

Why Cultural Studies?

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ABSTRACT – Why Cultural Studies? In this text it is argued that the vitality of Cultural Studies is in its openness and receptivity to promote varied conceptual and theoretical articulations. In order to deepen the analysis on the productive encounter between Cultural Studies and education, this article makes a survey of researches on nature and, also, of those themes dedicated to indigenous and afro-Brazilians. It is done in order to indicate theoretical articulations, investigative paths and points of attention promoted by researchers identified with this articulatory field. As part of a broader ethical-political project, it is observed that these studies question essentialisms, fundamentalisms, eurocentrisms, racisms, and point to possible forms of political-academic resistance.

Keywords: Cultural Studies. Nature Studies. Ethnic-Racial Relationships.

RESUMO – Por Que Estudos Culturais? Argumenta-se, neste texto, que a vitalidade dos Estudos Culturais está na abertura e receptividade para promover enlances conceituais e teóricos variados. De modo a adensar a discussão sobre o frutífero encontro entre Estudos Culturais e Educação, no presente artigo promove-se um rastreamento de pesquisas sobre natureza e, também, daquelas dedicadas às temáticas indígenas e afro-brasileiras de modo a indicar enlances teóricos, caminhos investigativos e pontos de atenção promovidos por pesquisadores identificados com este campo articulatório. Observa-se que, como parte de um projeto ético-político mais amplo, estes estudos questionam essencialismos, fundamentalismos, eurocentrismos, racismos e acenam para possíveis formas de resistência político-acadêmica.

Palavras-chave: Estudos Culturais. Estudos de Natureza. Relações Étnico-Raciais.

The publication of this article on Cultural Studies is the culmination of a theoretical and political project that started 25 years ago with the Graduate Program in Education of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). In the mid-1990s, a group of professors longed to “[...] promote the disarticulation between educational field and connections that strongly associated it with Freire’s thinking and with studies focused on Piaget’s genetic psychology” (Wortmann; Costa; Silveira, 2015, p. 33). Therefore, this project was plural and heterogeneous (since it brought together researchers from many areas of knowledge) but questioned the context of Brazilian Education and the solutions insistently sought in theories (even nowadays) regarded as hegemonic in the Educational field. The project was established from actions that involved: research line creation – Cultural Studies in Education; foundation of the Nucleus of studies about curriculum, culture and society (NECCSO) in 1996; creation of the discussion list (NECCSOLIST), active to this day; the elaboration, organization, translation, and publication of provocative books, which promoted criticism of curricular and representational/identity policies (Silva, 1995; Costa, 1998; Silva, 1999a; Silva, 1999b; Costa, 2000); problematization of gender and sexuality issues in school (Louro, 1997); analysis of cultural pedagogies and media means (Silva, 1995); problematization of research practices in Education (Costa, 1996); questioning of psychologizing trends in the Educational field (Silva, 1998); children’s literature analysis (Silveira, 2002); and science production (Wortmann; Veiga-Neto, 2001).

Then, between 2002 and 2004, the theoretical and political Cultural Studies in Education in Brazil became complex due to the creation of the Graduate Program in Education of the Universidade Luterana do Brasil (ULBRA – a private and confessional institution located in Porto Alegre), with concentration area in Cultural Studies, as well as a research group (the Culture and Education Group), and three similar research lines (Childhood, youth, and educational spaces; Curriculum, science, and technologies; Pedagogies and difference policies). Still in 2004 – accreditation year of the aforementioned Program with CAPES – the 1st Brazilian Seminar on Cultural Studies and Education (SBECE) was performed, later combined with the International Seminar on Cultural Studies and Education (SIECE), maintained as an underlining event of the (visceral and affective) relationship between the Research Line of Cultural Studies in Education (PPGEDU/UFRGS), and the Graduate Program in Education (PPGEDU)¹ of ULBRA.

If Cultural Studies have been characterized as *nomadic*², *polymorphic*, *transgressive*, *anthropophagic*, and *plural* knowledge, they are also marked by marginality. Their practitioners do not seek to be a *situation*, but a(n) (op)position; they do not seek so much for consensus, but they fight critical battles among themselves with the knowledge established in the Academy, with naturalized understandings about educational spaces and subjects who live in them, with the crystallized research approaches from/in school, as well as fight against the most evident explanations for the most diverse (and complex) behaviors and phenomena.

