

## **Rethinking Area and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Economic and Political Restructuring**

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There has been much discussion over the past decade about the restructuring of the university in the United States. The root causes of this restructuring are generally seen as follows: economic, to the degree that higher education has to produce the creators of the knowledge that will drive the so-called new economy and the managers who will administrate it; sociopolitical, insofar as the university troubleshoots the social divisions (especially those based on gender and ethnoracial differences) that threaten social order; and geopolitical, as the U.S. university acknowledges its place as the major brokering institution in global knowledge production in the post-Cold War period. With regard to this last point, it is recognized worldwide that the U.S. university system is far ahead in the production of the intellectual property that brings about "wealth creation." The U.S. genomics industry alone, for example, is about the size of the Argentine economy (Enríquez 2000). As capital accumulation increasingly depends on scientific and technological innovation and as commodity production is further devalued Latin America and other developing regions will decline even further. Under the current neoliberal consensus among Latin American elites, university research agendas are increasingly driven by market criteria, particularly in the spate of private universities that have sprouted over the past decade or two in every country and even in the increasingly underfunded public universities (Gentili 2000, 13). The result is brain drain from public to private institutions within Latin America and from Latin America to the United States, where scientifically competent immigrants are needed to fuel the new economy, according to the depositions before Congress of Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve. Indeed, pressed by Internet and high-tech companies, Congress will raise the number of H1-B visas in 2000 ("Too Many High-Tech

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Visas"). The problem, of course, is not limited to developing countries in Latin America or to the United States. Germany, which has "an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 jobs vacant in the booming Internet sector, with few Germans apparently qualified to fill them," is courting high-tech-proficient immigrants from India, a policy that is met with protest and greater appeals for increases and changes within the German university system. According to one observer, "German education with its focus on heavy philosophical concepts does not turn out the people we want" (Cohen 2000).

The repercussions for the humanities and social sciences should be evident. To the degree that they can accommodate to the imperative of the new economic order, the humanities and social sciences will maintain a high profile and obtain resources. Latin American studies, Latino studies, and Latin American literary and cultural studies are all affected differently, although significantly, which is the reason why there has been discussion of some kind of rapprochement among them in recent years. Latin American studies, although still supported as an institution at several universities by Title VI federal grants, has lost much of its *raison d'être* with the waning of the Cold War. U. S. foreign policy has used cultural and educational programs during periods of perceived external threats since the early 1800s when Latin American republics gained their independence, the Monroe Doctrine was declared, and the Smith Chair in Modern Languages and Literatures was established at Harvard a couple of decades after Spanish was introduced into the curriculum at several universities at the behest of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson (Fernández 2000, 1961). The Spanish-Cuban-American War (1895-98) and especially the Good Neighbor Policy during World War II provided impetus for cultural programs and research on Latin America, but it wasn't until the 1960s that Latin American studies became a national institution, with funding from major foundations (Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford) and the federal government (especially the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which expanded language programs and curricula in the culture and politics of the region). Indeed, "Latin American studies acted as a direct compliment to the Alliance for Progress" (Berger 1995, 87), and Project Camelot, which sought to foster modernization theory and anticipate and control social change in the region, was clearly an adjunct of foreign policy (91). Later in the decade, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) was founded with funding from the Ford Foundation's International Training and Research Program. In "non-threatening" periods these cultural and educational programs were reduced or eliminated, as occurred with the Good Neighbor Policy at the end of World War II and then again in the 1990s with the disappearance of the "communist" bogey after glasnost and perestroika. Some of the slack was briefly taken up by interest in NAFTA, but that involved research exclusively on Mexico, or by the War 'on Drugs, which does not seem to have an intellectual humanistic component. Without the threat of revolution south of the Rio Grande/Bravo, there is little federal interest in sweetening the stick of economic

reform imperatives with the carrot of support for intellectual and cultural production traditionally operative in the Good Neighbor policy, the Alliance for Progress, USA, and other Cold War programs.

Something similar might be said about the lack of interest in Latin America among cultural studies scholars. Complementarily, even Latin Americanists in the humanities tend to follow the division of labor established by the grand theory itself. Theoretical paradigms are produced in France and the United States (including postcolonialism and subaltern studies), and scholars in Latin American studies and Spanish departments simply apply them to Latin American objects of study. There are universities where students take theory in an English or comparative literature department and then bring it to bear on literary texts in their Spanish classes. For obvious reasons, this is not a practice adhered to in Latin American universities, where a dialogue with theory and cultural studies has taken place just as long as in the United States, as pointed out by scholars like Nelly Richard (2000) and Idelber Avelar (1999, 52). I myself remarked on the claim by some North American Latin Americanists who in the name of decolonization have discouraged Latin Americans from invoking theorists like Deleuze and Foucault (Yúdice 1996).

This sentiment seems to have been shared by (non-Latin Americanist) cultural studies critics, who rarely invoked any Latin Americans in their work. For all the interest in contestatory politics at the "Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture" conference held at the University of Illinois in 1983, only three (Hugo Achugar, Jean Franco, and Fernando Reyes Matta) out of thirty-eight papers published in the canon-setting proceedings (which would constitute the United States as the center of cultural studies) had anything to do with Latin America (Nelson and Grossberg 1988). The same goes for the cultural studies "bible" of 1992, also an outgrowth of a conference held at the University of Illinois in 1988 (Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg 1992.). This time, however, it seems as if Chicano/Latino interests, albeit woefully underrepresented, were stronger than Latin-American ones. Earlier on, Latin America provided grist for the European or European-derived theory mills, but after the mid-1980s, and especially with the failure of the Central American revolutions, Latino studies became the filter through which Latin America would increasingly be imagined by those in cultural studies. This state of affairs was partly due to the influence of multiculturalism.

