Derek Rubin and Jaap Verheul (eds.)

American Multiculturalism after 9/11

Transatlantic Perspectives

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Transatlantic Dialogues

Introduction

Derek Rubin and Jaap Verheul

Within a month after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Lynne Cheney, the wife of the Vice-President and former chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, publicly attacked educators who had sought to promote multicultural teaching and internationalism as a response to rising anti-Americanism. The notion that Americans needed to learn more about other cultures in the world, she argued, was tantamount to admitting "that the events of September 11th were our fault, that it was our failure to understand Islam that led to so many deaths and so much destruction." Instead of teaching diversity and tolerance, teachers from kindergarten to the top colleges and universities would do better to concentrate on the classics of world history and, most of all, the history of the American nation. The best way to understand the world in a time of national crisis, she concluded, was to read *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the writings of the founding fathers, or the heroic accounts of American soldiers during World War II by Stephen Ambrose.[1]

By unapologetically promoting national history and patriotism over diversity and tolerance, Cheney advanced her long-standing agenda to steer the national curriculum clear of multiculturalism. Her decision to assail what she called the "multicultural argument" in the wake of this national disaster also made clear that the ongoing debate over multiculturalism, diversity, and national identity was more alive than ever, as Americans struggled to make sense of "9/11." It has been debated whether this ominous date was a decisive turning point in American and global history, or should be understood rather in the context of long-term national and international developments and tensions.[2] It certainly is true that the American War on Terror, the invasion of Iraq, and the ensuing debate about civil liberties for which Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay became contested symbols opened a new chapter in a long history of constitutional interpretation. More importantly, the terrorist attacks by radical Muslims of foreign origin led Americans to recast their perceptions of diversity and assimilation within a national framework, and at the same time to reevaluate the position of the United States in the world.

Cheney's remarks are illustrative of several themes that are central to this volume. Her combative accusation unambiguously reminds us of the highly controversial and contingent nature of multiculturalism, a concept that can be said to

have developed in dialectical opposition to competing perspectives on citizenship and plurality in Western society. The battle was still going on, she seemed to say. Yet at the same time her argument made clear that both combatants and battlefield had significantly changed after 9/11. The way she associated multiculturalism with the understanding of Islam and a failure to "encourage the study of our past" in the context of Western civilization suggested a global perspective that was new to the debate about cultural diversity. Both in the United States and Western Europe, the term multiculturalism now became enlisted in the political and academic discourses about the presence of Muslims within Western societies.[3] Since this happened in different ways on the two sides of the Atlantic, while both trajectories retained many common elements and dialogical moments, it is well worth studying these changing approaches to multiculturalism from a transatlantic perspective.

Multiple Multiculturalisms

American multiculturalism as a concept for understanding and promoting American diversity has always been contingent and controversial. As David Theo Goldberg convincingly argues in the introduction to his seminal anthology, *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, its development can be understood as a reaction to assimilationist, monocultural claims that had become the dominant and hardly disputed discourse in the United States. Interestingly, Goldberg suggests that this American monoculturalism was deeply informed by European cultural notions of high culture. Based on a common transatlantic heritage, this "deeply ethnoracialized Eurovision" was now used in the United States to support domestic and geopolitical hegemony in a time of Cold War and imperialism. Multiculturalism emerged in the 1960s as a multiform revolt "against the monocultural grain." Fittingly, as a term that referred to plurality and difference, multiculturalism lacked consistency and unity. In fact, Goldberg emphatically warns against any attempt to reduce the "multicultural condition" that emerged in politics, education, and many other discourses to a single definition.[4]

Multiculturalism, indeed, has many genealogies. It is informed by well-established notions about citizenship and assimilation, by the Civil Rights Movement and the other emancipatory movements that promoted identity politics, and by the cultural turn that has transformed the humanities since the 1960s. Originally mostly used to describe accommodating policy directives that attempted to cope with cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in traditional immigration countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United States, the term multiculturalism became widely used in many different discourses where it was assigned a variety of meanings. It can be described as a policy-oriented movement that promotes a "multicultural society" marked by racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity. As Charles Taylor points out, rather than aiming for greater social and economic equality,

the movement has been driven as much by the "politics of recognition," forcing society at large to recognize and "incorporate" these minorities on an equal footing.[5]

Multiculturalism also forcefully and divisively entered the American university campus. It became a rallying cry for new academic programs focused on minority and "subaltern" groups. It also paved the way for new expressions of esthetic appreciation in literary studies and forms of moral and emotional approval in cultural studies. Fiction writers from many different cultural backgrounds were included in textbooks and anthologies of American literature that found their way into the academic curriculum. Moreover, multiculturalism gradually developed into a political theory that was analyzed and canonized in a number of influential scholarly studies published in the last decade of the twentieth century by various political philosophers.[6] Each introduced changing sets of adjectives to differentiate between all these manifestations of multicultural ambitions, such as soft and hard; assimilationist and radical; conservative, liberal, and critical; and corporate and incorporating. Behind this plurality of "concerns and considerations, principles and practices, concepts and categories," however, multiculturalism is most of all a fundamental *Weltanschauung*, an all-encompassing view of society, which Parekh describes as "a perspective on human life."[7] In all its guises, it is a perspective on power and hierarchy in Western society.

Although even the conservative sociologist Nathan Glazer sarcastically conceded in 1995 that "We Are All Multiculturalists Now," the new call for diversity had in fact already been forcefully disputed from several directions.[8] Conservative authors such as Allan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza had lamented the demise of a shared cultural tradition and sense of common American identity, and Samuel Huntington had singled out multiculturalism as the most "immediate and dangerous challenge" to the American creed and Western civilization which, if left unopposed, could lead to "the end of the United States of America as we have known it." Multiculturalism was very much at the heart of the culture wars that broke out when the United States entered the "multicultural decade" of the 1980s.[9] The champions of cultural and ethnic diversity had also drawn friendly fire from more left-leaning intellectuals, such as Arthur Schlesinger and Todd Gitlin, who feared that the cultural turn would harm egalitarian agendas and liberal coalitions. Liberal thinkers more fundamentally warned that the cultural essentialist and particularistic aspects of multiculturalism challenged the universalist and tolerant achievements of the Enlightenment project.[10] Indeed, some liberal scholars, such as David Hollinger and the so-called multi-racial theorists, had begun to seek new, alternative models for American society that went beyond multiculturalism. In the field of literary studies, champions of multiculturalism, such as Emory Elliott, explored the possibility of introducing a new esthetics into the hitherto highly politicized debate about the multicultural canon.[11]

Culture and Diversity after 9/11

It soon became evident that the horrific bombing of the Twin Towers had changed the dynamics of the multicultural debate in important ways. As America was forced to navigate between a heightened concern about national security and a longstanding commitment to civil liberties, the debate between liberals and conservatives in the United States polarized. Increasingly, multiculturalism became a key term in the age-old struggle to define America. Significantly, moreover, multiculturalism entered the international arena in ways it had never done before. The contentious issue of cultural diversity that had long been a concern of American intellectuals and politicians became acutely relevant in many European countries as the threat of terrorism mounted and large-scale attacks were launched in Madrid in 2004 and one year later on "7/7" in London. America itself has had to contend with the implications of abiding by the multicultural ideal as it has struggled to define its stance toward American Muslims and the Arab world amidst the ongoing threat of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.