Thus, the practitioners of these studies do not seek to assume immediate solutions to issues affecting contemporary societies – they are concerned with the indication of such problems, with mapping conditions of possibility, with the investigation of their emergence, as well as the practices and subjects involved in such issues. These are the political actions that predominantly occupy such studies.

Persisting is increasingly important – although there is still relative marginality of culturalism approaches in the Educational field – especially because we live in a time when conservative and retrograde positions obtained prominence worldwide in the public authorities' statements and administrative measures, curbing notably gender, sexuality, and ethnic-racial policies, among others.

The discussion of such issues interests the Cultural Studies, as from the valorization of cultural theory the “intellectual issues are no longer addressed in ivory towers, but became part of the media world, *malls*, and even bedrooms and motels”, as Eagleton (2005, p. 15) indicated when debating about the losses and gains of the culturalism approaches. Still considering Eagleton, one of the greatest achievements of cultural theory was the establishment of gender and sexuality as legitimate study objects and as issues of persistent political importance, although the author understands there was an ironic “trivialization of sexuality” (Eagleton, 2005, p. 16). The author also stated that, in Cultural Studies, “the analyses returned to the everyday life”, but also warned about replacing a consecrated belief to scholarship with another that deals with trivial events. Finally, as Eagleton stated in the Cultural Theory, one started “[...] to recognize that human existence has at least as much to do with fantasy and desire, as with truth and reason” (Eagleton, 2005, p. 17). These understandings have been recorded in many studies developed from Cultural Studies articulations and different areas of knowledge as Grossberg pointed out (2009), such as anti-racist, anti-heterosexist, anti-patriarchs, feminists, postcolonial, and decolonial.

The important and desirable conceptual dispersion arises from such involvements, which allowed not only the proliferation of these studies, but deepening and investigations regarding issues, situations, and focused themes, reaffirming the political breadth of the implied actions. At this point one notes how much this is associated with an investigative position/attitude that involves inciting the cultural analyses productivity. It is also associated with what Grossberg (2009) has pointed out in the many discussions about the Cultural Studies practice: these studies are involved with a knowledge production committed to radical contexts and to constructionism, as well as to a policy responsible for promoting social transformations. In Grossberg's words:

[...] cultural studies are concerned with describing and intervening in the ways cultural practices are produced within, inserted into, and operate in the everyday life of human beings and social formations, so as to reproduce, struggle against, and perhaps transform the existing structures of power (Grossberg, 2009, p. 17).

In Cultural Studies, practices and events are examined to indicate the place these studies occupy in historical formations. Furthermore, as Hall and Birchall (2006) indicated, one of the most important research performed contemporarily involves concerns, such as the exploration of new directions and territories for these studies, especially regarding theory. This demands the search for new possibilities, which has been performed by many scholars who belonged to a new generation of cultural studies theorists, as indicated by Hall and Birchall (2006); scholars whose academic background was entirely associated with theory, a distinct direction from the first generation members, almost all from popular social movements and whose university trajectory was characterized by clashes against the academic elitism in England in the mid-20th century. A sample of studies that discuss the possibilities of renewing and reinvigorating the theoretical discourse of Cultural Studies was organized and presented by Hall and Birchall (2006) in the work *New Cultural Studies – adventures in theory*. The texts gathered in this book attempt to build articulations with contemporary philosophy by discussing deconstruction, post-Marxism, ethics, anti-capitalism, post-humanities, and new media, as well as some intersections with intellectual theorizations, such as Gilles Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek. As its organizers pointed out, this book aimed to indicate the importance of a renewed action and ensure the theoretical fertility of Cultural Studies, especially to analyze recent events without neglecting desirable qualities, such as erudition, lucidity, and engagement. According to Hall and Birchall (2006, p. 5), this new generation is different because it is “not being recognized as a school”, but as “[...] more mobile [...] fluid, flexible, and spatially diffuse, involving a multiplicity of often conflicting, contradictory, and incommensurable theories, approaches, objects, pedagogies and styles”.

Still according to these authors, there are new lands with practices and productions whose approximations with theory are varied and, above all, unusual. Furthermore, they also argue that the most interesting Cultural Studies developments seem to occur on the margins or even outside the spaces and institutions identified with them. Moreover, they say: “it seems there is a clear decline of theory’s influence, and some consider this may not be something bad, because it is time for movements beyond theory” (Hall; Birchall, 2006, p. 4). However, they continue: “[...] at a time when it often seems theory is being increasingly marginalized, within cultural studies, the institution of the university and society in general, it is theory that they are drawing on for help in doing so” (Hall; Birchall, 2006, p. 4).