Initially a means to "empower" excluded or marginalized minorities, multiculturalism soon became a quick rhetorical fix of symbolic inclusion and very little material gain. By lumping together Latin Americans and Latinos of all classes and ethnoracial backgrounds, multiculturalism homogenized them as part of a U.S. tendency to panethnicization. Consequently, U.S. multiculturalism has been looked on with much caution by Latin American intellectuals, artists, and activists, to the point of discerning in it a family resemblance to cultural imperialism. My "We Are *Not* the World" (Yúdice 1992) was a critique of panethnic lumping, whereby

the Latino was used in a U.S. context to represent the Latin American, a practice that inverted the tendency to hire white, middle-class Latin Americans for positions earmarked for disadvantaged Latinos. A sometimes unwitting but often disingenuous opportunism has been at work in this intermediation or brokering of multiculturalism in the United States (Yúdice 1994, 147-50).

It did not take long before the underlying tension between Latin American and Latino scholars broke out as the latter criticized the former for not thematizing their class and racial privilege *vis-à-vis* the descendants of subaltern immigrants from their very own countries and as the former retorted that the identity politics brandished by U.S. minorities did not represent Latin American realities (Achugar 1998; Moraña 1998; Richard 1998; Sarlo 1997). Latin Americans also reacted to the market character of much of U.S. academic discourse, which had catapulted "brands" like postcolonial and subaltern studies to a high stature, particularly within the humanities and especially in literature and cultural studies programs, so that much of the legacy of Latin American intellectuals was either forgotten or reinterpreted as the [neo-Ari]elitist redemption of traditional intellectuals over and above the "real" needs of the people.<sup>1</sup> The latter is John Beverley's much cited and debated view of what is wrong with Latin American literary and intellectual discourse (1994, 1996). Likewise provocative to many Latin Americans is the insistence by a few U.S.-based Latin Americanists that the "restitution of Martí's *Nuestra América*" must go beyond a still operative Latin American Occidentalism that downplays the role of race and ethnicity. The recognition of racial difference in Latin America is seen by them as fundamental to a nonimperialist knowledge production (Coronil 1998; Mignolo 1998; Rodríguez 1998). Mignolo's characterization of Gloria Anzaldúa's border of interstitial knowledge as the beacon to which we should all aspire, and as important today as Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* in the seventeenth century (54-56), was surely read as a provocation by the likes of Achugar (1998) and Moraña (1998), troubled and unconvinced by the prospect that a Chicana would serve as the broker for ushering in a new epistemological framework for construing and understanding American realities.

Whether or not we can speak of realities in any absolute way, it is current practice nowadays to examine what were national questions in a transnational framework. The debate between Latin American scholars, on the one hand, and U.S.-based Latin Americanists and Latinos on the other, which I have briefly reviewed, is if nothing else a testament to that transnational framework. At the heart of the debate is the category of identity which became the centerpiece of cultural studies sometime in the late 1980s and 1990s, overlapping with the emergent (and now widespread) discourse of multiculturalism and diversity. Questions of representation were racked by conflicts over interests (such as university positions and institutional capital), and these conflicts were in turn complicated by the permeation of culture by a market logic, as I argue in the conclusion.

At the same time that Latin American studies and Latino studies were locked in this tension, the latter were also fending off attempts

by university administrations to eliminate them or fold them into larger cultural or American studies programs. While Latino studies programs, like other ethnic studies programs, have a rich tradition and scholarship that goes back to the 1960s, they do have certain limitations particularly the masculinism and nationalism of the early phase and until recently a difficulty dealing with transnational contexts. Consolidation—as in the creation of the Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity program at Stanford University and the decade-long attempt at CUNY'S Graduate Center to create an intercultural studies program that would bring together African American, Latino, Asian American, women's studies, and gay and lesbian studies—is in great part a response to the defunding of the humanities and the weakening of the commitment to ethnic studies as Albert Camarillo (1997) of Stanford has pointed out. He has also noted that the expansion of the program at Stanford had the advantage of being more relevant to a post-Cold War world by encompassing the ethnic and religious conflicts throughout the world in keeping with the discourse of globalization. The establishment of comparative ethnic studies programs or more inclusive American studies programs at places like the Five Colleges, Wesleyan, Harvard, Michigan, Duke, and New York University are consistent with the Ford Foundation's new Crossing Borders initiative to revitalize area studies by awarding \$50,000 grants to thirty colleges and universities (Volkman 1998, 1). Precisely the issues reviewed above—transdisciplines such as cultural studies and postcolonialism that disregard the boundaries of knowledge production; demographic shifts that bring into focus diverse groups' heritages, languages, and other issues examined in ethnic studies departments, the encounter of scholars with the communities they study (Mato 1998); and so on—are all motivating factors in the Ford Foundation's interest in keeping knowledge production consistent with its transnational contexts; in bringing together intellectuals scholars and activists who make likely interlocutors; and in influencing government, university administrators and donors to support the new area studies (Volkman 1999 xi-xii). Area studies has a sizable infrastructure that can be reconverted to accommodate new forms of knowledge production and distribution. This, at least, is the wager of the Ford Foundation, one that those of us in ethnic studies and cultural studies cannot afford to ignore, for our very livelihood is at stake, particularly as universities throughout the country are either forced to retrench (as in the SUNY and CUNY systems) or downsize certain departments and fields as part of a restructuring that I will try to account for in the following section of this essay.

