

The Illusive Race Question & Class: A Bacteria That Constantly Mutates

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ABSTRACT

Racism resembles bacteria. It has an uncanny ability to resist cures. Like bacteria, racism includes variants with unusual traits which have the ability to withstand an antibiotic attack on a microbe. For the moment the drug or laws kill the defenseless bacteria, “leaving behind — or ‘selecting,’ in biological terms — those that can resist it. These renegade bacteria then multiply, increasing their numbers a millionfold in a day, becoming the predominant microorganism.” My point is that we once believed that racism had been defined and that we were on our way to eradicate this ugly social disease only to find it active and well, but in another form.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodolfo F. Acuña was the Founding Chair and a Professor of Chicano Studies at California State University, Northridge. His accolades include the California Faculty Associations Academic Freedom Award, the Southern California Social Science Library's Emil Freed Award, and the Dr. Ernesto Galarza Award for Distinguished Community Activist and Scholarship. Acuña earned his B.A. and Master's degrees from Los Angeles State College and his Ph.D. in Latin American History from USC in 1968. His book, *Occupied America*, is a classic in Chicano studies. He presented this paper in April 2005 at the Society of Latino Scholars' Graduate Student Conference on the Michigan State University campus.