This volume explores the many ways in which the multicultural debate has evolved on both sides of the Atlantic since the cataclysmic events of 9/11. The British sociologist Tariq Modood, describing the disillusionment with and anxiety about multiculturalism after 9/11, recently rhetorically asked whether multiculturalism is still appropriate for the twenty-first century, only to confirm forcefully that this certainly is the case. "It is the form of integration that best meets the normative implications of equal citizenship," he argues, "and under our present post-9/11, post-7/7 circumstances, stands the best chance of succeeding."[12] Modood's observation poses a particular challenge for the field of American Studies that is worth considering briefly here because it speaks to the relevance of the present volume.

Multiculturalism was traditionally studied through the lenses of a variety of disciplines, and as such formed one of the central concerns of American Studies scholars, many of whom were, and indeed still are, strongly influenced by cultural studies.[13] However, in recent years American Studies scholars have turned their attention elsewhere, focusing on issues such as American culture in a transnational or globalized context, while multiculturalism has been explored mainly by political scientists. Surprisingly, however, in their discussions of multiculturalism, these political theorists have largely ignored the influence of 9/11 on the multicultural debate.[14] The present volume springs from the recognition that, in light of the urgency of the many problems facing multicultural societies on both sides of the Atlantic since 9/11, the field of American Studies has an important role to play in this debate, especially the developments in multiculturalism have been essentially cultural rather than political. *American Multiculturalism after 9/11* therefore brings together scholars who focus largely on the *cultural* rather than the political context and implications of multiculturalism and on the ways these

are reflected in cultural texts of different kinds. Moreover, in doing so, rather than view the multicultural debate as ongoing and uninterrupted, as their counterparts in the political sciences have done, the contributors to this volume have tried to take into account – and where relevant assess – the impact of 9/11 on the dynamics of American multiculturalism in a transatlantic context.

Multicultural Boundary Crossings

The book is divided into three sections, the first of which focuses on key theoretical issues concerning American multiculturalism and the ways in which these are related to the transatlantic multicultural dialogue. In his ambitious essay, "Multiculturalism and Immigration," Paul Lauter argues that, rather than serving as a catalyst for change in the dynamics of multiculturalism itself, the events of 9/11 highlight a dramatic shift that had begun earlier, from multiculturalism's concern with identity to the issue of immigration and the attendant problems of separation and integration, which now constitute the main challenge to Western societies. This has important consequences for the study of American society and culture. For, if the problems faced by multiculturalism were of a national nature, Lauter suggests those presented by immigration are international, in that they are closely linked to economic globalization and the production of a globalized culture. This means, he writes, that whereas "[i]n the 1960s those of us concerned with multiculturalism had to learn about the histories and contemporary dynamics of racism, Indian removal and dispersion, Chinese exclusion and Japanese internment ... we [now] need to learn about the economic and social meanings of American subsidies for corn and cotton growers, or French support for sugar beets and other domestic farm products." He concludes that "[w]e need to comprehend these economic and political contexts within which culture is now being produced, distributed, and consumed – indeed, the meanings of globalized culture as a commodity."

In a groundbreaking essay, titled "Native-Immigrant Boundaries and Ethnic and Racial Inequalities," Richard Alba constructs a conceptual framework that helps to determine the varying degrees to which multicultural tolerance has been at risk in Western societies since 9/11, which seemingly heightened the danger of radical Muslim influence among immigrant minorities. By comparing the United States and Western Europe – in particular France and Germany – for how social boundaries figure in the separation and integration of ethnic and racial minorities, Alba demonstrates that multiculturalism is at risk in Western societies to the degree that "Muslims form a large portion of the low-status immigrant population and thus where religion figures importantly in the distinctions that natives, whether secular or Christian, draw between themselves and disfavored immigrant groups." He concludes that, paradoxically, multiculturalism in its more liberal form "has not been affected as much in the United States, despite the traumatic

impact of 9/11 there, as it has in some Western European countries." More importantly, perhaps, Alba's analysis of social boundaries and the roles they play in reinforcing or dissolving social and economic differences between majority and minority populations helps to identify the necessary conditions for attaining racial and ethnic equality in Western societies, which, owing to immigration, are becoming increasingly multicultural.

In the final essay in this section, "Coherence, Difference, and Citizenship: A Genealogy of Multiculturalism," Ed Jonker points to the long and contested genealogy of multiculturalism by analyzing how the humanities and the social sciences produced competing perspectives on social and cultural identity. By offering an inventory of the multicultural debate in the humanities and social sciences, Jonker's essay serves as a useful framework for those by Lauter and Alba. At the same time, it enters into a fascinating conversation with these essays, because Jonker takes a stand on which theory is most pertinent to the post-9/11 world. As national states developed during the nineteenth century, he explains, historians were actively involved in creating national identities and citizenship, many taking their cue from nationalist German linguist Johann Gottfried Herder. Although later historians abandoned these efforts to construct homogeneous national identities, political and cultural theorists such as Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh, and Jacob Levy developed alternative discourses of national identity that attempted to discard history altogether. Since these theorists were less successful in explaining the multicultural disputes within changing civilizations, political scientists such as Charles Taylor and David Hollinger developed new theories to cope with difference. However, Jonker points out that the historical perspective remains valid, as illustrated by the demand for national narratives in times of political and cultural uncertainty. He reaffirms the need for "decent history" that embraces the universal traditions of liberalism and human rights, but accepts that pragmatic choices need to be made to allow these values to flourish in diverse societies.

Cultural Reflections of the Unthinkable

The essays in the second section explore the impact of 9/11 on American multiculturalism by examining cultural texts of different kinds. In his compelling essay, "Indecent Exposure: Picturing the Horror of 9/11," Rob Kroes explores the functions and meanings of photographs of the horrific events of 9/11 taken by amateur and professional photographers alike. While the function of most of the photographs made public via the media and through various exhibitions in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of the Twin Towers was therapeutic or healing, there were those, Kroes argues, that "induced contested readings that may reflect differences inherent in multicultural societies." In a section ironically titled, "The Iconic Photograph That Never Was (Nor Will Be?)," he illustrates

these differences with reference to the deeply unsettling photographs of individuals who jumped to their deaths. In particular, he focuses on Associated Press Photographer Richard Drew's controversial photograph of one man falling through the air, showing how ethnic background figured in the highly personal ways in which people responded to this photograph when it was presented to them as potentially being of a loved one whom they had lost in the bombing of the Twin Towers. Although Kroes acknowledges that "[e]thnicity may be too broad a category to account for the ways in which people reacted to the enormity of 9/11," he concludes that ethnic background does play an important role in determining these reactions. "In the end," he writes, "it will always be a matter of individuals drawing on their life experiences, their memories and cultural repertoires, including those that are ethnically rooted, when they attempt to give meaning to 9/11."