### **Area Studies and the Cold War University**

Area studies is largely a creation of the Cold War. As mentioned above, the U.S. government and various influential foundations—among them Ford, Carnegie, MacArthur, and Rockefeller—and other policy-making institutions oriented the university to work in the

service of greater competitiveness *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. Area studies emerged to deal with the great ferment of decolonization in Third World countries, both to gain knowledge of them as a way of managing their potential challenge to capitalism and as a way of gaining leverage over Soviet influence. Reaction to the technical achievements of the Soviet Union, emblemized in the “surprise” launching of Sputnik on October 4, 1957, led to the passage by Congress of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, later named the Title VI program. Foundations were also a part of this reaction to decolonization and Soviet influence. From 1953 to 1966, the Ford Foundation spent \$270 million on area studies. Ford spearheaded a Foreign Area Fellowship Program in the 1950s to provide graduate students with linguistic competency in understudied languages and cultures. In the early 1970s, this program was relayed to the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), where it functioned as the “keystone of area programs at the Councils for nearly three decades until the restructuring of the Councils in the mid-1990s” (Hershberg 1999, 120). These initiatives provided funding to train thousands of scholars in the language, culture, and political practices of countries throughout the world and “brought scholars from diverse disciplines together to support in-depth, multi-disciplinary training and research.” There were also efforts to induce scholars from these areas “to visit the U.S., in part to expose them to the realities of this country; in part to modify their attitudes toward a range of social, economic, and political issues” (Heginbotham 1994, 34). There are precedents for such large knowledge-producing enterprises—the New Deal and especially the Good Neighbor Policy—but those do not compare with the Cold War university.

It is a mistake however to attribute the entire enterprise of area studies to the Cold War. I think we must look at another contextualizing factor, which is also connected with the Cold War and may even have driven the Cold War mindset as a kind of legitimation. U.S. capital needed huge resources for its accumulation strategies after World War II. The university was one major site targeted as a socialized resource for capital. This is particularly evident in the use of the university as a site for research and development (R and D) for the defense and health industries. What is often overlooked when examining the university is its usefulness as a form of state intervention in the economy. That intervention was not limited to control of the supply of money and the redistribution of wage goods through taxation and welfare. It was also meant to create employment in three ways: by refashioning the state to be a major purchaser of goods and services; by pumping state funds into undercapitalized sectors (e.g., to rebuild the infrastructure of the railroads) only to relay them back to the market; and by subsidizing new technologies and the training of specialists in order to produce continual innovation (Lewontin 1997, 2-3). It is by this route that the U.S. government socialized the costs (i.e., used taxpayer’s dollars) for R and D for the defense and medical industries at universities under contract with government agencies such as the National

Science Foundation (NSF), the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Lewontin further argues that this form of socialization of capital accumulation strategies re-created and patterned the entire university system, particularly the research university, in the image of the entrepreneurial professors with command over research centers. The budget for such enterprises was enormous. From 1951 to 1961, the increases the NSF received from Congress were from \$100,000 to \$100 million, 85 percent of which went to universities and research institutes. The NSF and NIH instituted disciplinary autonomy and peer review panels that also became the *modus operandi* of the social sciences and humanities. Even while Congress launched a vicious attack against academic and other radicals, "there was a widespread indifference to political ideology in the research supported by agencies of the state" (Lewontin 1997, 18). Even pro-Soviet scientific researchers like L. C. Dunn of Columbia University did not lose funding.<sup>2</sup> Lewontin's own political activities with the Black Panther Party, collaborations with the Socialist Worker's Party, and the Communist Party, as well as antiwar activism during the Vietnam War did not cause him to lose any funding from the AEC or the Department of Energy, although he later discovered through a request for his file under the Freedom of Information Act that his activities were closely monitored by the FBI (19). Funders with an interest in gaining knowledge of the adversary and potential allies had to tolerate a measure of scholarly autonomy because the need for research in the university gave it the space for insisting on academic freedom. Consequently, funders cast their net widely, funding research areas that had little to do with Cold War goals if they wanted to maintain an agenda within the university (Heginbotham 1994, 35). Furthermore, since American culture was an important terrain of battle during the Cold War, there was funding available for social scientists and humanists to promote forms of American culture that demonstrated our superiority or our cultivation of freedom *vis-à-vis* the state command of social and cultural life in the Soviet Union. The art and literary criticism that made the argument for the freedom inherent in abstract expressionism or the style of modern dance promoted by Martha Graham, among others, provide good examples (Kowal 1999). The fifties are the period in which former leftists like Sidney Hook took a conservative turn and from the heights of the academy guided a generation of scholars between the twin "evils" of consumerism and totalitarianism.

The point I am trying to make is that the value of the university for both the economic and political strategies of the United States during the Cold-War created a structure for both disciplinary and area studies research on unprecedented levels. Throughout the entire Cold War period, and even afterward, the budgets of colleges and universities did not fall. Between 1946 and 1991 these budgets increased twentyfold and the physical plant by 600 percent (Lewontin 1997, 24), and faculty gained institutional collective power. As a body, faculty put limits on the discrepancy between the

sciences on the one hand, and the social sciences and humanities on the other. For example, "lower teaching loads in science meant lower teaching loads in the humanities" (30).

All of this began to change in the 1980s as the university was pressured to restructure. The point is not that university budgets will necessarily fall but that a different higher education system is resulting. Political ideology is only one important factor in this restructuring. I might go so far as to suggest that the political arguments for downsizing certain departments and especially reneging on the "compromise" with marginalized groups that was negotiated in the late 1960s and 1970s, significant in themselves, are part of a legitimation strategy for a different role of the university *vis-à-vis* capital accumulation.