A clipping was established in this text, given the research scope done with the Cultural Studies contributions to many disciplinary fields. Thus, we are specifically interested in the encounter between Cultural Studies and Education promoted especially from the creation of a specific research line at UFRGS, a space that contributed to the dynamism and strengthening of this study line, as well as to the nucle-

ation of other groups in other higher education institutions located throughout Brazil.

A first assessment to point out the articulation productivity between Cultural Studies and Education was performed in 2003, in an article written by Costa, Silveira, and Sommer, entitled Cultural studies, education and pedagogy, published in the *Revista Brasileira de Educação*. In that article, considerations about the emergence and development of Cultural Studies were presented as a multifaceted area, in which culture is conceived as a resistance and political field. The authors pointed out the connections (and the outcomes) of Cultural Studies with Marxisms, feminisms, anti-racist movements, as well as approximations and crossings with theoretical aspects and methodological trends, useful for the problematization of educational issues.

Wortmann, Costa, and Silveira reassessed the role of Cultural Studies in an article published in 2015 in the journal *Educação* (PUCRS) when in contact with Education. Three main directions of studies performed in the interface between Education and Cultural Studies were highlighted between 1996 and 2014: the first concerns studies that have promoted the resignification of the pedagogical field from new theoretical perspectives, issues, discourses, and artifacts traditionally regarding pedagogy; the second gathers studies pointing to a multiplicity of pedagogies operating in varied contemporary cultural spaces; finally, the third concerns studies dealing with the production of identities and differences. In 2016, studies directly involved with the curriculum were examined by Costa, Wortmann, and Bonin to track possible contributions of Cultural Studies for curricular discussions. The authors indicated there were three main intellectual movements, which involved the expansion of the curriculum notion, the intensification of analyses on government policies and programs, and a detained reflection on how the notions of identity and difference permeate curricular propositions.

Considering the different analytical efforts made to systematize investigative pathways derived from the encounter between Cultural Studies and Education in almost three decades of academic production, in this article we argue that this strand of research has been using different theorizations and many areas of knowledge as part of the expansion and updating movements, which reconfigures some of the theoretical and methodological directions assumed by the researchers. In this context, we follow the indications made by Hall and Birchall (2009) that the Cultural Studies productivity and vitality is open to promote varied conceptual and theoretical comprehensive associations, yet sometimes unusual. The effort is then focused on the indication of some directions followed by researchers, who, aiming to respond to current issues, use concepts, research models, and theoretical repertoires not directly associated with Cultural Studies to expand analytical possibilities.

On the one hand, our attention will be focused on nature studies, and on the other hand, on the discussions involving indigenous and Afro-Brazilian themes, because we understand that these themes demand attention and increased caution in analytical terms, due to the

contemporary disconcerting political scenario in Brazil. Environmental and ethnic-racial issues have been intensely boosted in claims of social movements, being sometimes adapted into laws, actions, plans, and public policies understood as relevant social achievements. These are not new concerns for Cultural Studies and Education; on the contrary, they have been part of the debate for decades, but today they are in sight of conservative government policies and society sectors that historically support and sustain their privileges with state actions.

Nature Studies: articulations and possibilities

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit) deeply marked the relations between culture and nature worldwide. For the first time, issues such as Ozone Layer; Greenhouse Effect; global warming; anthropic action and impacts on biodiversity; acid rain; and social and environmental poverty/inequality have taken over the news and the most different arenas. The Environmental Education³ – as an immediate response to such issues – gained unprecedented visibility, and was posteriori incorporated into the Brazilian Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (Law 9,394/96), into the National Curricular Parameters (as cross-cutting theme) and, later, regulated by law no. 9,795 of April 27, 1999, which instituted the National Policy on Environmental Education.

In this context, the encounter between Cultural Studies and Environmental Education occurred in the late 1990s in the Graduate Program in Education of UFRGS (Guimarães; Wortmann, 2014) and, more specifically, in the context of discussions undertaken in the Study Group on Education and Science as Culture (GEECC). The researchers associated with said group and guided by Maria Lúcia Castagna Wortmann began to analyze three interconnected fields (cultural and discursive production of nature, body, and science & technology) from readings, such as: Donna Haraway's early work (*Simians, Cyborgs and Women; Primate Visions; Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan@Meets_Onco-Mouse*TM; and *The promises of monsters*), by Emily Martin (*The Woman in the Body; Flexible Bodies*), Susan Bordo (*Unbearable Weight; The Male Body*), Sharon Traweek (*Doing Science + Culture*), and Dorothy Nelkin (*Selling Science; Dangerous Diagnostics; The MYstique DNA; The Body Bazaar*), among other authors strongly associated with⁴ Science Studies, the U.S. Media Studies⁵, and Feminist Studies. These studies were published in books and review articles – of which we highlight, for example, Wortmann and Veiga-Neto (2001); Wortmann et al. (2007); Guimarães and Wortmann (2014) – and the researchers became eventually autonomous research centers in Higher Education Institutions throughout Brazil.

