras del Año 1908," in *Revista Universitaria de San Marcos* (Lima: Universidad de San Marcos, 1909), pp. 50-56.
5. Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, *Tempestad en los Andes* (Lima: Editorial Universo, 1978 [1927]), p. 109.
6. George Stocking, "The Turn of the Century Concept of Race," *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1994, pp. 4-16.
7. Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, *Lima: Esquisses historiques, statistiques, administratives, comerciales, et morales* (Paris: Fermin Didiot, 1867), p.194.
8. Franz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1968 [1952]), p. 117.
9. Valcárcel, *Tempestad en los Andes*, p. 45.
10. José Matos Mar, "Algunas consideraciones acerca del uso del vocablo mestizo," *Revista Histórica* (Lima: Instituto Histórico del Perú, 1975), Vol. 28, pp. 62-63.
11. José María Arguedas, "El mestizaje en la literatura oral," *Revista Histórica* (Lima: Instituto Histórico del Perú, 1975), Vol. 28, pp. 271-275.
12. Conversations with Mariano Turpo, Cuzco, 1990. Thanks to Eloy Neira for introducing me to Mariano Turpo.
13. Mario Vargas Llosa, "Questions of Conquest: What Columbus Wrote and What he Did Not," *Harper's*, December 1990, pp. 45-53.
14. Juan Domingo Perón, October 12, 1947, Día de la Raza, Buenos Aires, Argentina; quoted in Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (Walnut Creek, CA.: Altamira Press, 1999), p. 54.

Contesting the Images of Oppression

1. See "Reconnaissance of Africa," *Oxford Atlas of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 34-35; Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), especially pp. 1-26; Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds., *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 1996 (No. 53), pp. 251-258; Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Américas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
2. *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492-94*, transcribed and translated into English with notes by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), pp. 134, 135.
3. John Wynter, "1492: A New World View," in Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds., *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas*, pp. 169-198.
4. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 1646.
5. Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, 2nd ed.
6. José Vasconcelos and A.L. Carballo, *Antología de Pensamiento Político, Social y Económico de América Látina* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, edición Justina Sarabia, 1989).
7. European conquerors used the term "Carib" to label people as cannibals (*canibales, canimas,* and *caribes*) to justify rape, enslavement, and war. We use the term to refer to the language group that is wide-flung in South America around the periphery of Greater Amazonia, from the Orinoco River Region of Venezuela to the Xingú River Region of Brazil. For information on the use of the label cannibal, see Michael Palencia-Roth, "The Cannibal Law of 1503," in Jerry M. Williams and Robert E. Lewis, eds., *Early Images of the Americas* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press,1993) pp. 21-63. For literature on the Carib and Arawak people of the Caribbean see Peter Hulme and Neil L. Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
8. Marc de Civrieux, *WATUNNA: An Orinoco Creation Cycle*, edited and translated by David M. Guss (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1980), p. 156. The Yekuana are also known by the Arawak word *Maquiritare* (*Makiritare*). Both words mean "river people" or "canoe people." See also David M. Guss, *To Weave and Sing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). The Arawak were the people, known as Taino, first encountered by Columbus in the Bahamas on the 12th of October 1492.
9. Stephanie C. Kane, *The Phantom Gringo Boat: Shamanic Discourse and Development in Panama*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), especially p. 107.
10. Richard Price and Sally Price, "Collective Fictions: Performance in Saramaka Folktales," in Dorothea Scott Whitten and Norman E. Whitten, Jr., eds., *Imagery and Creativity: Ethnoaesthetics and Art Worlds in the Americas* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press,1993), page 283; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Fatima Bercht, Estrellita Brodsky, John Alan Farmer, and Dicey Taylor, eds., *Taino: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean* (New York: The Monacellia Press, El Museo del Barrio, 1997).
11. Nina S. de Friedemann, "Gold Mining and Descent: Güelmambí, Nariño," in *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 182-199; Nina S. de Friedemann, *Minería, Descendencia y Orfebrería Artesanal Litoral Pacífico (Colombia)* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional, 1974).
12. Frank Salomon, "Killing the Yumbo: A Ritual Drama of Northern Quito," in Norman E. Whitten, Jr., ed., *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981) pp. 166-167.
13. June Nash, *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) pp. 131-132.
14. Norman E. Whitten, Jr., *Sicuanga Runa: The Other Side of Development in Amazonian Ecuador* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 84-87.
15. For an understanding of cultural imagery consult Dorothea Scott Whitten and Norman E. Whitten, Jr., eds., *Imagery and Creativity: Ethnoaesthetics and Art Worlds in the Americas*. For an extended discussion of imagery of blackness in the Americas see Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and Arlene Torres, eds. (Vol. 1), Arlene Torres and Norman E. Whitten, Jr., eds. (Vol. 2), *Blackness in Latin American and the Caribbean: Cultural Transformations and Social Dynamics*.
16. This argument is spelled out in much greater detail in Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and Rachel Corr, "Imagery of 'Blackness' in Indigenous Myth, Discourse, and Ritual," in Jean Muteba Rahier, ed., *Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), pp. 213-233; and in Norman E. Whitten, Jr, "Los Para-