### **Ethnic Studies at the Crossroads of the Cold War and the Neoliberal University**

Before elaborating on the restructuring of the university, let me give a very brief account of the incorporation into the university of marginalized groups during the Cold War. This is the context for the emergence of ethnic studies programs. Civil rights generated demands for all kinds of enfranchisement, including affirmative action programs for entry into the university as well as the creation of Black studies programs. At CUNY, Black and Puerto Rican studies programs were created in the early 1970s. The very growth of the university system during the Cold War as well as the strategy on the part of the Great Society government to troubleshoot the radicalized demands of African Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other disenfranchised or underenfranchised constituencies ultimately incorporated them into a system that was as much about managing populations as it was about empowerment. Elsewhere I have written about the similarity in troubleshooting function of policies of the War on Poverty and the then recently created national, yet decentralized, system of cultural subsidy embodied in the endowments and the state and local arts councils (Yúdice 1999).

Great Society programs cannot be separated from the overarching conflict of the period: the student movement, antiwar protest, and an increasing sympathy for Third World liberation struggles among students, minorities, and intellectuals. It would be inaccurate, in my view, to privilege any single one of these ingredients that make up the flavor of the period. The changes that took place in the sixties cannot be attributed solely to free expression of agency on the part of the social movements (blacks, other minority groups, women, antiwar protesters, and students) nor to the goodwill (or more likely the will to co-opt) of government that met the turmoil with antipoverty programs, judicial action, illegal surveillance, and punishment of activists. Both the frustration of minorities and President Johnson's need to increase his electoral base served to structure the field of action. Given the "intricate mesh of interactive effects," Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward's characterization of what Foucault meant by governmentality, which necessarily channeled



politics in the sixties in the form of protest,<sup>3</sup> the government in turn responded by managing the crisis to its electoral advantage, wielding what they call a "distinctively managerial kind of politics" (Piven and Cloward 1993, 249). It was this same kind of politics that the Johnson administration used to manage the vehement protests against the Vietnam War, which encouraged Third World sympathies among students and the intelligentsia. Like the antipoverty program, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities were established, among other reasons, to strengthen the connections between the Administration and the intellectual community," as recommended by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. at the time (Cummings, 1991, 49), for not only would this influential constituency help the Democrats electorally, it might also help defuse opposition to the war. These managerial strategies not only continued but were intensified under Nixon, although he also wielded a heavier stick to go along with his sweeter carrot of increased funding for the arts and the university (Yúdice 1999, 20-21).

This "democratization" of learning and knowledge production did not affect Spanish departments and Latin American studies programs immediately. In this early phase, what would come to be known as ethnic studies was largely in enclaves denigrated by the established disciplines. It wasn't until the late 1980s that Chicano and Puerto Rican studies made inroads into Spanish and English departments, largely under a new imperative and legitimation narrative of diversity. Multiculturalism was the name of this new legitimation discourse, to which I now turn in a second phase of my argument. It could be said that the 1990s offer a different mode of absorption of minorities but one that has to accommodate to a restructured university system. In the post-civil rights period of the Cold War, the numbers of women, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other ethnoracialized groups increased due to political pressures and the government's strategies to defuse protest and to manage populations. The university system in its expanding phase could absorb these demands in the 1960s and 1970s. The establishment of Black studies, Chicano studies, Puerto Rican studies, Asian American studies, women's studies, and subsequently gay and lesbian studies corresponded to the three dynamics I briefly outlined: the expansion of the university under the Cold War, mobilization and protest, and the government's managerial politics.

In the 1980s, with the turn to the right, economic uncertainty, and the beginning of the end of the Cold War restructuring of the university was on the agenda. Accompanying these changes, there was a recrudescence of racism among many white Americans that facilitated legitimation of reduction in government expenditures in the social sector. Government did not cut its investment in the university as the site of R and D for capital; it reconverted that site along with other sites that needed restructuring so as to "maintain the level that all political forces recognize as essential to the stability of modern capitalism" (Lewontin 1997, 32). The white backlash helped find populist ways to reduce expenditures. I am referring to a populism of the right, which targeted entitlement and redistributive

programs for marginalized groups that no longer wielded the power of mobilization that had been met by concessions in the form of the programs mentioned earlier as well as by a relative inclusion in the university and the government workforce. The restructuring of the university in the 1980s and 1990s rendered such concessions unworkable. The very notion of national security, which was used to orient the university to the defense industry and intelligence services, was rearticulated in the aftermath of the Cold War toward the economy. Indeed, although economic war has always been an instrument of U.S. foreign policy since the nineteenth century, throughout the Cold War it was wielded quite openly as a substitute for armed struggle. In the post-Cold War period, it, along with small containment wars, is even more important. Moreover, the rhetoric of war is also intended to legitimize state intervention in the economy (Lewontin 1997, 32). Under these circumstances, minorities are either routed out of high-profile universities by the rescinding of affirmative action or are absorbed into the corporate rearticulation of multiculturalism, which construes culture and diversity market factors important for economic productivity.

The state has continued to socialize the cost of research and education, but the premises have changed. State subvention is now oriented to enhancing competitiveness in the global economy. It is in relation to this transformation in the legitimation of the university's claim on government funds that we can establish a relationship between the economic and governmentalized structure of the university and the pressures to rearticulate area studies and ethnic studies. Area studies must shed its accommodation to the Cold War and instead orient itself to geopolitical and geocultural obstacles to capitalism, especially its consumerist, mediatic, and market forms, as well as the post-Fordist course it has taken in exporting work to cheap labor markets abroad. Ethnic studies, in turn, is enjoined to rid itself of the "stigma" of entitlement and redistributive logics to quell the demands of marginalized groups. But ethnic studies is given a way out of this dilemma: to emphasize its culturalist orientation (to the detriment of more pointed critiques of capitalism) and to accommodate to a multicultural contribution to U.S. competitiveness.

