

## **History of Racism in the 20th Century: a call for new epistemologies**

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All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity.

All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such. However, the diversity of life styles and the right to be different may not, in any circumstances, serve as a pretext for racial prejudice; they may not justify either in law or in fact any discriminatory practice whatsoever, nor provide a ground for the policy of apartheid, which is the extreme form of racism.<sup>1</sup>

In the field of racial prejudice and racist attitudes and practices, specialists in natural and social sciences and cultural studies, as well as scientific organizations and associations, are called upon to undertake objective research on a wide interdisciplinary basis; all States should encourage them to this end.<sup>2</sup>

Human races do not exist, but racism is real.

As demonstrated by scientists during of the twentieth century, the division of humanity into races has no scientific basis. Yet, the concept of race is still widely used by scientists, politicians and in popular discourses, with different meanings and purposes. The popular understanding of racial differences among human beings is at the root of social, political, economic and cultural exclusion and is still the biggest challenge to world peace and equality.

This paper discusses the need for new epistemologies of racism, based on the twentieth century experiences that have influenced definitions, practices and discourses on racism and race. The first part will address the divergences on the conceptions of race between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century and how they influence the concept of racism in academia, in politics and in popular thinking. The second part will deal with the challenges presented during the twentieth century to the studies on racism or racial conflicts, to multi-cultural societies and the governments of most of the countries which have to respond to the dynamics of immigration/emigration and, at the same time, have to reinforce their national identities.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice. Paris, 1978, article 1, paragraph 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, article 8, paragraph 2.

The last century has presented many changes that affected the cultural universe, like the development of new technologies of communication, the alterations in the political, economic and social order, and the demands of globalization, with interactions between different sectors of human life. All of these changes have also influenced the relations among different groups and have presented complex interrogations of the studies of racism. This paper defends the need for new epistemologies combined with new methodologies, which would bring new approaches to these problems, starting with the very definition of racism itself.

Historically, human groups have felt the need to differentiate themselves from “others” as a way to define their identity and territoriality. The competition for natural resources and the rivalries among groups influenced the definition of the “others”, and resulted in definitions based on opposition and negativity. As the societies become more complex, the definition of the self in opposition to the *other* becomes a definition of nationality and identity. According to Todorov, European philosophers paid more attention to the definitions of nation during the eighteenth century, during the enlightenment, when the debate on human differences and the idea of human races we are still facing today started to take shape.<sup>3</sup>

Peter Gay discusses the concept of the “convenient Other”, as a social construct that confirms the superiority of one group over others. He explains that the idea behind the “convenient Other” gives a very useful alibi for aggression and exploitation. According to him, the construct of the “convenient Other” is part of the “cultivation of the hatred” that during the Victorian age used those contradictory speculations of biology and history which formed the racist theories to justify British aggression and domination over other societies.<sup>4</sup>

Raymond Williams pointed to the historicity of the term “race” and its different uses during the nineteenth and twentieth century, mostly with the political intentions of domination, classification and exclusion.

Physical, cultural and socio-economic differences are taken up, projected and generalized, and so confused that different kinds of variation are made to stand for or imply each other. The prejudice and cruelty that then often follow, or that are rationalized by the confusions, are not only evil in themselves; they have also profoundly complicated, and in certain areas placed under threat, the necessary language of the (non-prejudicial) recognition of human diversity and its actual communities.<sup>5</sup>

Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown argue that the concept of race has always being used in a situation of conflict or contrast, and although it has changed its meaning and uses

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<sup>3</sup> Todorov, T. *Nós e os outros. A reflexão francesa sobre a diversidade humana*. Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Gay, P. *The cultivation of hatred. The bourgeois experience: Victoria to Freud*. New York, Norton, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Williams, R., *Keywords. A vocabulary of culture and society*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 250.

during the last two centuries, it has always being connected with the idea of domination and it persists even after scientists have proven the nonexistence of human races.