digmas Mentales de la Conquista y el Nacionalismo: La Formación de los Conceptos de las 'Razas' y las Transformaciones del Racismo," in Emma Cervone and Fredy Rivera, eds., *Ecuador Racista: Imágenes e Identidades* (Quito: FLACSO, 1999), pp. 45-70. Also see David M. Guss, *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 59.

17. Jean Muteba Rahier, "Introduction," in Jean Muteba Rahier, ed., *Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities*, p. xiv.
18. Janet L. Dolgin, David S. Kemnitzer, and David M. Schneider, eds., *Symbolic Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 3.
19. Terminology in the Americas is fascinating as regards racialization, self-liberation, and the dynamics of indigenous and Afro-Latin American people. A few examples are: The name "Seminole" derives from *cimarrón*, a concept that underscores freedom; the Miskitu—often known as zambos— got their name through their alliance with the British, from whom they obtained muskets which they used against the Spanish; the Garífuna (or "Black Carib") came into historical being on St. Vincent Island in the Lesser Antilles through interbreeding between Arawak-speaking native peoples known as the "Island Carib" and black *cimarrones* and perhaps slaves. Garífuna (plural Garinagu), which these people call themselves, derives from "Kalinago," the name by which Columbus came to know the "Carib" of Eastern Venezuela and Guyana.
20. Nelson Estupiñán Bass, "Canción del niño negro y del incendio," *Canto Negro por la Luz: Poemas para Negros y Blancos* (Esmeraldas: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1954), p. 50, 53.
21. Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 135.
22. See, e.g. Jean Muteba Rahier, ed., *Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities*.

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1. Florestan Fernandes, *A integraçao do negro na sociedade de classes* (Sao Paulo: Dominus, 1965), p. 293.
2. Nadine T. Fernandez, "The Color of Love: Young Interracial Couples in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter 1996), pp. 99-117.
3. José Felipe Carneado, "La discriminación racial en Cuba no volverá jamás," *Cuba Socialista*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (January 1962), pp. 54-67.
4. Rafael Duharte and Elsa Santos, *El fantasma de la esclavitud: prejuicios raciales en Cuba y América Latina* (Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1997), p. 135.
5. Rafael Duharte and Elsa Santos, *El fantasma de la esclavitud: prejuicios raciales en Cuba y América Latina*, p. 121; pp. 124-6.
6. "Aumenta la vigilancia policial en la capital," *El Nuevo Herald* (Miami), October 11, 2000; Eugene Robinson, "Cuba Begins to Answer its Race Question," *Washington Post*, November 12, 2000.
7. Deisy F. Mexidor, "Blanco y negro, sí," *Juventud Rebelde* (Havana), April 30, 1999.
8. Lourdes Serrano Peralta, "Mujer, instrucción, ocupación y color de la piel: estructura y relaciones raciales en un barrio popular de la Habana," *América Negra*, No. 15 (December 1988), pp. 119-33; Juan A. Alvarado, "Estereotipos y prejuicios raciales en tres barrios habaneros," *América Negra*, No. 15 (December 1988), pp. 89-115.
9. Elena Díaz, Esperanza Fernández and Tania Caram, "Turismo y prostitución en Cuba," unpublished paper, FLACSO, (Havana), 1996.
10. Lázara Menéndez Vázquez, "Un cake para Obatalá?!" *Temas*, No.4 (October-December 1995), pp. 38-51; Tomás Fernández Robaina, *Hablen paleros y santeros* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1994).
11. Roberto Fernández Retamar, "Documento Cultura y Sociedad," *Granma* (Havana), November 7, 1998.
12. Robinson, "Cuba Begins to Answer its Race Question."
13. Deisy F. Mexidor, "Blanco y negro, sí," *Juventud Rebelde*; Pedro Juan Gutiérrez, "Razas: diferentes pero iguales," *Bohemia* Vol. 89, No. 2 (1997), pp. 8-13.
14. Gerardo Tena, "Los 'no blancos' irrumpen en las filas de la disidencia," *El Nuevo Herald* (Miami), October 2, 1999.
15. Susana Lee, "El primer requisito," *Granma* (Havana), April 23, 1999.
16. Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
17. George M. Fredrickson, *The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism, and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