This culturalist orientation is compatible with the profusion of corporate rhetoric on diversity as an asset. Two reasons are given: (1) it provides diverse knowledges, presumably useful to capitalist enterprises, especially in niche marketing; (2) it provides linkages between U.S. minorities and peoples throughout the world, presumably making it possible for U.S. corporations to have a comparative advantage in a globalized marketplace. The logic behind this reasoning is that U.S. minorities, particularly Asian Americans and Latinos, will serve as the managers of corporate capital abroad, presumably more in tune with the culture of foreign businessmen and consumers. And given the development of translocal migratory patterns among the so-called new immigrants and their children, these minorities will inculcate U.S. consumption patterns abroad. Corporate logic on this ends up sounding a lot like

Appadurai's account of the spread of U.S. culture among diasporics and postcolonials in his well-known essay, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (1992).

### **The Post-Cold War University**

Downsizing, privatization, and other forms of restructuring, not only of national industries but also of public institutions such as hospitals and universities, are part of structural adjustment programs whose purpose is to make the public sector leaner and meaner and to encourage greater efficiency by linking operating budgets to earnings, particularly from industry-related contracts. These changes augur badly for underprivileged students. In the U.S. context, academic capitalism is ushering in corporate managerialist practices and supply-side higher education, which have prevailed in the post-Fordist private sector. Corporate-tested techniques, such as Total Quality Management (TQM), are even being applied to students. Despite protests to the contrary by the president of the University of Rochester, the following diagnosis seems consistent with his "Renaissance Plan": "Students are neither 'customers' nor 'consumers.' They are the 'industry's' 'inputs' and 'products.' The purchasers of the products—private, corporate 'employers'—are the customers. The push, then, is to improve (standardize) the product by 'improving' the input, a strategy that has clear implications (and no place) for access and affirmative action" (Rhoades and Slaughter 1997). Those who bear the effects of historical inequities will only gain entry, on the principles of quality management, if their "diversity" is in some way remunerable or marketable. And since the white middle class and government are renegeing on compensation, we are already witnessing the deepening of class differences as students are routed by class (highly correlated with race) into elite and research universities for entry into executive employment or the lucrative production of intellectual property; public colleges and second-tier private institutions to qualify for middle management; community colleges and private diploma mills for vocational training in the service sector; or into workfare, chronic unemployment, and prison. An official of the National Science Foundation has gone so far as to ask whether or not "in light of the worsening job market for Ph.D.s, we can afford to continue pro-active recruiting and special programs aimed at retaining graduate students from underrepresented groups?" (Burka 1996).

The crisis in higher education, which affects "developing" countries as much or more than it affects the United States, is less a crisis than a planned restructuring by capital in keeping with a model of global competitiveness (i.e., exporting jobs to "free-enterprise zones" where workers are underpaid and receive no benefits and where corporations pay little or no taxes). The emergence of this model, like some of the other phenomena reviewed here, goes back to the beginning of the 1980s with the winding down of the Cold War, the passage of legislative changes aimed to make the United States more competitive in the new global economy of

information and knowledge, and the rise of a new political coalition oriented to the marketization of knowledge (Rhoades and Slaughter 1997). The most salient changes have to do with the shift in academic science and technology from basic research toward a commercial competitiveness paradigm. As the Cold War began to wane, the Reagan and Bush administrations redefined national security in terms of national commerce. This shift prompted a reconversion of defense industries and related R and D, with concomitant changes in contracts with universities. In order to fully integrate universities in commercial ventures with the private sector, intellectual property laws, such as the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, were passed. These enabled corporations to write off taxes on profits made in partnership with universities and the latter to claim proprietary rights over inventions made with federal R and D funds. The vast university system, already accustomed to partnerships with the defense industry in the Cold War era, could now be used to produce the intellectual property that would enable the United States to counter increasing European and Japanese industrial competitiveness and to win control of global markets in the new knowledge, communications, and biomedical and medical technology industries (Rhoades and Slaughter 1997).

The bipartisan political coalition that made these changes possible in the 1980s was also instrumental in designing Bush's Enterprise of the Americas Initiative, which eventually became NAFTA. Like the GATT, this and other free trade agreements pushed to get trading partners to honor intellectual property laws on patents, trademarks, and copyrights. Free trade essentially means the disenfranchisement of citizens as transnational capital prevails over state jurisdiction by means of deregulation. Deregulation means the elimination of barriers (tariffs) to trade but also the elimination of state support of industry or the protection of labor, resulting in the lowering of wages and benefits, the reduction of welfare services (health care, education), the rollback of environmental safeguards, and so on. These changes not only ensure greater profits for corporations, particularly multinational enterprises, but guarantee that there will be little interference with the conduct of business since the organizations that manage trade (those that negotiate tariffs and regulations on production and distribution) are not subject to oversight by any electorate. In effect, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and so on, have not been empowered by voters and yet impose their policies virtually unchecked. It is against this model of U.S.-led globalization that concerned organizations (from trade unionists to farmers, church groups, consumer activists, environmentalists, animal rights and human rights activists, supporters of the Zapatista rebels in Mexico, and the Free Tibet movement in China) mounted an unprecedented protest against the "new round" of the WTO in Seattle in December 1999.

The repercussions of this restructuring, although presumably generated at the transnational level in trade agreements and

structural adjustment policies, are experienced acutely at the local level, as in the changes in higher education. Observers of the transformations that U.S. higher education is undergoing note that three areas of expansion will ensure its dominance: globalization, culture, and transdisciplinarity. For example, Steven Muller a specialist in international education waxes enthusiastic over the benefits of globalization:

These benign motives [the two way partnership between industry and research universities] tend to be mutually supportive and they go hand in hand with the globalism of the marketplace and the information society insofar as both industrial corporations and major research universities have equivalent multi-national or international interests (1995, 70).