Regarding the Nature Studies focused on this article, it is important to emphasize that the investigations gave centrality to the concept of *nature*, mischaracterizing it as the opposite of culture, or even as the

opposite of *civilization* – in fact, tensioning and problematizing such binarism. Furthermore, “all these studies were attributed to nature, in different spaces and times, also to different meanings from the cultural constructions in the contemporaneity” (Guimarães; Wortmann, 2014, p. 26).

One of the most prolific authors regarding the articulation between Cultural Studies and Nature Studies is Leandro Belinaso Guimarães, professor of the Graduate Program in Education at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) and founder of the Weaving Group – Environmental Education and Cultural Studies⁶ (Guimarães et al., 2010). Until the mid-2000s, the group coordinated by Guimarães was noticed due to the analysis of multiple nature and environment representations and to the discussions around the discourse (and later the *device*⁷) of socio-environmental sustainability and in the systematization of themes regarding the environment in different cultural artifacts and social groups. They also performed studies aimed at

[...] more dense relationships between subjects and the places they live in. In many studies, we work with places where there was something of ‘nature’, that is, places with certain amounts of biodiversity preservation. We were – even if using references from Cultural Studies that made us question what we practiced all the time – committed to an environmental education by which we wanted to preserve not only the environments considered as more ‘natural’, but conserve, rescue, and maintain human collectives with certain amounts of ‘tradition’. The latter, taken by us as proper to a place and to a human collective. We had difficulty seeing human (and non-human) collectives as a hybridization, as learned from Néstor García Canclini (2000)⁸, in which disparate elements interpenetrate, producing a constant update of these own collectives with asymmetric relationships of knowledge-power (Guimarães et al., 2010, p.76, our translation).

Over time, the work around nature studies changed: there was the increasingly remarkable use of theoretical-methodological concept of deconstruction by Derrida, as well as the deep (and fruitful) articulation with authors from the Literature, Art, Cinema, Photography, Philosophy (and philosophy of difference), anthropology, etc. In the most recent studies, Guimarães and Karam (2019) highlight ways of living and relating to environments that involve individuals, based on narratives built by residents of a seaside town of Santa Catarina, Brazil. The authors connect such narratives to their own memories and to different cultural productions, such as a cartoon starring a robot collector/classifier of objects to be discarded and characters from a novel by Rivera Letelier, entitled *The Movie-teller*. From these connections, important reflections are made on the value attributed to things and the role they play in building memories, as well as in the way individuals constitute themselves as subjects.

Still within nature studies – that is, at the intersection of Cultural Studies and Environmental Education – the contributions of Marise Basso Amaral and Shaula Maíra Vicentini de Sampaio are highlighted, both professors at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), but having started their studies at graduate level with the Graduate Program in Education of UFRGS. Guimarães and Wortmann (2014) show the impact of the first studies of Marise Basso Amaral in 1997 – with their Master’s thesis, entitled *Representações de natureza e a educação pela mídia* (Nature and education representations by the media), which would later usher in one of the most potent theoretical-methodological trends of Cultural Studies: the alternate use of representation concepts and cultural pedagogies in association with the critical theorizations of Media Studies (Judith Williamson, Henry Giroux, Douglas Kellner), and Barthes’ Semiotics in the analysis of advertising pieces that used elements of nature to sell products and services. The aforementioned author published several texts from her Thesis (Amaral, 1997b; 1999; 2000) problematizing the network of meanings produced by advertising around nature. According to Amaral, such meanings “naturalize images, concepts, and definitions of an almost always prototype nature, almost always technological progress and development model, almost always romantic, benign, pure, and immaculate” (Amaral, 1999, p. 236, our translation). Moreover, nature has been shown in the media, according to the author, “as a reflection of what is good and socially acceptable, that is, natural, and therefore legislator of what is not normal” (Amaral, 1999, p. 236, our translation). In another study, the author questions meanings of a widely circulating nature – for example, the idea that it is merely a *resource* and, as such, could (and should) be used, manipulated, and controlled by human beings; the idea that nature is *primitive, inhospitable, distant* of human beings and, ultimately, “negative counterpoint of everything that culture and consumption can offer us” (Amaral, 1999, p. 117, our translation). Another author who deserves emphasis in this section is Shaula Maíra Vicentini de Sampaio, whose course in Cultural Studies begins with her master’s research production, advised by Maria Lúcia Wortmann. Sampaio (2005) takes the concepts of representation, consumption, and identity to think about the manufacture of environmental educators in the framework of a continuing training course, offered to public school teachers. The author discusses pedagogical strategies aimed at the subjects’ clarification, information, and awareness, which produces and mobilizes a certain sense of redemptive education. In the study, she examines not only the curricular proposal and the forms of course implementation, but also the narratives of participants and the testimonies of environmental educators collected, throughout the study, due to their supposed exemplary. With these procedures, the author shows there are certain preferential attributes for environmental educators emphasized in formation, such as the ability to live and behave in front of nature according to premises they teach.