Thus, perversely, social scientists have prolonged the life of an idea that should be consigned to the dustbin of analytically useless terms: ‘There are no races and therefore no race relations’. Unfortunately, social scientists have frequently assumed that it is possible to overcome the problems inherent in using the term ‘race’ analytically by simply using scare quotes – that is substitute ‘race’ for race. This has the virtue of emphasizing that ‘race’ is not a real attribute of human biology, but socially constructed and discursively perceived. In this case, the theory, by simply using the term, is contributing to perpetuate the racism.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Sowell defends the use of the word ‘race’ as a concept to analyze different social groups. He defines racial groups as ethnic groups and confirms the usefulness of the term race in a broad social sense, utilizing it as it is done in everyday life, to better differentiate groups by biological and cultural features.<sup>7</sup>

Accurate examination of the use, meaning and classifications of race during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals the malleability of the systems created for these aims. Nationality, skin color, community, language and class are some of the categories associated with race throughout the centuries. Moreover, the concept has been studied, applied and explained by different areas of knowledge such as medicine, law, sociology, anthropology, politics, history, and geography. There was even a field created to understand the supposed racial differences in association with public health and social studies, which was the science of eugenics.

In Brazil, as well as in other Latin American countries, during the first half of the twentieth century there was the celebration of the “Dia da Raça” or “Dia de la Raza” (The Race Day). This was originally celebrated in Spain to commemorate Spanish colonial expansion. In Latin America the day is used to celebrate indigenous ancestors. For example, Mexico celebrates the Aztec culture<sup>8</sup> while Brazil celebrates the Brazilians as a new race (mixed, stronger, younger, and fitter). One can say that race in this context means nationality, or national identity, but it is also linked to the celebration of the national vigor.

No scientists have influenced the ideas of biological and hierarchical differences between human groups more than Gobineau and Darwin. The first worked in out a detailed hierarchy that explained the unquestionable supremacy of the European over other human races, while the second established the scientific laws of evolutionism, which were immediately applied to human groups. Both offered justifications for the European exploitation of colonized and enslaved humans, by giving natural reasons for this

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<sup>6</sup> Miles, R. and Brown, M. *Racism*. New York, Routledge, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Sowell, T. *Race and culture*. New York, Basic Books, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Pitt-Rivers, J. “Race, color, and class in Central America and the Andes”. In *Daedalus*, 96(2), 1967, pp.542-59.

relationship<sup>9</sup>. Imagined racial differences and hierarchy have been used in studies of criminology, diseases and epidemics, religion, social exclusion and poverty, applying the determinist logic to explain situations and justify practices of discrimination and marginalization.

Saul Dubow calls attention to the importance of theories of racial differences and how they form part of mainstream international intellectual traditions. During the first decades of the twentieth century racial preconceptions were endemic and gave support to the ideology of white supremacy in different societies.<sup>10</sup>

Analyzing the case of South African apartheid, Deborah Posel points to the continuities and discontinuities in the politics and epistemology of racial classification in that society before and after the advent of apartheid. The racial classification imposed by the government was to a great extent based upon the common-sense understanding of racial differences and features. Thus, the classifications could vary according to the person in charge of it and how he or she viewed the person to be classified.

The practitioners of racial classification had considerable latitude to interpret the bureaucratic criteria for racial classification in ways that allowed them to draw widely and idiosyncratically on the popular litanies of biological stereotypes, but spared the need for any pretense at scientific rigor in the process.<sup>11</sup>

Sowell reinforces the idea about the vulnerability of definitions and categories based on race, using a comparison between the United States and Brazil as example. In the United States, a person with seven-eighths of Caucasian ancestry is considered Black, as in Brazil a person with four-eighths of Caucasian ancestry is considered White.<sup>12</sup> In other words, if in the United States society a drop of African blood makes a person Black, in Brazil a drop of Caucasian blood makes the same person more White and less Black. Recently, as the Brazilian government adopted the policy of quotas for Afro-descendants in public universities, the question of racial classification arose in a society that is now facing the problem of defining who is Black and – as a corollary – who is White.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the studies on race done by scholars in the fields of medicine, eugenics and law during the first half of the twentieth century, most of the studies on race have been concentrated in areas like anthropology and sociology. The majority of the studies done by historians focus on racial relations or racial conflicts, primarily during slavery and its aftermath (for post-colonial societies) and secondarily on racial segregation in the United States and Southern Africa, the struggle for civil rights in the United States and racial conflicts during independence movements in the African continent. Above all, these

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<sup>9</sup> Banton, M. *The idea of race*. London, Tavistock, 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Dubow, S. *Scientific racism in South Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Posel, D. "Race as common sense: racial classification in twentieth century South Africa". *African Studies Review*, 44(2), 2001, pp.87-113.