In his review of the transition of social science research to a post-Cold War paradigm, Stanley Heginbotham vice president of the Social Science Research Council, noted that "[t]he collapses of the Soviet bloc and the Soviet Union have accelerated a reassessment among federal, state, and private funders of their program priorities in a changed international environment." If research during the Cold War focused on in-depth understanding of adversarial societies now it is oriented to "themes or problems associated with the challenges of building more effective social, economic, and political systems." Chief among these themes Heginbotham lists the development of viable markets and market institutions, the fostering of civil society institutions, the building of independent, merit-oriented educational institutions, and the adaptation of technologies responsive to public needs. All of these, moreover, are believed to enhance "questions of performance—especially in the international economy—of the United States relative to the other advanced market democracies" (Heginbotham 1994, 36).

Several years before, then Social Science Research Council president Frederic Wakeman convened a meeting of advisers to orient the council toward a new policy to subsidize "transnational and comparative research." Among the issues he reviews are "such issues as the global emergence of an underclass, the spread of English and the access to power associated with speaking English, and differences among nations in how they use the same technologies, [none of which] accord with ordinary discipline—or area-oriented committee agendas" (Wakeman 1988, 87). It is evident, then, that research into the crossing of national boundaries also requires a crossing of disciplinary boundaries. And at the heart of transnationalism and transdisciplinarity is culture. Wakeman invokes the problem of "deterritorialization" and its impact on state-oriented analysis; "micro or substate level" activity, such as the NGO movement; and "cultural factors not in the state sphere that impinge upon the international sector." "Culture," indeed, has become more central even for the kinds of problems studied by economists and political scientists.

"[C]ulture" is itself no longer the sort of thing anthropologists once took it to be: homogeneous, local, well-bounded, and in clear one-to-one correspondence with distinct social units. Culture now leaks across national boundaries, and this transnational flow is intimately tied not only to the many diasporas that characterize national populations, but also to the incredible force of media (movies, magazines, cassettes, videotapes, computers, and the like) which close the cultural distance (and accelerate the traffic) between overseas populations and their home societies. (88)

It should come as no surprise, then, that the Council decided, in the very same issue in which Wakeman makes his report, to announce the financing of *Public Culture*, a journal in transnational cultural studies. After all, Arjun Appadurai, coeditor with Carol Breckenridge, was among the advisers convoked to give the Council a new direction. By the time of Heginbotham's more programmatic essay for the Council in 1994, a transnational and transcultural approach to economic, political, and social issues was on the agenda. We see the importance that social scientists now give to culture even in the hardest of the social sciences, economic activity. "The emerging interest...is in international scholarship that is context-sensitive: that helps us understand how the globalizing aspects of contemporary society are shaped, refracted, altered, and redefined as they encounter successions of local contests" (Heginbotham 1994, 37). Heginbotham even makes room for traditional disciplines within his scheme:

Disciplinary departments in the humanities and social sciences will increasingly engage with, and become fuller partners in, international scholarship. The themes and problems they explore will increasingly be seen as common to a wide range of global settings, but will take very different forms. Many of those themes and problems will increasingly be seen as having important transnational components. (38)

What we are seeing here is a pitch for the continuing relevance of the social sciences, and even the humanities, as higher education is establishing partnerships with business and declaring economic competitiveness to be the sole concern. Heginbotham argues that area studies refashioned as transnational transcultural studies will enable "understand[ing of] how the culture, history, and language of a local context shape its interaction with, for example, the evolution of market institutions and engagement with international market forces" (37). He then goes on to aggrandize American scholarship to the proportions of what elsewhere I have called a "We Are the World" syndrome. "The boundaries between American comparative and international scholarship will increasingly be seen as arbitrary and impediments to effective inquiry" (37). In a universe of globalized knowledge production under U.S. hegemony, foreign students trained in the United States will measure their own

societies against ours and acquir[e] an understanding of the distinctions between American society and their own society" (38). The comparison with the United States will presumably enable them to manage change at home: "Their educational goals will be to understand the difference between how a globalizing force is refracted in the United States and in their own society so that they can better manage change at home" (38).

It comes as no surprise, then, that even this enterprise of transnational, transcultural studies will serve to maintain the comparative advantage of the U.S. system of higher education, perpetuating the economic differential that accrues to the more global system. Note that Heginbotham is speaking obliquely to funders:

The interests of funders will be less directed at building a community of U.S. scholars who can represent and reflect American society in contrast to that of the Soviets, and more at playing a leading role in promoting international scholarship that has shared norms, standards, problem definitions, and methodologies [. . .] By virtue of the size and excellence of our educational institutions, U.S. scholarship will undoubtedly play a strong influential role in the building of an international scholarship. Given the challenges that we face in our own society, it should be clear, however, that we will benefit from, as well as shape, the internationalization of scholarship. (39)

#### **Prospects for a Rapprochement of Latin American Studies, Latino Studies, and Cultural Studies**

The unparalleled competitiveness of the U.S. university system is cause for both the increasing presence of Latin American academics in the United States, not only as permanent professors but also as occasional workers supplementing their salaries back home, and also for their resentment at the power of this university system to establish research agendas to which they must accommodate. With the likely rapprochement between ethnic studies and cultural studies and their protagonist role in helping to reconstitute area studies, i.e., Latin American studies a U.S. approach to dealing with questions of social stability markets and diversity is likely to gain ground in Latin America. In fact, it has already established some beachheads. And there is opposition, as in the debates over the direction of scholarship on Latin America to which I referred in the introduction. These critiques do not come from reactionary conservative points of view, not even from left conservative perspectives such as the Marxist critique of identity politics with which we are familiar in the United States. It has to do with the asymmetry in the establishment of research agendas rather than a critique of the identity politics evident in the approach of U.S. Latin Americanists for a more democratic culture and society, which in any case is a common desideratum of all involved.