In 2012, Sampaio defends her Doctoral Dissertation, in which she examines a broad and diffuse discursive network in which truths about

the Amazon rainforest are produced. Escaping the formal environmental educational scope, the author begins to discuss in texts published in Brazilian newspapers between 2007 and 2011, how it is a kind of strategic sustainability device that operates by validating certain practices and producing new regulation forms for both the forest and the people who live in it. To expand the analytical potential of Cultural Studies, the author uses the Foucauldian Studies, employing notions of device and discourse as central analytical tools. She also considers historical speeches to indicate how a *traditional population* sense, skilled and pure enough, emerges to deal with an imposing and grand nature. The study deals with the media pedagogical character and locates tensions and impasses between “developmental” and “preservationist” discourses, accompanied by the proposition of sustainable development as an alternative solution for the Amazon region and for the global climate change.

More recently, Sampaio (2019) discusses the conflicting but powerful (dis)encounters between Environmental Education and Cultural Studies. The author points out the intertwining between theory and politics, as shown by Stuart Hall. This intertwining is a fundamental characteristic of the Cultural Studies intellectual practice, resulting in the impossibility of studies to maintain a peaceful or passive relationship with theory. Sampaio argues that, in this perspective, theories are taken not only as tools to access and understand the world, but also to intervene in the world and modify it. The relationships between theory and practice in the Environmental Education are also conflicting and tense, because while pedagogical approaches to environmental training are eminently prescriptive and normative, the Environmental Education takes on a political policy bias aimed at intervention and change of reality, in order to overcome totalitarianism, prejudices, and injustices. From the examination of many studies, the article focuses on the (dis)encounters that occur in the articulations of these fields, paying attention to brands, problematizations, questions, and to the establishment of other operational ways with discourses about the environment. The author also presents approaches that have gained visibility in this articulatory encounter, to the extent that the Human Sciences finally appropriated and brought significant contributions to contemporary debates on the environmental crisis.

It is noteworthy that, inspired by these authors, we continue to pay attention to the nature representations produced in other cultural spaces – for example, taking documentary cinema as a central focus (see Marcello; Ripoll, 2016; Borba, 2016; Borba; Ripoll, 2015), and corporate marketing (Paim, 2010; Silva, 2018; Silva, Ripoll; Wortmann, 2018).

Ethnic-racial bias studies: theoretical arrangements and new focuses of attention

Since its emergence, Cultural Studies have been facing the challenge of problematizing racism and analyzing how stereotypes and

Eurocentric versions of historical events are produced, updated, and propagated. Stuart Hall's studies on the spectacular representation of the difference in British advertising⁹ were inspiring to question the racialization pedagogies, by which race is attributed to some subjects but not to others. Along with these discussions, there is also a fruitful space for the tensioning of monocultural practices, within which knowledge, experiences, different ethnicities productions, and indigenous cultures are neglected, silenced, and/or trivialized.