Where Kroes's essay explores the impact of 9/11 on American multiculturalism by examining responses to photographs taken of the event, Phillip E. Wegner's challenging essay, "'The Dead Are Our Redeemers': Culture, Belief, and *United 93*," does so by analyzing the movie *United 93*. Although his focus is entirely different from Richard Alba's, Wegner, too, offers a modification of the widely held view that 9/11 damaged multiculturalism because it highlighted the risks of tolerating difference. His essay offers an analysis of *United 93* to support his argument that radical, conservative anti-multiculturalists and superficial, more liberal multiculturalists of the kind found in the Bush administration and in corporate America share a "destructive envy," as he calls it, of the 9/11 terrorists for their willingness to sacrifice themselves for ideals to which they were totally committed. His reading of the movie shows how it presents the passengers aboard United 93 as representative Americans who usurped the terrorists' willingness to die for their beliefs by sacrificing their own lives for a higher cause, through violently resisting those very same terrorists. Wegner argues that this transformation of the victims of 9/11 into heroes willing to die for their ideals "makes the American deaths on 9/11 not endings, but rather the crucial inaugural act, the moment when things change, in the new infinite sequence of the war on terror." He concludes that this form of "commemoration and redemption" regrettably prevents the kind of healing so sorely needed after 9/11 and points to the need for more constructive alternatives.

In his essay, "Real American Heroes: Attacking Multiculturalism through the Discourse of Heroic Sacrifice," Michan Andrew Connor argues that the promotion of New York's firefighters as symbols of American courage and self-sacrifice in the face of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers was a right-wing ploy to discredit multiculturalism and justify American expansionism. Through a discussion of the public debate concerning the erection of a controversial memorial statue modeled on a photograph depicting three white firefighters raising the American flag at Ground Zero on September 11, Connor shows how right-wing

commentators were able to discredit the ideal of multiculturalism and present the predominantly white New York City firefighters as quintessential American heroes and models of ideal American citizenship. Rather than usher in a new phase in the multicultural debate, Connor argues that 9/11 only intensified the right-wing's longstanding privileging of whiteness in the discourse of American heroism and sacrifice, as part of their attempt to promote their racist policies and their support of military action as a justifiable means of American expansion. He demonstrates this with a detailed reading of the pre-9/11 movie *Armageddon* and a discussion of its relevance to the right wing's post-9/11 promotion and justification of the War on Terror.

In the next essay in this section, "'America under Attack': Unity and Division after 9/11," Mathilde Roza discusses the early post-9/11 poem, "Somebody Blew Up America," by radical black activist Amiri Baraka. In this poem, Roza points out, Baraka violated every code of what was considered appropriate for poetry written in response to the horrific attack on the Twin Towers. Instead of expressing shock, sadness, and outrage at the death of thousands of Americans on that fateful day, Baraka points an accusing finger and directs his anger at what he sees as a racist white America that has historically excluded and inflicted suffering upon African-Americans and other minorities. Roza's essay examines the controversy caused by Baraka's public recital of this poem at a poetry festival in September 2002, where he made his appearance as the newly elected Poet Laureate of the state of New Jersey, and which ultimately led to his losing this position. She places her analysis of the attempt to silence Baraka alongside the controversy concerning the 9/11 monument proposed by the New York Fire Department. Roza demonstrates how the multiculturalist debate evolved, in that the emphasis on difference and diversity came to be perceived by many Americans as irrelevant given that the nation as a *whole* was under attack by Muslim extremists. What was ultimately at stake in these two controversies, Roza argues, was the recognition of difference as a means toward creating a just society, as opposed to the construction of a monolithic model of America that denied the significance of diversity in the name of national unity.

In contrast to Roza's focus on Baraka's radical poetic response to 9/11, John-Paul Colgan explores a "mainstream" author's imaginative reading of the terrorist attacks in his essay "'This Godless Democracy': Terrorism, Multiculturalism, and American Self-Criticism in John Updike." Placing Updike's highly controversial novel *Terrorist* (2006) in the context of his earlier work, and examining it in relation to novels by other mainstream writers such as Jay McInerney, Jonathan Safran Foer, Paul Auster, and Don DeLillo, Colgan analyses *Terrorist* for the ways in which it gives new expression to Updike's seemingly contradictory self-declared conservatism and patriotism, on the one hand, and his critical stance toward contemporary America for the ways in which it has failed to live up to its promise, on the other. This is highlighted, he argues, by Updike's radical act of writing a novel

that "comes very close to imagining al-Qaeda-style terrorism as a type of severe critique of an America that has lost its way," while at the same time criticizing American multiculturalism for creating the conditions that make such an act of terrorism possible. His reading of the novel demonstrates how the titular Muslim terrorist serves as Updike's mouthpiece for his criticism of the dissolution and crass materialism that prompt his attempted terrorist act. Yet the fact that the protagonist, who as a Muslim fundamentalist vehemently criticizes the freedom and tolerance of multicultural America, is himself the child of a multicultural union between an Egyptian father and Irish-American, "gestures, perhaps inadvertently," Colgan suggests, "towards the views of American critics of multiculturalism, such as Samuel Huntington and Lawrence Auster, who see it as a fundamentally anti-Western ideology."

In the final essay in this section, "Multiculturalism in American History Textbooks before and after 9/11," Rachel Hutchins-Viroux examines the impact of 9/11 on the content of American history textbooks as contested sites for the definition of American national identity. Hutchins-Viroux explains that "[t]extbooks embody a compromise. In order to sell, they must be acceptable to parents, teachers, administrators, and, in general, citizens of divergent political leanings. As such, they provide a meaningful representation of a consensual vision of American national identity." Because the contents of American history books for primary education were highly contested in the culture wars in the 1980s and 1990s, and continue to be at the center of important debates on national identity, she takes as her case study a comparison of American history textbooks that were adopted for use in primary schools in the state of Texas in 1997, which was the last time such books were selected before 9/11, and 2003. American history books purchased for primary schools in Texas, Hutchins-Viroux explains, serve as a useful national indicator for two reasons: firstly, more than anywhere else in the nation, the state has a say in determining their content, thereby guaranteeing that they closely reflect a consensual view of American national identity; and secondly, because the books purchased by the state of Texas are then sold nationwide by their publishers. Hutchins-Viroux compares these textbooks, examining them thoroughly for the way they represent the make-up of American society through photographs and illustrations, their choice and treatment of contested topics for multiculturalists and conservatives, the nature of the patriotic iconography and texts concerning patriotism that they include, and their presentation of the events of 9/11. She concludes from her study that the important gains that she found had been made by multiculturalists in determining the content of the 1997 textbooks proved to be lasting, in that the 2003 textbooks still reflected the multicultural nature of American society, and covered previously taboo topics such as the cruelty of slavery toward African-Americans, and the injustice of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. However, she discerns an unmistakable rightward shift in the 2003 textbooks which, if not caused exclusively by the post-9/11 natio-

nalistic upsurge, was certainly reinforced by the rise in conservatism that accompanied it.