<sup>12</sup> Sowell, op. cit..

<sup>13</sup> Schwartzman, L. "Seeing like citizens: unofficial understandings of official racial categories in a Brazilian university". *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 41(2), 2009, pp. 221-50.

studies are massively dominated by studies of the conflicts between Black and White groups with the exception of studies on Nazi discrimination against the Jews during the 1930s and 1940s.

A derivation of the idea of race is the concept of racialization, explained by Miles and Brown as a concept used by scholars during the second half of the twentieth century in reference to the academic discourse on race.<sup>14</sup> The term is also used by Banton in his reflection on how intellectuals during the nineteenth century viewed the relations between cultures and societies as racial relations, in which one group, namely Europeans, was superior to others (the colonized world).<sup>15</sup> Octavio Ianni in his article *A Racialização do Mundo* uses the idea of racialization to discuss the phenomenon of transnational migration and the conflicts between different nationalities in the same territory, which became more evident in the last decades of the twentieth century due to the globalization of the economy.<sup>16</sup>

Marc Ferro points to the contribution of medical doctors in institutionalizing and justifying discrimination and segregation of human groups based on distinctions of race.<sup>17</sup> Side by side with teachers (and I would add priests), they gave the scientific excuse and justification for discriminatory policies and the institutionalization of racialism, especially in the first half of the twentieth century.

Miles refers to the influence of the common sense in the constructions of those theories and practices<sup>18</sup>, an idea also supported by Posel<sup>19</sup>. In a cyclical dynamic, scientific theories and political practices supported and reinforced the common sense view. Julio Cesar Pino<sup>20</sup> argues that the idea of race is an outcome of political struggle, which for authors like Ferro<sup>21</sup> had its apex during the colonialist and imperialist expansion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as a result of the conflicts for decolonization. For Hannah Arendt, the connection between racism and imperialism goes beyond the nineteenth century and is central to the Nazi and fascist totalitarian regimes, who related race to nation<sup>22</sup>.

Analyzing the case of Brazil one could conclude that racialist theories and the debate about racial differences were predominant in the years after abolition when the society had to “find a place” for the former slave in a new system. Florestan Fernandes claims that racial prejudice in Brazil was predominant in the post-abolition period and based on the experience of slavery.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Miles and Brown, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Banton, op. cit..

<sup>16</sup> Ianni, O. “A racialização do mundo”. *Tempo Social*, 8(1), São Paulo, 1996, pp. 1-23.

<sup>17</sup> Ferro, M. *Colonization: a world history*. London, Routledge, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Miles, op. cit..

<sup>19</sup> Posel, op. cit..

<sup>20</sup> Pino, J. “Teaching the history of race in Latin America”, *Perspectives*, American Historical Association, October, 1997. <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/1997/9710/9710TEC.CFM> retrieved in 2009/10/28.

<sup>21</sup> Ferro, op. cit..

<sup>22</sup> Arendt, H., *The origins of totalitarianism*. Orlando, Harvest, 1985.

<sup>23</sup> Fernandes, F., *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*. São Paulo, Dominus, 1965.

One of the most important manifestations of racialism is found in the first decades of the twentieth century, under the thesis of eugenics. Eugenic theories defended intensive social control and supported policies of classification and segregation in the societies as measures to promote hygiene and health. In South Africa, eugenic ideas responded to White fear of contamination that included cultural and sexual contamination. Miscegenation, the biggest fear, included the other two, sexual and cultural contamination, and it would synthesize the Afrikaner fear of their national identity disappearing, as it melted into the African culture and society.<sup>24</sup> The fear of contamination came into the definition of nationality, as the descendants of Dutch colonizers used “Afrikaner” to define their nationality as a way to differentiate themselves from the natives of the continent.

In Brazil and in other countries, eugenic theories were used in criminology and medicine as an instrument to identify and categorize dangerous groups and dangerous individuals, suggesting measures to isolate and even “treatments” for what was considered as an abnormality.<sup>25</sup> Between 1900 and 1920 Brazil increased the number of asylums and hospices, as well as the prisons.