Regarding cultural and identity policies, it is worth noting that the substantial transformations experienced in global and transnational capitalism make boundaries increasingly porous, with circulating messages and subjects' products, bringing together worlds imagined as distant, and thus, substantially altering the routines and practices of our time. Moreover, initiatives of political movements and a range of new social actors, who claim specific rights, proliferate. Many of them are incorporated into legislation from the constitutional premise of respecting differences. Actions leveraged by black and indigenous movements – which also had the collaboration of support networks incorporated inside and outside academic institutions – promoted important advances in public policies, regulations, and legal provisions of the Educational field. The highlighted laws are no. 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2008, which make the approach to Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture mandatory in the country's Basic Education public schools. Also law no. 12,711/2012, regulated by Presidential Decree no. 7,824/2012 and supported by the Normative Ordinance no. 18/2012, of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, which determines the reservation of half of the courses vacancies offered in Universities and Federal Institutes to students who studied for three years at public high schools; and for blacks, browns, indigenous, and disabled the vacancies must concern percentages regarding the population indicators of each locality.

In academic spaces, black and indigenous presences have been expanding the possible interventions and problematizations to the extent that these students claim recognition, respect, space of expression, and place of speech in the university context. And to account for these issues, researchers from Cultural Studies and Education have been using wide and varied theoretical contributions from anthropology, sociology, political science, black studies, among others.

Regarding ethnic-racial studies in Latin America, we highlight studies performed, coordinated, and directed by Daniel Mato within the framework of the *Red Educación Superior y Pueblos Indígenas y Afrodescendientes* (ESIAL)¹⁰, associated with the *Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios Avanzados da Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero*, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The interinstitutional network has been coordinated by Mato since 2007 and has currently the participation of 44 universities in 10 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela).

In one of his most recent writings, Mato (2019b) discusses the political, ethical, and epistemological dimensions regarding the Cultural Studies institutionalization in the Latin American context. Furthermore, the author emphasizes the importance of investigative practices including the participation of other social agents than those who work in the Academy. As highlighted, in Cultural Studies it is possible to relate the discussions of otherness to subjects, specific organizations, social groups positioned in the different terms of socioeconomic strata, occupation, ethnic and racial belonging, gender, generation, among other social markers. The relevance of this proposal lies in the culturalism (and post-structuralism cutting) premise that there is no universal knowledge, and thus, the knowledge production demands intercultural collaboration and appreciation of other ways of thinking and practicing science, an aspect that formal scientific institutions value little. Mato shows that public policies tend to dissociate intellectual studies from political and ethical reflections, a limit that should be surpassed to allow universities to reassess their relationships with the social sectors and to appropriate other teaching-learning models, with a more local aspect.

In the encouraged intellectual production of Daniel Mato, analytical directions are diversified, but in the clipping that interests this article we highlight the productivity of texts published between 2008 and 2019 integrating studies organized by him (Mato, 2019a; 2018; 2017; 2016a; 2015; 2008) that focus on the access and permanence of indigenous and Afro-descendant people in higher education institutions in Latin America. The author points out, in several of his writings, the marks of a colonial heritage that produces and maintains unequal conditions for access to school and academic educational spaces for indigenous and Afro-descendants in contemporary Latin American societies. The texts gathered in these studies are dense information sources and offer a relatively wide overview of the efforts made by researchers for decades and articulated simultaneously by Red ESIAL.

Mato presents fruitful actions underway in Latin America that place several traditions of knowledge production – learning for which it is necessary to pay attention, according to him, in view of the problems regarding the *translation* of worldviews, values, sensitivities, and temporalities, affective senses that constitute one of the main challenges to face in any experience of intercultural communication. For him, even though explicitly racist forms have been mitigated in university spaces, racism (sometimes barely visible) “particularly by excluding not only students and teachers from these villages, but also from worldviews, stories, languages, knowledge, ways of producing knowledge and learning systems that are their own” (Mato, 2016b, p. 21, our translation). If current racism forms are propagated (also) by institutional and formal means – laws and policies, institutional models, curricula – the author points out that these elements should integrate the list of concerns of thematic ethnic-racial scholars, along with an attention to everyday expressions and actions, ways of articulating power and knowledge (the

power to define, to represent, to establish truths, and the knowledge that conforms and legitimizes all this). The discussion on the pedagogical aspects of cultural practices should, thus, be accompanied by an attentive education against all racism forms thought continuously and aimed at students, managers, and teachers, to expand the possibilities of strangeness and reversal of racist institutional and epistemological bases.