Transatlantic Dialogues

Whereas the second section of the book focuses on American cultural texts, the third section offers discussions of the impact of 9/11 on multiculturalism in the United States and Europe. In his essay, "A Kinder, Gentler Europe? Islam, Christianity, and the Divergent Multiculturalisms of the New West," Patrick Hyder Patterson offers an insightful discussion and assessment of the effectiveness of what he takes to be fundamentally different forms of multiculturalism in the United States and Europe. These differences, he argues, are particularly emphatic and visible when it comes to American and European responses to Islam and its followers since 9/11. Concentrating on what he calls "mainstream multiculturalisms," Patterson begins by distinguishing between the American assimilationist model, which he explains "is, at bottom, about finding ways to offer Americanness to everyone, or as some critics from the left would say, to impose it," and the European anti-assimilationist model, which, "by contrast, has been one reluctant to insist on the assimilation of newcomers, and often has not offered much real prospect of it." Patterson argues that although overall the American model may constitute a harsher form of multiculturalism, the strict distinction between church and state in the United States has paradoxically made it possible for American Muslims to integrate socially and politically, while maintaining their religion in the private sphere, thereby rendering it unproblematic. In Europe, by contrast, the seemingly more gentle policy of allowing minority groups to live alongside the majority population rather than pressuring them to integrate or assimilate has highlighted the cultural, and particularly the *religious*, differences between European countries' dominant Christian populations and their Muslim minorities. The recognition of the problems ensuing from this, Patterson concludes, may very well herald a gradual shift in Europe, from its anti-assimilationist variety of multiculturalism to the American assimilationist model, which Europeans have resisted for a long time, partly at least because it has been felt to pose a threat to the dominant position of the Christian majorities.

In her essay, "Slavery, Memory, and Citizenship in Transatlantic Perspective," Johanna Kardux examines the many years of conflict and controversy leading up to and following the construction of the African Burial Ground National Monument, which was finally unveiled in New York City in 2007, and the National Slavery Monument in the Netherlands, which was unveiled in Amsterdam in 2002. Kardux demonstrates in her essay that "the call for slavery memorials in these two nations also represents vital, if necessarily conflicted and contested, attempts to renegotiate national and cultural identities, and to redefine citizenship in a postcolonial and globalizing age. Seeking recognition and redress for

centuries of willful amnesia, the slavery memorial projects in the United States and the Netherlands attempt to re-imagine national, transnational, and multicultural communities that are more responsive to the needs of citizens in our multicultural societies today." Her essay argues that the two monuments she discusses, *and* the debates to which they have given rise, are *both* important forms of memorialization or "collected memory" – rather than "collective memory." This form of memorialization enables previously silenced groups to be heard among a clamor of voices. In making themselves heard they claim their rightful place in the ongoing debate on what constitutes a national past that does justice to the multicultural nature of contemporary American and Dutch society.

In "Are We All Americans? 9/11 and Discourses of Multiculturalism in the Netherlands," Jaap Kooijman explores the role played by 9/11 in the construction of a national identity that reflects the multicultural make-up of contemporary Dutch society. He does so by focusing on the ways in which Dutch artists have appropriated the tragic events of September 11, 2001, in their responses to the rapid, fundamental changes in Dutch society. These changes were dramatically highlighted by 9/11 and the political murders of Pim Fortuyn, the populist leader of the successful Dutch anti-immigrant party who was shot by an animal rights activist on May 6, 2002; and the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who was assassinated in the city center of Amsterdam by a Muslim extremist on November 2, 2004. Kooijman's essay is a response to the well-known Dutch left-wing publicist Paul Scheffer, who has criticized Dutch multiculturalism for creating ethnic segregation and thereby laying the foundation for the radicalization of Muslim ethnic minorities in the wake of 9/11 and the Fortuyn and Van Gogh murders. According to Kooijman, "[b]y making a rigid distinction between 'us' (the Dutch national collective) and 'them' (the Muslim ethnic minorities), Paul Scheffer implies that 'our' culture can be reduced to an identity that is predominantly formed by a collective national history. Moreover, his statement ignores the fact that 9/11 and the assassinations of Fortuyn and Van Gogh not only gave 'many of them their narrative' but also 'us' a range of narratives, including some that polarize the debate, as well as others that instead challenge the rigid 'us' versus 'them' divide." Kooijman backs up his criticism by analyzing two Dutch art films, *The American I Never Was* (2004) by Chris Keulemans and *New York Is Eating Me & The Cactus Dance* (2005) by Jeroen Kooijmans, which employ the events of 9/11 as a means of challenging the idea of a dominant Dutch national narrative in the "us" versus "them" distinction implied by Scheffer.

Whereas Kooijman's essay focuses on how Dutch responses to 9/11 figure in constructions of a national identity, in the final essay in this volume, "'How could this have happened in Holland?' American Perceptions of Dutch Multiculturalism after 9/11," Jaap Verheul focuses on how Americans employed the political murders of Fortuyn and Van Gogh in their constructions of a post-9/11 American national identity. Verheul explains how both of these political murders shocked

Dutch society, and dramatically changed the political landscape and the intellectual debate about immigration and integration in the Netherlands. Not surprisingly, he argues, the murders and the ensuing public self-searching also cast the Netherlands in the center of international attention. Verheul observes that especially the American media paid a great deal of attention to the turmoil and confusion that gripped the Netherlands in the wake of these two events. American commentators placed the murders and the ensuing public discussion in the context of a conservative turn in European politics, the changing transatlantic relations after 9/11, and – most significantly – the urgent debates in Europe about multiculturalism. Verheul explains in his essay how the American media vividly predicted an end to Dutch tolerance, but mostly tried to draw lessons for American society from these events.

Together, the essays in *American Multiculturalism after 9/11* illustrate the intensity and diversity of the debate about multiculturalism after 9/11, both in the United States and in Europe. Instead of offering closure by presenting a unified narrative about cultural diversity, national identity, and social stratification, these essays present a variety of perspectives and trajectories, each foregrounding different voices and opinions. They suggest the undiminished relevance of key terms such as immigration, assimilation, and citizenship, while also pointing to unresolved conflicts over competing concepts, such as universalism, religion, and tolerance. This volume also highlights the fact that these ongoing debates have acquired a global dimension. Most importantly, however, it shows that the struggle over multiculturalism is not limited to the political domain, but has more profound cultural implications that become clear from a reading of cultural texts of different kinds. Rather than offer a definitive conclusion, the volume is meant to stimulate further academic discussion about the ongoing debate on multiculturalism as a concept relevant for the study of America in a global context.

Notes

1. Lynne V. Cheney, "Mrs. Cheney's Remarks at the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture," The White House, http://www.whitehouse.gov/mrscheney/news/20011005.html. For Cheney's previous attacks on multiculturalism see Lynne V. Cheney, *Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995). Patriotism also informed many of the children's books she co-authored after 9/11, such as Lynne V. Cheney and Robin Preiss-Glasser, *America: A Patriotic Primer* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002); Lynne V. Cheney and Peter M. Fiore, *When Washington Crossed the Delaware: A Wintertime Story for Young Patriots* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).
2. Strobe Talbott and Nayan Chandra, eds., *The Age of Terror: America and the World after September 11* (New York: BasicBooks, 2001); Mary L. Dudziak, *September 11 in History: A Watershed Moment?*, American Encounters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke Univer-

sity Press, 2003); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007).

3. Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 12.

4. David Theo Goldberg, "Introduction: Multicultural Conditions," in *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 1, 4, 6.

5. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

6. For an overview of the debate see for instance Will Kymlicka, "The New Debate on Minority Rights (and Postscript)," in *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*, ed. Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also the essay by Ed Jonker in this volume.

7. Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism. Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Second ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 336.

8. Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

9. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987); James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic-Books, 1991); Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 305-07.

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11. Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995); Emory Elliott, Louis Freitas Caton, and Jeffrey Rhyne, *Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

12. Modood, *Multiculturalism*, 14.

13. For a quantitative overview of multiculturalism as a "central problematic" in American Studies scholarship between 1949 and 1999 see Larry J. Griffin and Maria Tempenis, "Class, Multiculturalism and the American Quarterly," *American Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2002). See also Linda Kerber, "Diversity and the Transformation of American Studies," *American Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1989); John Higham, "Multiculturalism and Universalism: A History and Critique," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1993); Gary Kulik, "Special Issue on Multiculturalism," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1993); Lucy Maddox, ed., *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

14. For instance, the second edition of Bhiku Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, which appeared in 2006 with a chapter that responded to criticism, makes no reference to

9/11, neither does Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Multicultural Boundery Crossings

Multiculturalism and Immigration

Paul Lauter

Would this book exist if September 11, the train bombings in London and Madrid, the attacks in Mumbai, and the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh had not happened? Probably not. All the same, I am going to argue that the acts of terrorism like September 11 only amplified the sound of a tectonic shift in global economic and social structures that has been gaining strength since World War II. That shift is currently focused, in the United States and elsewhere – especially Western Europe and Japan so far – on the questions of immigration: how much, how fast, from where... and then what? These questions, which fundamentally spring from a globalized and altogether unequal economy, have begun to replace the earlier questions of identity that marked the debate over multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s. Those identity questions remain of interest, but they were largely matters of single national societies, as is signaled by phrases like "Asian American," "Native American," "Black German," "German Turkish," "British Asian," and the like. The questions of immigration are those of global structures, structures that have been imposed upon us by rampant and increasingly globalized capitalism.

Multiculturalism focused on access and integration; but these are *not* the primary issues of globalization and the immigration it has generated. The issue there is legitimization: whether one is, and is seen and received as, legal, legitimate, fully a citizen. The issue of multiculturalism was identity: Who are we, and who am I? The issue of immigration is integration and separation: Of what are we – am I – a part, and who decides? The issue is not what constitutes an identity that needs to be respected, but what constitutes a viable political community. It is these issues I wish to discuss, and the new structures of inequality shaping this particular moment.

Enduring Structures of Power

Before I do this, I want to reflect briefly about the successes and failures of that earlier moment of multiculturalism. It began in the demands of the Civil Rights Movement for access: access to the front of the bus, to the lunch counter, to universities and decent, desegregated schools, and above all to the voting booth. While in the mid-1960s a few activists asked, "who wants to be integrated into a

burning house," as the civil rights leader formerly named Rap Brown put it, most people saw the goal as having access to the promises America had held out since its earliest days. "Let us in," most people said, "not as tokens, or with *no* deliberate speed, or somewhere down the line, but Now." "Freedom Now," as the slogan and chant had it.

To be sure, the general belief of those who formulated women's studies, for example, or the variety of ethnic studies programs that emerged in the 1960s, was that institutions like colleges and universities, or courts, or even political parties, would necessarily be transformed simply by what would come in the wake of the entry of large new cadres of previously excluded people. They were right... and they were wrong. As had been the case with the achievement of women's suffrage, a half-century before, the addition of new constituencies to the voter rolls, the student bodies, or even the curriculum, did not in and of itself produce revolutionary change.

This is by no means to suggest that there have been no significant transformations brought about by the push for access. On the contrary, the color, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation balances of various public bodies have altered noticeably, and for the better. Hiring practices have changed through affirmative action; the idea, if not the practice, of daycare has become commonplace; access to the voting booth is no longer prevented by violence, though it is often undermined; public facilities and schools are no longer legally segregated, at least not by race; abortion remains relatively accessible, as do a wider variety of career opportunities, at least for some women. These are the real accomplishments of the identity-based movements of the 1960s and 1970s. I do have to say that a book like the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* – to cite my own favorite example – is a better, more inclusive, more accurate and finally more interesting text than predecessors of the 1950s, like *12 American Authors* or even the *Norton Anthology* of the 1980s.

It would be remiss not to point out the situation of today's black and Latino communities, where more men are in jails than in universities, and where secondary schools are viewed as disastrous failures. It would be absurd not to point to the wealth and income differentials making this period the most unequal in US history. It would be dishonest not to understand how institutions like unions, which have protected and supported working people, have been attacked, marginalized, and emasculated. To say this another way, what the movement – rooted in multiculturalism and in the identity politics it produced – did not accomplish was any significant alteration of the American structures of power, structures based on increasingly pervasive class determinants.[1] There are those, like Walter Benn Michaels, who would argue that the 1960s movement's focus on multiculturalism has had the effect, however unintended, of solidifying the American class structure in all its brutality. This is certainly a question worth discussing, but it is not my point here.

I do, however, want to quantify the meaning of class today within the United States and outside of it. Writing for CBS *MarketWatch* during the 2004 election campaign, Thomas Kostigen noted that within the United States, the richest one percent of the population "saw its financial wealth grow 109 percent from 1983 to 2001," while the "bottom two-fifths watched as its wealth fell 46 percent."[2] Here is another measure of the increasing inequality of wages and wealth in America, as formulated by Michael D. Yates. Between 1979 and 2000, "the richest 1 percent of all households, whose income is mainly from capital (or capital income disguised as wages), grabbed an astonishing 38.4 percent of all the income produced over a thirty-one year period. The poorest twenty percent of households took home a mere 0.8 percent of the total income. Consider," Yates continues, "that in 2003 there were 111,278,000 households in the United States. One percent of this number is 1,112,780 households. These very rich households got a share of the income increase forty-eight times higher (38.4 divided by 0.8) than the 22,255,600 families which comprise the poorest 20 percent of households."[3] Writing in the *Boston Globe* and deriving his figures from the Congressional Budget Office, columnist Derrick Z. Jackson puts it this way: "The share of America's income that went to the highest twenty percent of households increased from 45.5 percent in 1979 to 52.2 percent in 2003. The remaining eighty percent of American households saw their share of the nation's income drop."