The idea of human races and the ideas considered part of the racist theories are intrinsically connected with the problem of racism. As we have seen in the previous pages, those ideas are not heterogeneous or uniform, they differ according to the time, local, author, subject and circumstances (including the author’s nationality and ethnic group), even though these concepts, added to the popular conceptions generated by centuries of experiences and cultural references, give the base for racial relations and conflicts, better known as racism.

The concept of racism derives from race and it is basically the application and practice of discriminatory policies and attitudes by one group or individual against others, justified by beliefs about natural differences and superiority among nations, cultures, religion, and physical types. Banton explains that the term racism originated in England during the 1930s to identify a type of doctrine that affirms that culture is determined by race. Since then, racism and race terms have been used by those who are denouncing and resisting the practices and by those who are theorizing about them.<sup>26</sup>

Created in the twentieth century, racism is actually a new phenomenon, which has been defined differently by scholars from all over the world. The common point of all theses on racism lies in the fact that it is a concept applied to relationships between groups, societies, nations or groups that consider themselves different from each other, and this difference is marked by the assumption of the superiority of one side and the inevitable inferiority of the other.

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<sup>24</sup> Giliomee, E. *Afrikaners, a biography of a people*. Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Schwarcz, L. *O espetáculo das raças: cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil 1870-1930*. São Paulo, EDUSP, 1993.

<sup>26</sup> Banton, op. cit..

For many years, racism was applied mostly to define racial conflicts involving Blacks and Whites, in which Europeans and their descendants, considered as Whites, dominate Africans and their descendants. The acknowledgement of racist practices and policies has generated reactions from the victims of racism, who forced new definitions of and approaches to their own culture, history and physical features as instruments of resistance to marginalization and exploitation.

Miles and Brown argue that racism is an ideology that is related to self identification and the identification of the other, in processes of simultaneous exclusion and inclusion in which the involved groups are defined by each other always in a negative way, in characteristics attributed to nature (biology) and culture.

...racism can take a form of coherent theory, exhibiting a logical structure and adducing evidence in its support, but it also appears in the form of a less coherent assembly of stereotypes, images, attributions, and explanations that are constructed and employed to negotiate everyday life. Too many of the contributions to the debate about the nature of racism as an ideology have a fascination with the writing of fellow intellectual practitioners but maintain a silence about the way in which representations of the Other have been created and reproduced in everyday life.<sup>27</sup>

The authors also affirm the connection between racism and economic exploitation and political domination, a link exploited by other scholars like George Frederickson<sup>28</sup>, Edward Said<sup>29</sup>, Marc Ferro<sup>30</sup> and Peter Gay<sup>31</sup> who agree that racism provides excuses and strategies for political action, and that is precisely the reason that this ideology, or doctrine as proposed by Banton<sup>32</sup>, is always mutating, adapting, re-modulating itself to fit any need for political or cultural reasons to re-affirm the hegemonic power. In the words of Sampie Terreblanche,

...the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism was really a means to an end, namely the mobilization of ethnic power to attain political power, and especially greater wealth. The racism accompanying this ideology was also a means to an end, namely maintaining the subordination of allegedly inferior indigenous races in order to create the “space” for Afrikaners to attain their political and economic aims, and their promised land.<sup>33</sup>

When the antagonisms are clear and the aim of racial domination is also clear, as it was in the South African regime of apartheid, the apparatus for total control of the society and

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<sup>27</sup> Miles and Brown, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>28</sup> Frederickson, G. *The black in the white mind. The debate on Afro-American character and destiny*, 1817-1914. Hanover, Wesleyan University Press, 1987.

<sup>29</sup> Said, E., *Cultura e Imperialism*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Ferro, op. cit..

<sup>31</sup> Gay, op. cit..

<sup>32</sup> Banton, op. cit..

<sup>33</sup> Terreblanche, S. *History of inequality in South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 2002, p. 299.

the exploitation of the (Black and Colored) African working force was daily reiterated by the religion, school and practices of everyday life. It was not sufficient to indoctrinate and control the dominated population, but it was also necessary to convince the White population of their rights as superior race to command, as well as to eradicate any possibility of sympathy from those who were designated to dominate the inferior groups.