In Brazil, specifically from the theoretical association between Cultural Studies and Education, a set of studies focusing on the indigenous theme was and has been developed initially under the guidance of Rosa Maria Hessel Silveira, professor of the Graduate program in Education at UFRGS. The first thesis defended was from Teresinha Silva de Oliveira (2001), entitled *Olhares Poderosos* (Powerful Looks), in which indigenous' stereotypes and representations are problematized in textbooks and media products. The following year, Maria Helena Rodrigues Paes (2002) defended the dissertation *Na fronteira: os atuais dilemas da escola indígena em aldeias Paresi de Tangará da Serra (MT), num olhar dos Estudos Culturais* (At the border: the current dilemmas of the indigenous school in Paresi villages of Tangará da Serra, MT, in a look of cultural studies), in which she focused tensions and hybridizations in disparate cultural contexts, but strongly intertwined in the practices of indigenous school education. In the following years, the dissertations of Iara Tatiana Bonin (2007), Maria Helena Paes (2008), and José Vicente Aguiar (2011) analyzed a wide network of discourses about indigenous people, produced and propagated in varied instances, spaces, and artifacts (such as records travelers' accounts, literary narratives, didactics, cinematographic), as well as in basic education and higher education students' narratives, to locate and problematize emergency conditions and effects of discourses or historical and contemporary representations by which they are named, characterized, and position the indigenous in a web of power and knowledge relationships.

In an effort to systematize studies that focused on the indigenous theme in culturalism, Bonin, Ripoll, and Aguiar (2015) mapped and discussed the theses and dissertations results published between 2000 and 2013 in three Graduate Programs in Education, thus indicating some trends and analytical approaches. The study allowed us to understand the academic productions of this articulatory field, which have been fertile to problematize the abstract idea of cultural diversity, to critically analyze cultural markers of identities and differences, to discuss relationships of power, derogatory repertoires about indigenous cultures, essentialisms, and the search for purity and cultural authenticity, practices and representational policies by which racism, Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism are propagated.

In other recent articles, Bonin and Silveira (2012), Bonin and Ripoll (2015), Bonin, Kirchof, and Ripoll (2018), and Thomas and Bonin (2019) have shown the Cultural Studies productivity to critically discuss representations and/or discourses about indigenous people in children's literature, print media, textbooks, and virtual social networks us-

ing theoretical contributions from the Anthropology and Educational fields, and by interestedly employing conceptualities, discussions, and questions brought by the Studies of the Body, the Studies of Visual Culture, and Semiotics. Indigenous authorial productions (Cachoeira; Bonin, 2019; Bonin, 2015), on the one hand have helped understand how indigenous literature and cinema stimulate singular aesthetics, marked by the ways of thinking of indigenous people, and, on the other hand, help understand how they challenge and subvert literary canons established in the Western culture.

The participation of researchers from The Cultural Studies in Brazilian Education in the ESIAL network, coordinated by Daniel Mato and mentioned earlier, have expanded the themes and the attention points in the educational studies performed by this group. Attention to affirmative actions for the entry of indigenous students into university¹¹, especially at the highest academic levels (Master and Doctorate), comes to occupy a central place, as well as discussions on the eradication of racism forms in higher education institutions. Moreover, the ways of implementing affirmative action policies by Graduate Programs of public universities require renewed attention. Meeting the requirements of Normative Ordinance No. 3/2016 of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, an expressive number of public universities have been ensuring the entry of indigenous students into Master's and Doctorate courses, but this is a recent determination still in progress and is in frank dispute and at setback risk, in the current Brazilian political context. In this context, since 2016, an effort to screen edicts for students to enter different institutions in the country (annually published) and an analysis of the ways in which, within these affirmative actions, constitute and are disputed meanings about being indigenous, producing scientific studies, dialogue with established knowledge and establishing places of speech.

Focusing on ethnic-racial relationships, a broad research set has been developed in the Graduate Program in Education of ULBRA and UFRGS. In this context, the discussion on racialization pedagogies, on the ways in which one learns to have race and/or color, and about old and new racism expressions have been boosted by researchers, such as Gladis Kaercher (2006, 2010), which performed in his Doctoral Dissertation an analysis to the ways in which black characters are represented in black characters of children's and youth literature of the National School Library Program¹², a collection selected in 1999. In the literary texts examined in the thesis, the researcher observed that whiteness is reified, and blackness is racialized by discursive strategies that place white identity as a reference standard for the hierarchization and subordination of other racial identities. In 2013, Kaercher began to coordinate a specialization course aimed at training professionals to teach African and African-Brazilian history and culture, as well as to promote anti-racist practices and studies produced in partnership with other black scholars, which have been arguing about the applicability of Law 10639/2003.