Reconciling the differences that this asymmetry opens up is not easy. One strategy, which would be to invite Latin American academics to participate in the design of research agendas, is not necessarily workable, if we imagine that there will be continued resentment that those invitations are at the disposition of U.S. actors, be they Euramericans or Latinos. The underdevelopment of foreign university systems by the dominance of the U.S. university system engraves this unequal situation in the structure of knowledge-producing institutions on a global level. Another tack might be to create transnational academic circuits with the goal of influencing the educational policy of international bodies and trade agreements as well as international foundations in order to strengthen the university systems in Latin America, which national governments are downsizing due to pressures to cut public expenditures, and also to adjust the educational sector to business, trade, and technological innovation. The Ford Foundation has an initiative to make this partnership more feasible, and those of us who are negotiating the relations among area studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies should make recourse to it as a means to help defuse some tensions between Latin American and Latino scholars. The Ford Foundation's architect for the Crossing Borders initiative referred to earlier writes that:

The fund will complement the grant making [to rethink area studies in the United States] by supporting international collaborations through grants made jointly to academic institutions in the U.S. and overseas. The Foundation hopes that the impetus for such collaborations will originate largely overseas so that the historical imbalance—whereby scholars in the West studied the "rest"—may truly begin to shift. Without that change, revitalization of Area Studies will inevitably be limited. (Volkman 1998, 3-4)

And I would add that without that change, the reconstitution of ethnic and cultural studies will also be limited.

### **Conclusion: The Critique of Culture**

The post-Cold War creates a situation that is difficult, however, for reworking the relations between Latino studies, area studies, and cultural studies. All of these transdisciplines have prioritized the role of culture—the recognition of cultural differences—as the sine qua non of democratization. It is this notion of culture, for example, that underpins the concept of cultural citizenship introduced by Renato Rosaldo (1989; Rosaldo and Flores 1987). At odds with conventional notions of citizenship, which emphasize universal albeit formal applicability of political rights to all members of a nation, the usefulness of the concept of cultural citizenship is to emphasize that groups of people bound together by shared social, cultural, and/or physical features should not be excluded from participation in the public spheres of a given polity on the



basis of those features. In a juridical context that enables litigation against exclusion and a cultural-political ethos that eschews marginalizing the "nonnormative" (considered as such from the perspective of the "mainstream"), culture serves as the ground or warrant for making "claim[s] to rights in the public square" (Rosaldo 1997, 36). Since culture is what "create[s] space where people feel 'safe' and 'at home,' where they feel a sense of belonging and membership," it is, according to this view, a necessary condition for citizenship (Flores and Benmayor 1997, 15). Consequently, if democracy is to be fostered, public spheres in which deliberation on questions of the public good is held must be permeable to different cultures. The relativist strain in anthropological theory—according to which "communal culture" as an ensemble of ideas and values provides the individual with identity (Sapir 1924)—is mobilized here for political ends. Culture is thus more than this anchoring ensemble of ideas and values. It is premised on difference, which functions as a *resource* (Flores and Benmayor 1997, 5). One drawback is that the content of culture recedes in importance as the instrumental usefulness of the claim to difference as a warrant gains legitimacy. It might be said that previous understandings of culture—canons of artistic excellence, symbolic patterns that give coherence to and thus endow a group of people or society with human worth—give way to the expediency of culture. In our era, *claims to* difference and culture are expedient insofar as they enable the empowerment of a community.

Because the expediency or instrumentality of culture is increasingly evident, appeals to cultural difference do not carry the legitimizing force that they once did. It is no longer invoked only by minority groups seeking greater inclusion but also by governments, international nongovernmental organizations, the corporate sector, and even multilateral development banks. With the inflation of culture, its value in the project to democratize society wanes partly because of its absorption into the strategic gambits of capital and politics. Like ideology, in Larry Grossberg's formulation, cultural politics are increasingly beside the point. Grossberg's "end of ideology" is premised not on the demise of communism but on the rearticulation of political economy. Unlike Fukuyama's formulation, however, the new global conjuncture of today does not portend the end of history. Modernity required ideology to camouflage the instrumentality of cultural management. But today, as Larry Grossberg argues, the globalization of culture has led to an "increasingly cynical inflection to the logic of ideology," such that it no longer operates unconsciously. If ideology implies that "people don't know what they are doing but they are doing it anyway," then the expediency of culture as instrumental performativity implies that "they know what they are doing but they are doing it anyway" (Grossberg 1999, 43-44 n. 52). Once we are all aware that cultural identity is wielded as a form of strategic essentialism, it loses its power to open up space, or the space that it opens up is functional for the neoliberal university or a Benettonian representation of cultural democracy compatible with consumerism. The Gramscian view of

culture as a terrain of struggle may only extend the reach of the market and other forms of instrumentality on this view. Therefore, ethnic studies and cultural studies need to articulate their goals with a critique of culture.