One striking measure is the gap between CEOs (and other managers) and workers; the ratio was 42:1 in 1980; 107:1 in 1990, and now about "431:1, or $11.8 million to $27,460. ... If the salaries of the average worker had kept up with that of a CEO, he or she would be making $110,136. Had the minimum wage risen at the same pace as CEO compensation, it would stand today at $23.01. The federal minimum wage of $5.15 ... [had] not risen since 1997."[4] Likewise with respect to wealth, Yates notes, "In 2001, the richest one percent of all households had 33.4 percent of all net worth. The bottom ninety percent had 28.5 percent." In short, class disparities have grown wildly in the multicultural United States. At the same time, the ranks of the very rich have also grown, and thus helped to sustain the appearance and the pervasive ideology of open access.

Now, these figures concern only the richest country in the world, the United States of America. Consider, then, some details about the rest of the world. Kostigen summarizes thus:

Three billion people are living in "poverty" on less than two dollars per day, 800 million people lack access to basic health care, 17 million people – including 11 million children – die every year from easily preventable diseases and malnutrition, 2.4 billion people lack access to proper sanitation, 1.1 billion do not have safe drinking water, 275 million children never attend or complete primary school education and 870 million of the world's adults are illiterate.[5]

These figures are by no means independent of those I cited for the United States or those one could produce for the concentrations of wealth and income in Western Europe and in Japan. On the contrary, the enormous wealth of our societies derives in significant measure, directly and indirectly, from the exploitation of people in what used to be called the "third world." Think about farm products, like corn. The United States and Europe heavily subsidize the domestic production of such products, which can be grown more cheaply domestically by capital-intensive methods of cultivation: more machines, more fertilizer, more pesticide, and bigger industrialized farms. The result is, for example, that Mexican farmers, no longer able to sell their corn at a profit in competition with US corn, are forced off their farms and into cities both in Mexico and in El Norte, where they become cheap, exploitable labor and, of course, immigrants. That process is accelerated by the conversion of corn to biofuel, which has helped make the cost of food in Mexico double in the last year. Meantime, the American manufacturers still left – as well as service providers – hold the whip hand over US workers and their decreasingly effective unions by threatening to move to low-wage venues like the Mexican border, a process made considerably easier by NAFTA and other so-called "free trade" mechanisms.

One result is a vast increase in the import of consumer and capital goods manufactured abroad, a process that even further erodes jobs within the United States and Western Europe without fundamentally improving the status of most workers abroad. The process works this way, write Blau and Moncada: "Multinationals such as Wal-Mart, Sears, and Tarrant Apparel Group first set up operations in Mexico, where workers are paid $1.00 per hour, then move to China, where workers make $.50 an hour, and then to Bangladesh, where workers make $.30 an hour, and then to Mozambique, where they make even less."[6] Every move by a factory or site of other low-skilled jobs from one country or area to another creates a new displaced group of workers, who are detached from their former homes and ways of life, and likely therefore to become transnational migrants.

These statistics amply illustrate the increasing disparities between the rich in our countries and the poor both domestically and overseas. Obviously, we are not discussing the casual accumulation of some surplus value from a handful of workers down in the Connecticut River valley, who labor for Mr. Lawrence or Mr. Lowell. Rather, we are looking at the large-scale appropriation of the fruits of the labor of millions of people at home, and increasingly overseas. My basic point is this: the current system is producing not only the huge disparities in wealth, income and life chances I have barely touched upon, but the very crisis of immigration now haunting Europe and America, like a specter of old. What the "West" (or North if you prefer) has been doing is extracting enormous wealth – not just hydrocarbons – from the "third world," and in so doing setting off a huge flow of immigrants – one might call them economic refugees – from those countries, following the money, so to speak. Western countries continue to want to have it

both ways; that is, devouring the financial fruits of what is called "neoliberalism" globally, but trying to prevent the influx of impoverished foreign workers cast loose from their roots elsewhere, precisely by the policies that produce Western wealth.

As long as the current political economy of globalized capital rules, the West will be importing social tension and conflict along with the enormous value it extracts. In a peculiar and perverse way, there is a certain distorted truth to the oft-repeated mantra of the Bush administration that "they" have to be fought over "there" so that "they" don't have to be fought "at home." This mantra needs to be understood not in the Bush military framework, but very differently. Unless the West takes major steps to support, indeed to bring about, change in the economic and social conditions of people in the impoverished world, it will increasingly face the problem of finding ways to deal with the growing tide of immigration at home.

Changing Patterns of Immigration

Immigration is rapidly growing, too, both in numbers and in proportion to the resident populations in the United States and Western Europe. Likewise, the origins of immigrants have altered noticeably. According to US census figures, in 1950 those born outside the United States constituted 10,347,395 of a total population of some 150,216,110, or 6.9 percent. In 1970 – essentially before the impact of changes in immigration law had set in – the figures were 9, 619,302 of a total of 203,210,158, or 4.7 percent. But by 1990, immigration numbers had swollen to 19,767,316 of 248,709,873, or 7.9 percent,[7] and by 2000 the total of the foreign-born was 31,107,889 of 281,421,906, 11.1 percent, up some 57 percent in a single decade, and the highest as a percentage of total population since 1930.[8] In fact, these figures can be compared with the peak of turn-of-the-century numbers; in 1900, the foreign-born constituted 13.6 percent of the US population.

At least as important in setting the tone for the debate over immigration in the United States, and elsewhere in the "West," is where the immigrants are from. In 1970, European immigrants to the United States totaled 5,740,891, those from Asia 824,887, and those from Latin America 1,803,970. By 1990, these figures had altered to 4,350,403 from Europe, 4,979,037 from Asia, and 8,407,837 from Latin America.[9] The 2000 figures are even more striking: from Europe 4,915,557; from Asia 8,226,254; from Latin America 16,086,974. Of this last group, over nine million are from Mexico alone, which understates the actual number because these are census figures and likely do not capture undocumented immigration fully. Meanwhile the total of immigrants from northern and western European countries shrank to just over two million by 2000.[10]

Such figures also do not capture the impact of immigration in particular areas, where new arrivals are often concentrated. The long and short of it is that shifts

in these dimensions have come to overshadow the earlier forms of change that accompanied the Civil Rights Movement, and the subsequent struggles to establish multiculturalism as a central feature of American as well as of many Western European societies. In many respects multiculturalism has come to be accommodated within the basic structures of American capitalism, though disputes rage on about just how that accommodation should proceed in education and culture. Current harsh debates over immigration, the laws to make English the only legal language, the increasing conflict between native minorities and incoming immigrant workers, the widespread attitude that *mi casa no es su casa*, and the worldwide dimensions of the present struggles all suggest that we have entered a new historical moment.

Cultural Reflections of Global Inequality

How, then, does all this affect multiculturalism after September 11? Culturally, the focus in American Studies has undergone an analogous shift, from a period of multiculturalism to that of globalization. In the 1970s and 1980s, the major new literary influences were writers of color, especially representative women like Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Leslie Marmon Silko, among many others. They are still very significant players, of course. Increasingly, for the past fifteen or so years, writers in Western languages, including English, exist and create in a globalized culture, within which national boundaries are much less meaningful, and in which authors like Salman Rushdie and Gabriel García Márquez – just to select two arbitrarily – generate immediate local impact.

