

Introduction

Culture is concerned with networks and connections – what Raymond Williams called ‘structures of feeling’. Despite the existence of innumerable histories of Latin American and Caribbean art, literature and music, for example, their development is not and cannot be seen in isolation from one another, or indeed from any of the multiple behaviours and practices through which human beings apprehend, make sense of, organize, and represent the world. Every cultural act – and by that we understand everything from making a painting to building a house, or speaking about either activity – is an event which relates to other practices, whether previous or contemporary, and in turn shapes and frames every successive such act. So at whatever point we enter that complex of relations, we will encounter or at least become aware of the presence of other objects, acts and relationships. This whole is what we call culture.

This work is in our view the first serious attempt to trace those interconnections in the cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean without being captive to artificial internal divisions and exclusions, which often obscure those networks. Thus, we can quite happily acknowledge the different forms, genres, movements, spaces and institutions in which cultural activity takes place without an impulse to placing them in a hierarchical relation to one another and thus give differential weight to the many manifestations of that activity of understanding and representing the world. Therefore, without apology we include within the cultural sphere, which we have set out to map in these volumes, the whole range of ‘structures of feeling’ and material practices that constitute the contemporary culture of the many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This embraces ‘the

arts’ – literary, visual and performative – but also forms of social organization; expressions of collective experience, ritual, religious or political; mass culture, both as patterns of consumption and forms of resistance; material culture, including food, drink, sport, and the other rituals of daily life; and of course the historical frame in which all of this takes place.

Our cultural mapping of this complicated and contradictory region has to accomplish two things at the same time: on the one hand, tracing lines of connection that link events and structures that co-exist at any one time, and on the other, understanding their relationships through time and their particular and shared histories. So the ambitious task we have set ourselves is to attempt to locate important cultural events, sites and moments, while at the same time seeing them as parts of a whole series of different constellations. So, any single cultural act can belong within a class of such acts – writing, performing, organizing, making, for example – while occurring within a space – national, urban or rural, interior or exterior, limited or open – which will equally give the act its meaning. It will also be bounded by the social origins and location of its participants, shaped by gender, race, class, sexuality and ethnicity, and as such also participate in their desires, hopes and aspirations. These in turn will give entirely legitimate descriptive terms like ‘utopian’, ‘realist’, ‘adaptive’, ‘cooperative’ or indeed ‘revolutionary’ a specific reference in time and space, as well as a disciplinary function that has to do with ordering and representing.

The format of this work is alphabetical, which of course highlights the accidental ordering of the material that follows. However, the ‘keywords’ that are the titles of our entries function as nodes in a

network: points that are not only significant in themselves, but also as connectors and sites of tension or contradiction. Like the vast networks that the Venezuelan artist Gego builds, invading the sanitized spaces of museums and galleries, and involving the spectator in a sometimes uncomfortable journey through asymmetrical and unexpected spaces, a journey into culture should be full of surprises and unpredictable twists and turns.

A simply linear reading betrays that complexity, though we certainly invite our readers to seek out narratives that run through the text. In a way, the decade entries that open this work (because they do not fit comfortably in the alphabetical list) provide a sort of temporal narrative frame. In the same sense, the country entries offer another story locating the same series of events in space; other plots arise out of generic entries which look at cultural acts in terms of their internal laws and classifications (fields, disciplines, genres, movements). A quite different journey would be taken if the reader jumped through the work following the cross-references ('see also' and boldface keywords) in pursuit of connections that have more to do with the particular than the general. For example, the several possible interpretations of any single act, the impact of one event upon other activities or actors, the multiple webs that any individual or work can find themselves simultaneously entangled in, can in turn generate from the same starting point a series of quite different meanings. The authors neither could nor would wish to limit or exclusively define any one set of such meanings as true or false, or more or less significant – because after all the reader too is involved in his or her own frameworks. So what might appear to be simply a publisher's device – the system of cross-referencing – is in fact an invitation to multiple explorations, not unlike the routes that Julio Cortázar set out as possible ways through his experimental novel *Rayuela* (Hops-cotch), published in 1963.

What we have argued so far is in a way a broad and universal materialist definition of culture as rooted in representations and practices. Within that general frame, there is a specificity about the cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean – and please note that we use cultures in the plural – which multiply and diversify the possible cultural