Racism is mostly seen as the antagonistic relationship between Black and White groups, due to the influence of United States scholarship and anti-racist propaganda, as pointed out by Banton.<sup>34</sup> The words racist and racism have a strong negative meaning and imply a moral condemnation, as they were used to denounce prejudicial attitudes toward Black people.

More recently, Audrey Smedley went beyond the notion of racism defined by the relationships of the active (White) against the passive (Black), affirming that the racist attitude can be turned around, for example in the United States when the Afro-Americans decide to emphasize their African heritage to contrast with the Western culture, and to construct a positive racial identity for Black people; and in Zimbabwe, when Blacks attacked Whites and expelled them from their country.

Afrocentrism seeks to reidentify with the peoples and cultures of Africa and to elevate Africans to a position of esteem by emphasizing valuable aspects of African cultures. Some Afrocentrists also make assertions about the positive qualities of African people and seek to recognize and objectify Africanisms in the behavior of African descended peoples who have been scattered all over the New World.<sup>35</sup>

This is true in the case of Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican political leader who preached in favor of a “United Black Africa”, the political organization of the Black population in the American continent and in Africa, and the return to Africa as part of a project to “uplift the race”. The highest point of the militancy of Garvey’s proposal for an Afrocentrism, as pointed by John Clarke, came during Garvey’s stay in the United States, where he arrived in 1916 and lived until 1927:

It is no accident that Marcus Garvey had his greatest success in the United States among Black Americans in the community called Harlem. He came to the United States and began to build this movement at a time of great disenchantment among Afro-Americans who had pursued the “American Dream”, until they had to concede that the dream was not dreamed for them. They had listened to the “American Promise” and also conceded that the promise was not made to them. Marcus Garvey gave them the vision of a new dream, a new promise, and a new land.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Banton, op. cit..

<sup>35</sup> Smedley, Audrey. “‘Race’ and the construction of human identity”. *American Anthropologist*, 100(3) 1998, pp.690-702.

<sup>36</sup> Clarke, J. “ Marcus Garvey: the Harlem years”. *Transition*, 46, 1974, p.14.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934951> retrieved: 10/09/2008.

This promised land was in Liberia first, to which many Afro-American emigrated with the dream of finding “home”; later it became Ethiopia, identified by Garvey as the promised land. After his close contact with Ethiopia during the 1930s, Garvey’s writings on Ethiopia turned into the preaching of a new religion or religious movement called Rastafari. According to this belief the Ethiopian emperor Gbre Haile Salassie was the re-incarnation of Jesus Christ. Until today Rastafarian followers acknowledge Salassie as a kind of God, based mainly on his opposition to racism and slavery.

If the categories, descriptions and definitions of the racialism are based on representations and myth, the anti-racist movement can also be deceived by mythical constructions. The deification of Gebre Salassie, for example, is based on the speech presented by the emperor in 1936 in the United Nations, but according to Paul Lauren it was just a desperate appeal to the other nations for support against the aggression of Italy<sup>37</sup>. In fact, though slavery was officially abolished in 1942 in Ethiopia, serfdom and mild forms of slavery in Ethiopia were only abolished after the fall of the monarchy in 1975, when the imperial family lost their power.

Anti-racist movements are reactions to racial discrimination. Therefore, anti-racists accept the idea that human kind is divided into different races, and react against the stigma of inferiority imposed on some groups by transforming what is classified as negative into a trace of originality and positive identification, like the kinky hair, transformed into “afro style”.

In Paraguay, a bilingual country, Guarani is seen as a language for the lower classes, while educated people should speak Spanish. However, Paraguayans living in New York learned that to differentiate themselves from the other “Chicanos” or Latinos, they should speak in Guarani among themselves. Similarly, Peruvians and Bolivians use Quechua language as a means of preserving their distinctiveness among other Latino immigrants in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

The question of race has been thoroughly studied in the United States, in part to understand the problem of multiculturalism that the society faces with Afro-Americans, Amerindians, Europeans (colonizers) and all sorts of immigrants that the country has been receiving since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During the presidential campaign in 2008, some people were asking if Senator Barack Obama was “black enough” to represent Afro-Americans, arguing that Black Americans are those descended from West African slaves, or that Black Americans should follow a pattern of Black American culture. But what is Black American culture? Is it Hip Hop music from New York or Gospel songs from South Carolina? Among Blacks and Whites, many stereotypes are constructed around this idea. The description of Black culture in the United States is diverse and contradictory.