This shift from the focus on domestic multiculturalism to a globalized "migrant" culture began, I think, with the increasing attention to "borders" and what Gloria Anzaldúa and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, among others, designated as the "borderlands," the areas that are defined not by particular national cultures but by their very interculturality, hybridity, unsettlement.[11] Anzaldúa, for example, arrived in the *Heath Anthology*, if I may use that literary museum as a cultural barometer, in the fourth edition, which came on the market in 2001. Preparing that edition, we had a good deal of discussion about the international dimensions of literature in what is now the United States, from its earliest days into the twenty-first century.

This new angle of vision might be represented by the fact that the first 200-plus pages of the anthology consist of texts written or spoken in languages other than English. This development is stressed even more in the fifth edition, which contained clusters in the early volume on "America in the European Imagination" and on "Cultural Encounters," which includes brief excerpts from theorists like Mary Louise Pratt, Paul Gilroy, and Paula M.L. Moya and Ramon Saldívar. As we prepared the new sixth edition, a major problem became how to represent the contemporary globalizing of American culture in this anthology of US literature.

Addressing that problem, it seems to me, is the underlying meaning of the debate over the name of our enterprise, heretofore "American Studies," as represented by Janice Radway's presidential address to the US American Studies Association in 1998.[12] For the very subjects of literary, historical, and social reflection and analysis have modulated, from those focused within a national state to those in which the cultural productions even within that state are at least as involved with external as with internal cultural forces. Some ignorant critics, like Alan Wolfe for instance, have accused people like Radway of being uninterested in, if not altogether hostile toward, the United States. The issue is not lack of interest in the culture, society and politics of the United States, but recognizing that one simply cannot understand these phenomena in isolation. Whether one is talking about hip-hop or current fiction, what is being produced in the United States exists in a text-milieu, and increasingly a society, less defined by national boundaries than by international flows of people, goods, and, of course, cultures.

Am I saying, then, that September 11 made no difference? By no means. We have yet to know what all these differences might be. Still, in the United States, unlike in Europe, the impact of globalization, manifest as a crisis of immigration, seems quite distinct from the impact of September 11. After all, the overwhelming bulk of immigrants to the United States were and are from Latin America and Asia; the total of residents who identify themselves as of Arab origin, to take the obvious case, is a relatively modest 1.2 million, and that includes anyone – Berbers and Kurds, for example – from North Africa or much of the Middle East.[13] September 11 did not change the sources of the new immigration, and in a sense the events of that day remain largely marginal to the processes of globalization I am describing. What that day *did* bring sharply into focus, at least for this child of the Enlightenment, is the role of religion, and especially religious extremism, in secular democracies.

Endangered Consensus

Do the events of September 11 present a ready-made metaphor for the impact of religious fanaticism on capitalist democracies? Let me leave that question for a moment and approach it through some combination of historical reflection and personal experience.

Western secular democracies were established in somewhat different ways by a series of compromises. These compromises enabled an increasing variety of religions, often brought with them by immigrants, to flourish, even as established churches faded, often into little more than relics. In America, the form of religious expression called deism formed the core belief system of many, probably most, founding fathers. Particular churches played little role in fostering revolutionary ideology or practice, however. It was, rather, people like Thomas Paine – infamously described by Theodore Roosevelt as a "dirty little atheist" – whose

skills and ideology advanced the revolutionary cause. What Paine in particular added to the equation was a deep skepticism of, indeed hostility to, organized and especially sectarian religion. Consider the tone of this, one of my favorite passages from Paine:

> It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian Church, sprung out of the tail of the heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand. The statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus. The deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints. The Mythologists had gods for everything; the Christian Mythologists had saints for everything. The church became as crowded with the one, as the pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.[14]

It is passages like this that got Paine posthumously into deep trouble in the nineteenth century. Today, however, Paine's reputation has rapidly improved; something like three new books and a large number of articles on him have appeared in recent years.[15] He is seen increasingly as a historically significant player in the Revolutionary era. The improvement in his political reputation seems now to have helped justify the religious skepticism he so brilliantly articulated. Does a reaction against the religious dimensions of September 11 *and* of other fundamentalisms help explain Paine's recent popularity? Does the interest in Paine represent a growing discomfort, especially in secular democracies, with the rise of religious extremism and the challenges such fundamentalisms pose to democratic values? It is questions like these that September 11 continues to raise instead of the issue of immigration, at least in the United States.

What Americans have failed to grasp by and large is why fundamentalist religions, especially Islam, have come to constitute the central oppositional force to the West in many parts of the world. We have not perceived or accepted the implications of the fact that it has long been Western policy to destroy the forms of resistance presented by the Left, as in the Iran of Mossedegh, or even to encourage religious fundamentalism that attacked communist influence, as in Afghanistan. Deprived of socialist or communist – much less secular democratic – forms of opposition to the Western capitalist power that continued to consume their bounty and control their daily lives, people in many parts of the third world, and especially in the Middle East, turned to ever more extreme religious fundamentalisms as the only available option against continued Western domination. But the

events of September 11, and those in Madrid, London, and the Netherlands, made apparent the basic conflict between radical Islamicist ideology and that of Western democracy. This conflict had been papered over during the Cold War period, when the United States and its allies supported any force, however corrupt or malign, against Communism.

My point is this: while the dynamic of globalization, which I have here represented by the immigration crisis, may have been exacerbated by September 11, it is by no means identical to it. The perception that Muslim fundamentalism and Western secularism are at odds – who would have thought? – also ignores what is to me a more basic question than whether the Prophet can come to table with George Washington. The question is whether fundamentalisms of any religious definition – Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Islamic – do or do not finally throttle avowedly secular democratic societies. If one concludes that they do, what is then to be done? Multiculturalism does not provide answers.

My own approach to such questions grows from my experience working with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker organization, during the 1960s. Quaker meetings for business – the formal gatherings of Friends, at which policies and their implementation are decided – are governed by the practice of consensus. That idea, or at least what was thought to be that idea, appealed to many movement activists, who urged that the practice be adopted in their own organizations. Many people, however, confused unanimity with consensus, but they are not the same. Among Quakers, a consensus is achieved when no one exercises his or her responsibility to object to moving an action or policy forward. I say "responsibility" because within a Quaker dispensation, it would be as irresponsible for a Friend to allow an action offensive to his or her basic values to move forward, as it would be to oppose, and therefore to block, an action on narrowly personal or sectarian grounds. This concept of consensus was not, I fear, widely understood in the 1960s, and certainly not shared outside Quaker circles.

That is my main point: for any political practice like consensus to operate, a consensus must already exist about its meaning, the rules by which it works, the real meanings of alternatives and, most of all, the religious or philosophical concepts about human beings and our societies underpinning an idea like consensus-based decision making. After all, the political practice of the Quakers is rooted in the idea that individual human beings have direct access to God and may be sufficiently inspired by a holy spirit to speak out in Quaker meetings for worship, or to withhold consent in meetings for business. If you do not believe in a god whose spirit might on important occasions inspire your tongue with an image of the divine, then consensus-based decision-making becomes an empty and often dangerous form, because it is easily manipulated. Which is why consensus-based decision-making is all but useless in most democratic organizations. Likewise, laissez-faire secular democratic social arrangements may seem

pleasurably open to immigrant newcomers from more repressive cultures; but are the premises on which such arrangements are erected recognized, much less embraced?