Within the framework of the Graduate Program in Education of ULBRA, whose exclusive concentration area is that of Cultural Studies in Education, a set of coordinated and guided studies performed by Maria Angélica Zubarán stand out. The study group has been dedicated to the analysis of black authorial productions in the theater (Zubarán; Santos, 2013) and in the black press (Zubarán, 2015; 2016; Atolini; Zubarán, 2014; Zubarán; Guizzo, 2015; Zubarán; Vargas, 2015; Zubarán; Vargas; Bahia, 2019), understanding them as spaces for the production of discourses and representations that, on the one hand, dispute stereotypes and, on the other hand, collaborate to the formation of subjectivities and black identities. These researchers have promoted approaches with journalism and theater, seeking to understand negotiations that are established in black cultural productions with specific textual genres, but have also promoted fertile articulations with research with diaspora, race, among other studies. The theoretical associations and careful screening of primary empirical sources have allowed us to understand the specificity and power of black productions that are structured in different times and spaces to account for idea exchanges and circulation in the black diaspora to affirm identities, to challenge racialized representations, contemplate neglected and silenced aspects of Afro-Brazilian cultures, banned in broader cultural productions.

In conclusion

We emphasize that we have only gathered a “sample” of studies and discussions undertaken by the Cultural Studies inspiration. We seek to emphasize how these studies produce tensions in their meeting with different fields, such as education and environmental education, but also the effects they have on cultural and citizenship policies and in the ways academic institutions deal/act/relate to indigenous and Afro-descendants. We also seek to indicate how these Studies produce productive perspectives on ways of living and relating to everyday environments and artifacts, and about the institutionalization of Cultural Studies. But more than that, in conservative political times like nowadays, we understand that Cultural Studies, articulated to so many other studies that have been mentioned throughout this article, can continue to strongly question essentialisms, fundamentalisms, Eurocentrism, racism, and addressing other possible forms of political-academic resistance.

Received on June 28, 2019
Approved on February 07, 2020

Notes

- 1 The 8th edition of SBECE and the 5th edition of SIECE occurred from June 25 to 27, 2019 promoted jointly by the Graduate Program in Education of the Universidade Luterana do Brasil and the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, with the support of the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (CAPES) and the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq).

- 2 According to Costa (2000, p. 13), “nomadic knowledge, which migrate from one discipline to another, from one culture to another, which travel countries, groups, practices, traditions, and which are not captured by the consecrated cartography that orders the human thought production – here is a temporarily appropriate description to refer to the *ethos* contingent of Cultural Studies in its contemporary version”.
- 3 The 1988 Constitution ensures the Right to the Environment in Art. 225 (“Everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment, which is a public good for the people’s use and is essential for a healthy life. The Government and the community have a duty to defend and to preserve the environment for present and future generations”. It is up to Public Authorities to “promote the Environmental Education for all educational levels and to create public awareness for the preservation of the environment” (available from: <https://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/con1988_26.06.2019/art_225_.asp>, access on January 13, 2020).
- 4 Timothy Lenoir, Joseph Rouse, Bruno Latour, Karin Knorr-Cetina, etc.
- 5 Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Douglas Kellner, Shirley Steinberg, etc.
- 6 Available at: <<https://www.facebook.com/tecendo/>>. Access on January 13, 2020.
- 7 Guimarães uses the device concept from Foucault and Deleuze, creating together with Shaula Maíra Vicentini de Sampaio the concept of *sustainability device* (Sampaio; Guimarães, 2012).
- 8 Canclini (2003, p. 283-350).
- 9 See, in particular, the chapter *The spectacle of the Other*, in the work *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices* (Hall, 1997).
- 10 Other network information is available from: <http://untref.edu.ar/sitios/ciea/red-esial/>
- 11 The first proposal for differentiated access to High Education Institutes for blacks, browns, and indigenous emerged in the State of Paraná in 2001. At the federal level, the Universidade de Brasília (UnB) was the first to deploy additional vacancies for indigenous in the same decade. With an intense framework of legal dispute over affirmative action policies, in 2012, the Supreme Court declared the Constitutionality of such actions. In the same year, the federal government sanctioned Law No. 12711/2012, which guarantees the reservation of 50% enrollment per course and shift in the 59 federal universities and 38 Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology to students who studied for three years at public high schools. The remaining 50% vacancies remain for wide competition. It is in the 50% cutout of reserved vacancies that a minimum percentage is retained, corresponding to the black (black/brown) and indigenous population data.
- 12 The *Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola* (PNBE – Brazilian School Library Program) has been developed since 1997 by the Brazilian Ministry of Education with FNDE resources and promotes the distribution of literature collections, studies, and reference studies.

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