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<sup>37</sup> Lauren, P. *Power and prejudice. The politics and diplomacy of racial discrimination*. Boulder/London, Westview Press, 1988.

<sup>38</sup> Gracia, J. and Greiff, P., *Hispanic/Latinos in the United States: ethnicity, race and rights*. New York, Routledge, 2000.

Who is Black? is also a question in Brazil, one of the countries with African inheritance that do not apply the “one drop rule”. Actually, if in the United States one drop of African blood determines someone’s blackness, in countries like Brazil and the Dominican Republic where miscegenation is noticeable, one drop of white blood can get a person closer to White and away from Blackness.

Dominicans solved the question of “racial identity” with the belief that Blacks are their neighbors, the Haitians. In the Dominican Republic, race is a very sensitive matter and it is related to their national identity since their first years of independence. Thus, blackness is identified by the language spoken, by culture and class.<sup>39</sup>

Many societies of Latin America have adopted what is called *pigmentocracy* - the use of skin tone and some physical features such as the type of hair, the shape of nose and lips- to determine the blackness of an individual. They also make use of cultural values such as education and erudition, as well as class, to define who is Black or not. Brazilians created the “Moreno” (male) or “Morena” (female) to define everyone who is not White. Ranging from White with dark hair to Black (African type), “Moreno” is also a category that is relate to affection. Somebody who is loved, cared for or respected will always be classified as “Moreno” as opposed to “Black”.

As one can see, the phenomenon of racism can be very different from one country to another and even among different cultures in the same country. It is also influenced by many external factors, like the political needs of a determined moment, as exemplified with the case of Haile Salassie of Ethiopia, or by changes in the technology, the advances in communications that are shaping the globalization of culture worldwide.

The influence of Marcus Garvey in the Americas has influenced other developments, such as the reggae music, which in turn influenced culture and political movements all over the world. Additionally, the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the decolonization of African countries, the fall of the Apartheid regime in South Africa and the election of Nelson Mandela have affected the culture of different societies and helped to transform the relationship between groups that are defined as “different races”.

Going beyond the limits of Black and White relations, Edward Said called the conflicts involving Israelis and Palestinians for more than fifty years now racism.<sup>40</sup> In South Africa after the defeat of the apartheid regime, the rise of the African National Congress could not erase life-long rivalries among Blacks and Whites and the tension between ethnic groups when competing for jobs or in other disputes of daily life.<sup>41</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu discusses racism and xenophobia in his analysis on poverty, unemployment and social crisis in France in the beginning of the 1990s. Based on

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<sup>39</sup> Candelario, G., *Black behind the ears: Dominican racial identity from museums to beauty shops*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Said, E., *Orientalism*. New York, Vintage, 1989.

<sup>41</sup> Terreblache, op. cit.. Also MoodiE, D. ,*Going for Gold. Men, mines and migration*. Berkley, University of California Press, 1994; and KROG, Antjie, *Country of my skull. Guilt, sorrow and the limits of forgiveness in the new South Africa*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1998.

testimonies, he argues that poverty can be the trigger for conflicts between groups of different nationalities or national background such as the French lower class and the Moroccan immigrants in housing projects.<sup>42</sup> His theses on the symbolic power and the logic of cultural practices<sup>43</sup> are useful in understanding the malleability of racism in time, space, class and cultures.

Octavio Ianni<sup>44</sup> proposes a revision of the studies of racism to include the problems revealed by the end of the cold war and the fall of the communist regimes, and the ethnic wars which included disputes over religiosity and nationality in Eastern Europe, India and Middle East societies and in the African continent.

This malleability and diversity in racism calls for new epistemologies (I want to emphasize the plural), and methodologies to study these types of relationships. To overcome the rigid scope of traditional epistemological approaches in history, there needs to be an interdisciplinary view of racism that would consider diverse aspects of the same problem, such as economic statistics and psychological aspects, without losing its central focus, which is to analyze the human trajectory in time, studying social and cultural dilemmas, political crisis and the everyday life of communities and societies.

