

WORK-IN-PROGRESS FACULTY LUNCH SEMINARS, 2009–10

September 23

Jocelyn Olcott: “Pulled Out of the Closet? International Women’s Year and the Event of the Mexican Lesbian”

October 7

Robert Karl: “Community Development and Colombia’s Cold War, 1960–1966”

November 11

Gustavo Guerrero: “Latin American Literature Looking East”

December 9

Beatriz Jaguaribe: “Memories of the Future: Images, Narratives, Monuments, and the Aesthetics of Memory in Brazil and Argentina”

February 8, 2010

Lilia Moritz Schwarcz: “Lima Barreto: The Anxious Thermometer of a Young Republic”

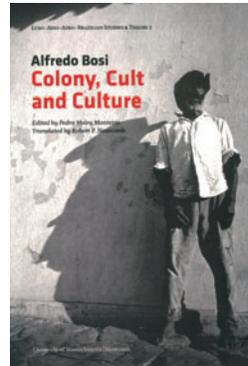
March 1, 2010

Rachel Price: “The Uses and Abuses of ‘The Atlantic’”

April 5, 2010

Bruno Carvalho: “Cradle of Samba: Carnaval, Radio, and the Price of Progress”

ALFREDO BOSI



literature and a culture whose production is grounded in a peripheral experience—in this case, Brazilian—that develops in the seductive shadow of models originating in the North, especially in Europe, and always in consonance or conflict with these models. More broadly, we might imagine that the valorization of a culture produced in the molds of a peripheral formation is an essential part of a debate that applies to all of Latin America. Or, thinking of the fissures in a totalizing national discourse, we might be close to what can be identified, using a terminology more palatable to the

Anglo-American academic sensibility, as a properly liminal culture—a term at least as old as Victor Turner’s writings, and employed here with the meaning that Homi Bhabha ascribes to it.

Princeton hosted the acclaimed Brazilian literary critic Alfredo Bosi in his first academic visit to the United States in October 2009. Bosi participated in a Spanish and Portuguese graduate seminar, and in launching his book *Colony, Cult, and Culture*, whose English-language translation recently was published by the University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth. Princeton’s Pedro Meira Monteiro, an associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese languages and cultures, edited the book and organized the Princeton roundtable discussion of Bosi’s work.

Bosi shared the table at Chancellor Green with Princeton’s Arcadio Díaz Quiñones and Jeremy Adelman, along with the work’s translator, Robert Newcomb (University of California–Davis), and the publisher, Victor Mendes (professor of Portuguese studies, University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth). The Program in Latin American Studies co-sponsored the event with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures, the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, and the Center for African American Studies.

Colony, Cult, and Culture was originally published in 1992, with numerous Brazilian reprints, and has been translated into French, Spanish, and Italian. The English translation inaugurates UMass Dartmouth’s Luso-Asio-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory series, and is available for download gratis at www.laabst.net. Below is an excerpt from the editor’s preface.

Born in São Paulo in 1936, Alfredo Bosi is one of the most notable intellectuals of a generation that, arriving on the scene and establishing itself during the second half of the 20th century, is responsible for the great critical paradigms that continue to guide academic production in Brazil. If we may situate Bosi alongside Antonio Candido and Roberto Schwarz, names that are better known to an English-speaking public, this is because, despite their differences and singularities, there is something that unites them at a deeper level: they each seek, in their own way, to understand the phenomena of a

Though Bosi’s text was born under the sign of a critical constellation somewhat removed from contemporary theoretical debates in North America and Great Britain, it shares with them an astonishment before the complexity and richness of a world constructed against the tide of hegemonic discourses and that ultimately establishes itself in a symbolic space crisscrossed by the violent forces of colonization or, more recently, littered with the ruins of colonial power. Here a plane of conflicts and contradictions is drawn, a plane where all of the “ghosts” of the “repressed” will appear—to cite a metaphor recent studies have borrowed from the language of psychoanalysis in order to understand how forces that surge forth from the margins regularly put in check the wholeness of a national discourse with pretensions to inclusiveness. That which is repressed and then (re)appears in phantasmagoric form in the contemporary cultural and political scene ultimately designates the “performative time” of a site of resistance comprised of the people themselves. Bhabha looks to Fanon in seeking to comprehend that “zone of occult instability where the people dwell,” which from a postcolonial (and, to be exact, postmodern) perspective points to the ephemeral temporality of all discourses. It is here, I believe, that both the meeting point and the point of divergence with respect to Bosi’s analysis of culture are to be found. After all, the performative space of the popular is for the Brazilian writer less ephemeral in nature than it would appear from Bhabha’s perspective. Where contemporary theory, produced by a largely Anglophone academy, might see the imminent dissolution of all identities, Bosi’s contemporaneous reflections seek out the daily re-composition of something that, while not constituting a fixed or stable identity, establishes itself as a strong environment for the reaffirmation of the repressed—a “repressed” that in both theoretical visions invokes memory, ritual, and myth in composing the performative space of its own resistance. In this book, this is referred to as the “dialectic of colonization.”