Race, Class and Color

1. See Hannah Arendt, "Race-thinking Before Racism," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951) and Michel Foucault, *La Genealogía del Racismo*, (Madrid: Las Ediciones de la Piqueta, 1997).
2. In census reports since 1940, only between 5 and 10% of the Brazilian population has identified itself as black. John Burdick correctly calls attention to the fact that the percentage of blacks who define themselves as such in Brazil is large in spite of the way it is reported by sociologists. In my case, the "only" in the above phrase means merely that a large number of persons who would be classified as blacks by lighter-skinned others do not classify themselves that way, but as "*pardos*" (mixed bloods). See John Burdick, "The Lost Constituency of Brazil's Black Movements," *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 1998).
3. See Caetana Damasceno, "'Em casa de enforcado não se fala em corda:' notas sobre a construção social da 'boa aparência' no Brasil," in Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães and Lynn Huntley (eds.), *Tirando a Máscara: Ensaios sobre o racismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra, 2000), pp. 165-202.
4. France Winddance Twine detects, through interviews, that in a small town in the Rio de Janeiro countryside the practice of segregation of blacks lasted practically until the 1987 Constituent Assembly debates that criminalized racism. See France Winddance Twine, *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
5. See Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães, "Racismo e restrição de direitos individuais: a discriminação racial publicizada," *Revista de Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, No. 31 (1997), pp. 51-78.
6. Studies on workers' mobilizations in Brazil also point to moral values, like dignity, as being more important than material interests for the success of these campaigns. See Lais Abramo, *O Resgate da Dignidade*, MA thesis, University of São Paulo, 1990.

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1. Census Bureau press release, March 12, 2001, see www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/cb01cn61.html.
2. D'Vera Cohn and Darryl Fears, "Multiracial Growth Seen in Census," *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2001.
3. Clara Rodríguez, *Changing Race: Latinos, the Census and the History of Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pp. 4, 5, 7, 8.
4. Rodríguez, *Changing Race*, pp. 175–176.
5. Lise Funderburg, "I Am What I Say I Am," *Time*, March 26, 2001.
6. Jim Yardley, "Non-Hispanic Whites May Soon Be a Minority in Texas," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2001; Todd S. Purdam, "California Census Confirms Whites Are in Minority," *The New York Times*, March 30, 2001.
7. D'Vera Cohn and Darryl Fears, "Hispanics Draw Even With Blacks in New Census," *The Washington Post*, March 7, 2001; Dana Canedy, "Florida Has More Hispanics Than Blacks, Census Shows," *The New York Times*, March 28, 2001.
8. Purdam, "California Census Confirms Whites Are in Minority."
9. Rodríguez, *Changing Race*, p. 19.
10. William A. Henry III, "The Browning of America," *Time*, April 9, 1990, cited in Rodríguez, p. 129.
11. Susan Sachs, "A Hue, and a Cry, in the Heartland," *The New York Times*, April 8, 2001.
12. Tammerlin Drummond, "Como Estás, Des Moines?" *Time*, March 19, 2001.
13. Robert Samuelson, "Can America Assimilate?" *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2001.
14. *National Review*, "The Census: Minority Report," April 2, 2001.
15. Michael Janofsky, "Arizona Owes Growth Spurt Largely to an Influx of Hispanics," *The New York Times*, March 28, 2001; Janofsky, "Illegal Immigration Strains Services in Arizona," *The New York Times*, April 11, 2001.
16. Garry South, chief political adviser to Gov. Gray Davis (D), quoted in Purdam, "California Census Confirms Whites Are in Minority."
17. Yardley, "Non-Hispanic Whites May Soon Be a Minority in Texas."
18. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," in Lauren Berlant (ed.), *Intimacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 313.