Marc Ferro denounced the uses of history as an instrument of domination and exclusion in the way it is written and taught<sup>45</sup>. Before that, Moniot<sup>46</sup> criticized exclusion of communities and societies from history, classified as “societies without history”. Among those were included the tribal societies. The demands of indigenous peoples from the American continent and the political demands in South Africa for a new history to be taught in the language of the communities or ethnic groups to which the students belong, as well as historical content that would include those communities in the “official history” are among the factors necessitating a new history.

The need for a gender sensitive approach to the history that considers ethnic diversity is one of fundamental demands of feminists affiliated to what they call “Third World Feminism”. Among the problems they want to redress is the status of women in religion and societies, so that Western paradigms would not be prevalent in classifying gender roles in other societies.<sup>47</sup> They criticize, for example, the Western views on Muslim women’s use of the veil.

The purpose of new epistemologies is to expand the use of the concept of racism to include other problems, subjects and approaches. As explained by Milles and Brown:

The concept of racism is also heavily negatively loaded, morally and politically. Thus, to claim that someone has expressed a racist opinion is to

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<sup>42</sup> Bourdieu, P. (org.) *A miséria do mundo*. Petropolis, Vozes, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> Bourdieu, P et al. *The logic of practice*. Stanford university Press, 1990.

<sup>44</sup> Ianni, op. cit..

<sup>45</sup> Ferro, M., *The use and abuse of history or how the past is taught to children*. London, Routledge, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Moniot, H., “A história dos povos sem História”. In: LE GOFF, J. & NORA, P. (orgs.). *História: Novos Problemas*. 3ª ed., Rio de Janeiro, Francisco Alves, 1988.

<sup>47</sup> Mohanty, C. *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, Duke, 2003.

denounce them as immoral and unworthy. In sum, racism has become a term of political abuse. This presents special difficulties for the social scientist who defends the use of the concept. Whatever definition is offered has significance for not only academic work, but also political and moral debate.<sup>48</sup>

A new epistemology would respond to the demand for theories and methods that would consider the multiculturalism, migrations, religiosity, language, and many aspects of everyday life. Because racism involves emotions, it must be analyzed under new logic, something that could understand the *structures of feelings* as proposed by Raymond Williams<sup>49</sup> and the tactics and strategies of everyday life as proposed by Michel De Certeau<sup>50</sup>.

The policies of research and publication must also be part of the considerations in this new epistemology, since it is important to critically review what has been prioritized in research projects and what type of history publications the market has presented to buyers. In other words, because racism is a political issue, in accessing the history of racism is important to analyze who is writing, the geopolitical context, the publishing house and who are the potential readers.<sup>51</sup>

Racism is an issue of cultural history, as well as a topic for political history, considering conflicts of power. Its dynamics demands a methodology that would extend the limits of Marxist dialectics, considering what Williams<sup>52</sup> proposed as a methodological approach for cultural history, the relation between *residual*, *dominant* and *emergent* aspects of culture, considering what Bourdieu<sup>53</sup> called *habitus* and his idea of *symbolic exchanges*, considering Michel Foucault's *microphysics of power*<sup>54</sup>.

A new epistemology for the history of racism demands also a revision of the concept of race, and ethnicity as well. It would open the field of history to interdisciplinary theories and interdisciplinary methodological approaches, for a review of sources and time framing. It must consider all the changes the world went through during the past century, even when looking at other periods of history. To embrace a new epistemology in studying racism, historians also must face their own biases and deconstruct all prejudices and pre-conceived ideas used to categorize and classify human beings that are part of the historians' own history.

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<sup>48</sup> Milles and Brown, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Williams, R. *Marxism and literature*. New York, Oxford, 1977.

<sup>50</sup> Certeau, M. *A invenção do cotidiano. Artes de fazer*. Petropolis, Vozes, 1994.

<sup>51</sup> Rocha, E. *Racism in novels, a comparative study in Brazilian and South African cultural history*. MA dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2007.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, 1977, op. cit..

<sup>53</sup> Bourdieu, P. *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999.

<sup>54</sup> foucault, M. *Microfísica do poder*, Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 2000.

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