Bill Readings (1996) elaborates further on the transformation in the experience of culture. In the so-called post-Fordist era, culture no longer mediates between the ethnic nation and the rational state to produce a distinct national identity. This does not mean that culture disappears but only that it is reconverted; it becomes instrumentally useful but no longer legitimized as the medium through which subjects are civilized or, to use the language of early twentieth century cultural policy, become "ethically incomplete" (Miller 1998). Ethical incompleteness, indeed, is a variant of that performative force that requires subjects to come into being by reiterating norms. According to Readings, the emerging global system of capitalism no longer needs "a cultural content in terms of which to interpellate and manage subjects" (cited in Grossberg 1998, 5), which is not to say that subjects do not consume culture more voraciously than ever before. In other words, as culture expands and becomes ever more central to the economy, its importance in establishing a Bourdieuan distinction wanes. Capitalism now is committed only to "monetary subjects without money" who are merely "the shadow of money's substance." Consequently, "if the sphere of the ideological [and I would add, the cultural] has become visible (not only in critical theory and the academy but literally everywhere), this is because it is not where the real game is being played anymore" (Grossberg 1998, 5).

It is not so much that power dispenses with culture; it no longer needs it to shape ethical subjects of the nation. Culture is freed, so to speak, to become a generator of value in its own right. And it is increasingly traveling speedily along the same media as finance capital, which seems to have become a virtual source of value. Neoliberal capitalism may also be understood as the "post-development organization of international capital" now that in the post-Cold War period there is no need to develop the so-called underdeveloped world (Grossberg 2000). Emblematic of this situation is the recent turn to culture by multilateral development lending institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. They ask questions like the following: What kind of rationality can economic agents rely on for investment in culture? What kind of structure of incentives will get results? The answer we get is that incentives can provide a stable environment for private investment in culture rather than the episodic nature characteristic of public investment in culture. But even then we are told that "we have to limit the model of financing of culture to specific segments of culture because the demand for resources is too large and wide-ranging" (Santana 1999).

Return is the sine qua non of investment. Why else should economic agents invest? How can you persuade them? It all depends on how we define return. One thing we can say with certainty is that the financing of

culture for culture's sake has a low probability of success. The different kinds of return are: (1) fiscal incentives, (2) institutional marketing or publicity value, (3) conversion of nonmarket activity to market activity. As far as multilateral development banks are concerned, the major kinds of cultural funding are for projects that provide a political return (e.g., help defuse political problems and hence give greater security to investment), and projects that develop human and social capital (e.g., education) that increase the GDP and enable governments to repay their loans. (Santana 1999)

To be sure, education must be financed and curricula developed to expand the GDP, but this is not its only usefulness. Culture and identity, as the lynchpins of the rapprochement of Latin American studies, Latino studies, and cultural studies, have largely been reconverted for the benefit of the neoliberal project. Therefore it is important to understand the degree to which a new phase of institutionalization in the university may not solve the frustrations that all three endeavors have produced in their constituencies. Such understanding requires large doses of critique. For critics like Richard, only the disruptive force of certain aesthetic practices continues to repel the omnivorous reach of the market and the instrumental discourses of cultural legitimation. While this is no doubt true, particularly in countries like Chile where she resides, it is important to recognize that disruption is not produced exclusively by culturalist or aestheticist resistance. Other significant forms of disruption are given by the solidarity protests in Seattle in December 1999 that brought about the collapse of the talks at the meeting of the World Trade Organization. The protestors laid bare the undemocratic manipulation of the international trading system by the major powers against the interests of developing countries, the poor, the environment workers, and consumers. The rapprochement of Latin American studies, Latino studies, and cultural studies could become complicit with a university system beholden to the corporate world. On the other hand, this new endeavor can work to undermine the very premises under which universities are fostering it. To do so requires examining the transnational context in which the ground of culture and identity is already structured for its absorption. The fact that so many of the abuses of the new world economic order are practiced in Latin American countries (e.g., the abuse of workers in sweatshops, the creation of a huge "reserve army of unemployed labor," the rise of new private universities at the expense of public institutions) is an opportunity to examine and intervene in the very conditions that shape our institutional practice. This is also an opportunity to factor class back into the projects of ethnic studies and cultural studies and extend its relevance to a transnational framework in which these projects can be part of a heterogeneous yet global critique of the ways in which neoliberalism has structured the terrain in which we act.

**Addendum: 15 January 2007**

This essay was written in 2000 and hence did not foresee the repercussions of 9/11 on government policy. These include: reinforcement of area studies via Title VI funding, particularly for Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian Studies, with a yet-to-be-determined place of culture in this use of education for security concerns; the linking of security concerns over terrorism and piracy (which affects capital accumulation in the so-called “new economy”); the weakening of the U.S. university as the desirable place for study by foreigners, who are turning to Europe (particularly the UK and Germany) and developing educational infrastructure in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The term ‘Arielism’ is based on José Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel* (1967), originally published in 1900. It is a call to Latin American intellectuals to eschew the allure of U.S. instrumental culture and instead model their politics on a quasi-Kantian, disinterested aesthetics. Were Rodó to have taken an activist role in educational policy, it would be possible to see in him an analogue of Matthew Arnold, in whose *Culture and Anarchy* [1869] 1961 culture is characterized as the atmosphere in which an aesthetic technocracy would rule more effectively than either the aristocratic or capitalist classes.

<sup>2</sup> “Dunn was an organizer or officer of a number of Soviet-American cooperation and cultural exchange organizations. He was highly visible on the letterheads and at the rallies of Left and pro-Soviet groups and, although he was not a member of the Communist Party he was active in many organizations supported by the party. He was the classic fellow traveler of the McCarthyites and his application to be scientific attaché in the American embassy in Paris was denied, presumably for political reasons. Nevertheless, during the entire period of his political activity his research was supported by an AEC contract” (Lewontin 1997, 19).

<sup>3</sup> This mesh or field of action that channeled sixties politics in the medium of protest was structured by “[weak] working class organization...[flawed] electoral representative institutions...and state structures that inhibited the translation of popular interests into policy” (Piven and Cloward 1993, 422).

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