encounters that can occur. (One might think of the Uruguayan writer Isidore Ducasse, Count Lautréamont, so dear to the surrealists, who spoke of the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table.) The linguistic dimension leads to consideration of contact, cultural overlay, bi- and multilingualism, which are as much the consequence of a brutal but in some ways unresolved historical confrontation between civilizations and cultures as the result of a differential contemporary relationship, economic, social and ideological, reflected in hierarchies and tensions in language. One need only think of the linguistic map of the Caribbean, for instance, with supposed English islands where French creoles are spoken, where there are continuing debates among the specialists about the precise origins of some of the languages (Papiamentu is the most famous example), not to mention their destinations. It is worth saying that Papiamentu was a language that was entirely spoken, yet within the recent past it has developed a literature which will both ensure its survival and almost certainly sever it from its own history. Looking to what is usually described as Spanish America, with reference both to its colonial history and to its dominant linguistic parameters, what looks like unity conceals a series of internal linguistic and cultural circuits in which other languages prevail, though they are in their turn subordinate to the national or official language. Thus, in the Andean region Quechua and Aymara have maintained their existence through time and yet have not broken out of the siege of a Spanish-speaking world: this paradox informed the life's work of one of Latin America's key writers and thinkers about culture, José María Arguedas. In Paraguay the fact that Guaraní is the dominant spoken language forces writers and intellectuals to negotiate an almost impossible path between orality and literacy, the spoken and the written, as yet unreconciled (and here the key figure is Augusto Roa Bastos). Portugal's legacy in Brazil, now by far the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world, has been challenged and transformed by the confrontation with equally historically charged languages of African origin, as well as the extraordinary importance in the colonial period of Tupi; as a result, Brazilian Portuguese has been claimed as a new and different

language by lexicographers, writers, and social theorists, yet it is the site of a dynamic and aggressive cultural encounter expressed through the metaphor of anthropophagy, languages cannibalizing one another. That constant fusion and rejection is expressed with great power in the song lyrics of Caetano Veloso and the counterpoint and polyphony of Villa-Lobos's compositions, particularly the *Bachianas Brasileiras*, as well as in Mário de Andrade's great novel or 'rhapsody' *Macunaíma* (1928).

The attempt to understand these networks and relationships in the particular context of Latin America and the Caribbean has produced a range of important new cultural models that seek to both acknowledge and explain that encounter and its effects. García Canclini's concept of hybridity, for example, suggests that the cultural forms and expressions produced by that encounter are distinct from their origin, and constitute a different way of understanding modernity. These 'hybrid cultures', as he calls them, respond to the circumstance of uneven development and cultural overlay, and the possibility of improvisation and acts of imagination, that imply the constitution of new agents and new actors. Fernando Ortiz's much earlier model of 'transculturation', taken up later by Angel Rama and Mary Louise Pratt, also implied negotiation, improvisation, and strategies for survival. Even seemingly pessimistic models like cultural dependency, which assumed that economic subordination would automatically imply cultural dominance, have provided the opportunity for contestation: Quino's *Mafalda* is an answer to Schultz's *Peanuts*, just as Diego Rivera was called to paint a mural in the Rockefeller Center (even if in the end that mural was erased by its disgruntled sponsor).

A significant proportion of what follows concerns what can broadly be described as popular culture, but even the category contains different cultural practices, meanings, relationships. The Puerto Rican dentist turned television astrologer, Walter Mercado, delights in what cultural theorists have termed kitsch and camp. But what do these terms mean? Are they a form of mimicry or parody? Are they terms that police the cultural field? That paradox is probably more immediately and persistently present in popular culture than in

the so-called 'higher arts' (or Culture with a capital C), in part at least because popular culture engages directly with ideological representation on the one hand and the pressing necessities of material life on the other. There is a range of representations whose effect is in some way or another to reconcile its consumer with reality, either by declaring it closed to all change or by mobilizing active support. This after all is the role of an increasingly powerful television and print media, which must find ways of 'disappearing' the manifest contradictions of a modernity in which the latest in electronic technology can coexist in a single space with craft survivals of uncertain age. One hugely successful way of doing that has been to draw enormous and loyal transnational publics into a world of fictional reconciliation and resolution: the hero or heroine of the Latin American telenovela is usually reconciled with the world in the end. But the other face of popular culture is that it is also a locus of resistance: the craft tradition, for example, became an instrument of struggle and contestation when the patchwork artists used the most domestic of forms, *arpillera*, to comment on public events. When Fernando Birri, the Argentine film-maker, talked about an 'imperfect cinema' he was laying down a challenge to the sophisticated production values of a Hollywood which provided counterfeit worlds in perfect technicolour; the raw, unfinished nature of his films refused closure while the society from which they emerged was still so riven with unresolved contradictions.

This way of looking at the cultural field is destabilizing but also liberating. We propose to include the whole 'canon' of high culture, but to locate it not in an ivory tower or what the modernistas called a *reino interior*, an inner realm, but in constant traffic with the noise and confusion of modern life. Thus, Borges, Guimarães Rosa, Lispector, Lezama Lima – that is, the intellectuals considered emblematic of 'high culture' – are here shown in an active, and sometimes conflictive, relationship with other forms of cultural activity. 'Our' Borges works in journalism, talks about tango, translates and promotes crime fiction, and writes dense texts that call into question some of the most powerful universal explanations, but without faith in their replacement by other more plausible alternatives. 'Our' García Márquez finds

in magical realism a route back to the reality of a Colombia torn apart then and now by La Violencia, and directly engages as a journalist with the day to day realities of the region. Yet he locates his responses within an oral tradition which links the response to immediate events with the accumulated experience of a historical community. 'Our' Caetano Veloso uses popular music as a means of bringing poetry and cultural critique to 'the people', as his colleague and friend Gilberto Gil has done with regard to local politics and racial struggle.

When Borges, in his essay on the Argentine writer and the Western tradition, defined that relationship in terms of connection or lineage but also distance and irreverence, he provided a model for creativity that others have found exciting. An inscription by the clock tower at the centre of the University of São Paulo campus, built in the 1960s or 1970s, reads: NO UNIVERSO DA CULTURA O CENTRO ESTA EM TODA PARTE (in the universe of culture the centre is everywhere), a phrase that echoes Borges's collection of examples of this very image, and locates that centre in Latin America, not in some distant place.

Circumstantially, Borges is witness to the moment from which this encyclopedia begins. 1920 is not so much a precise date as a conjuncture, a historical moment at which Latin America and the Caribbean confront modernity and the paralysis of an old order whose focus was in Europe. As its cultural icons began to lose their power to define and contain the world, a new force seemed both to offer progress, prosperity and change, and to threaten the destruction of an older Latin America which for all its contradictions and repressions represented some kind of continuity with the past. For that reason, that time seems an appropriate moment at which to ask how Latin

America can begin to explain itself to itself in these new and sometimes frightening circumstances.

We are concluding these lines, and the several years of this dizzying and exciting project, on the eve of a new millennium. Contemplating the cultural landscape, whole regions have disappeared or been transformed beyond recognition by a combination of natural disaster, economic change, social conflict, globalization, and many other factors. And yet, it is valid to ask whether this represents an achievement and an enrichment of the lives of the millions who inhabit the place, or whether the outcome is a net loss for the majority and minority populations of the continent. What has happened to that spirit of innovation and imagination, that delight in improvisation, that impulse to freedom, in a continent where suddenly the new proliferation of religion seems to suggest uncertainty in the face of future? But in contrast, it is still obviously the case that people continue to imagine futures that they then seek by every means at their disposal to construct in reality. The Brazilian landless people's movement, the Movimento Sem Terra, is an inspiring example. So, it seems that it is not only poets and artists who dream. There is no frontier that can contain a truly liberating understanding.

In João Guimarães Rosa's great novel *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, near the end, a model of understanding the world, of teaching and learning, is proposed: 'Mestre não e quem ensina, mas quem de repente aprende' (the teacher is not the one who teaches, but the one who suddenly understands). Unforeseen connections are the ones that we have delighted in during the compilation of this work, and which we invite you to discover for yourselves.

DANIEL BALDERSTON
MIKE GONZALEZ
ANA M. LÓPEZ

How to use this encyclopedia

The framework of this Encyclopedia is an idea of culture and cultural studies whose underlying assumption is the connectedness of all forms of cultural expression. For the user, then, this will mean that there is a narrative to be followed through the book, whatever the point of entry. You may begin by consulting the entry on 'samba', for example; but the system of cross references, marked in bold in each entry, and the 'See alsos' that follow some entries, should take you into a constellation of related fields and issues – in this case through 'black cultures' or 'Carnival' to 'Brazil' via the 'Estado Novo' or 'Cinema Novo' towards 'bossa nova' and 'samba-reggae'. These routes will build a complex cultural narrative across themes, fields, time-frames and countries.

The entries are listed alphabetically but also, at the start of the book, listed by field and by country – from Literature and the Visual Arts to Music and Cinema. There are also a number of entries which explore cultural concepts and categories – like 'Time' or 'Meat' or 'Exile' – and others that provide brief biographies of significant figures with date and place of birth and death. We have tried, wherever possible, to give some sense of individuals and their achievement or significance rather than listing titles and dates.

The time-frame that we have interpreted as 'contemporary' embraces most of the twentieth century (with a tiny incursion into the twenty-first) with a starting point around 1920. This is not entirely arbitrary, since we would argue that that general time-frame acknowledges the beginning of a process of cultural decolonization which continued across a broken terrain through the century.

A note on spelling, names and order

The overall organization of the text is alphabetical. Surnames in the Hispanic world are often double. But there is a different usage in Spanish America and in Brazil; in the case of Spanish names, entries are arranged using the first name; in the case of Brazil, it is the final surname that is used and under which the individual is listed. For English, French and Dutch names the normal usage applies – following the Portuguese or English pattern.

Where appropriate, entries contain references to specific works like books, films or paintings. We have given the title in its original language in every case and followed it with the translation of title into English in brackets. In some cases, particularly in cinema, works have been published or released with a different title in English; where that is the case we give the name under which the film, say, was released. Otherwise the translations are literal.

Bibliographies and further reading

Items of 400 words or more normally carry a short bibliography. It is an indicative list, with no pretension to exhaustiveness; its purpose is to give the interested reader a starting point for further research or reading. Translations of titles are not normally given in the 'Further reading' section, but wherever possible there will be readings in English as well as the source language.

Finally

Cultures are complex interrelationships, cultural

xxiv **How to use this encyclopedia**

practice is diverse and creative. In some way, what is involved here is an attempt to make sense of the world, or to reshape. That activity is not restricted to the grand, self-conscious interventions in the world; a popular tune or a national dish may tell as

complex a story as a literary work. Our starting point has been that all these diverse manifestations have value and significance – and that they deserve to coexist in the book as they do in the world.