Secular democracy has been developed from certain basic ideas. In the United States these ideas were particularly enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and the later Bill of Rights. It may not be necessary to agree that our basic truths are "self-evident," or that it is a deistic "creator" who endows our "unalienable rights." We might dispute that, though it is clear that neither Bibles nor Korans, priests nor ministers, rabbis nor imams get into this act. No crucifix or commandments or empowered prophet enters into this ground. What *is* indisputable is the idea, which America has struggled with for at least 230 years, that all men and women are created equal, and that they all have equal rights, as later defined in that Bill of Rights.

Reading Globalized Culture

Can the fundamental consensus about those rights, a consensus achieved through much bloodshed and struggle, be sustained absent of a consensus about the basis for them? Can such a consensus be achieved in the conditions of globalization today, in which economic refugees find themselves pushed out of house and home and into exile precisely by the same people, or at least the same society, that acts out its indifference or hostility to their exile? Is the rage behind the attacks of September 11 exactly the point at which the despair of unsettlement and the force of globalization coalesce?

I do not pretend to have answers to all these impossible questions, though certain things do seem reasonably clear to me. First, the situation of nation-states with less explicitly defined founding documents than the United States is simply more difficult. In such nations, the cultural settlements, so to speak, which ground democratic politics are embodied in long-term practices and general assumptions rather than in Declarations and manifestos. However much the Declarations and the Bills of Rights can be deconstructed, they do offer secular texts of a power equivalent to those of sectarian religious dispensations.

Secondly, for those of us who do cultural and literary studies, the new situation of globalization demands that we apply our talents for reading and analysis to such documents. They cannot be left to the bloody hands of those who have shaped the crises of global inequality and oppression. We have to examine such texts with as much care and creativity as once we devoted to the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, "The Yellow Wallpaper," "The Revolt of Mother," or *The Souls of Black Folks*. We have to make more abundantly clear in our classrooms why someone like Tom Paine, precisely in his union of secular democracy and religious skepticism, is a writer for our own time.

We need, too, in producing anthologies and syllabi, to find new ways to illuminate the tensions, hopes, ideals, and despair of this new globalized moment. Just as we learned to chart and teach the beauty and distinctiveness of multicultural difference, so now we need to chart and teach whatever it is we find in the unsettlement, the bordered and borderless world, of immigration, globalization, and movement across the planet. This is no easy task. In the 1960s, those of us concerned with multiculturalism had to learn about the histories and contemporary dynamics of racism, Indian removal and dispersion, Chinese exclusion and Japanese internment, just to name a few examples. So now, we need to learn about the economic and social meanings of American subsidies for corn and cotton growers, or French support for sugar beets and other domestic farm products. We need to comprehend these economic and political contexts within which culture is now being produced, distributed, and consumed – indeed, the meanings of globalized culture as a commodity.

Just as in the 1960s and 1970s we had to learn about the work of women and minority male writers who had never made it into our syllabi and graduate school reading lists, so today we need to do lots of fresh reading. Just as Zora Neale Hurston became an icon of multiculturalism – black, female, irreverent, forgotten – or W.E.B. DuBois – activist, theorist, teacher, rebel, so today, we need to find the writers who will speak to the globalized culture we can no longer avoid. They may be fiction writers like Junot Díaz, Dominican and American, for whom the interpenetration of old home and new constitutes a central dynamic. Or Helena Viramontes, whose wonderful story "The Cariboo Café" offers a kind of paradigm for the experiences of displacement to – and within – the United States. For my own part, facing the daunting task of producing the revised sixth edition of the *Heath Anthology*, I can only say that I feel much as I did in 1964, when I discovered, or was told about, my fourth black writer, Paule Marshall. Change is afoot. How shall we understand it, interpret it, and teach it? These, I think, are the questions to which this present collection of essays has courageously committed us.[16]

Notes

1. For a very recent and important analysis see Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

2. Thomas M. Kostigen, "Sophisticated Investor: Rich-Poor Gulf Widens; 'Inequality Matters' Conference Puts Nations on Alert," CBS.MarketWatch.com, 1 June 2004, http://cbs.marketwatch.com/.

3. Michael D. Yates, "A Statistical Portrait of the U.S. Working Class, *The Monthly Review* 56, no. 11 (April 2005), http://www.monthlyreview.org/0405yates.htm.

4. Derrick Z. Jackson, "Income Gap Mentality," *Boston Globe*, 19 April 2006, http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2006/04/19/income_gap_-mentality/.

5. Kostigen, "Sophisticated Investor."

6. Judith Blau and Alberto Moncada, *Human Rights: Beyond the Liberal Vision* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 102.

7. US Census Bureau, "Tech Paper 29: Table 2. Region of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 1990," 9 March 1999, http://www.census.gov/.

8. US Census Bureau, "People: Origins and Language," *American FactFinder*, 27 August 2004, http://www.census.gov/.

9. US Census Bureau, "Tech Paper 29: Table 2. Region of Birth of the Foreign Born Population: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 1990." 9 March 1999, http://www.census.gov/.

10. US Census Bureau, "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: March 2002," February 2003; cf. U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office, "Number of Foreign-Born Up 57 Percent Since 1990, According to Census 2000," 4 June 2002, http://www.census.gov/.

11. I use the term "unsettlement" in the sense developed by Michael Geyer in his important article "Multiculturalism and the Politics of General Education," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 499-533, and particularly 528-529. Geyer's suggestions for the development of general education programs are, perhaps, more relevant to the kind of educational challenge I am outlining than to multiculturalism in an earlier sense of that term.

12. "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November 1998," *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1999): 1-32.

13. US Census Bureau, "The Arab Population: 2000," December 2003, http://www.census .gov/.

14. Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason," Chapter 2, *Representative Selections*, ed. Harry Hayden Clark (New York: American Book Company, 1944), 239.

15. Harvey J. Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005); Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Vikki J. Vickers, *"My Pen and My Soul Have Ever Gone Together": Thomas Paine and the American Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, Updated Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

16. A somewhat different version of this essay appeared as Paul Lauter, "From Multiculturalism to Immigration Shock," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009), http://repositories.cdlib.org/acgcc/jtas/vol1/iss1/art10.

Native-Immigrant Boundaries and Ethnic and Racial Inequalities

Richard Alba

On the surface, 9/11 may seem to have damaged multiculturalism throughout Western societies, because of fears that tolerance for cultural difference will allow radical Islam to proselytize further among immigrant populations. However, a more thoroughgoing examination leads, I believe, to the conclusion that the fate of multiculturalism is variable from one society to another, because it is tied to the ways cultural difference is articulated by the construction of native-immigrant boundaries. Multiculturalism, as will be apparent from the argument below, has been especially at risk since 9/11 wherever Muslims form a large portion of the low-status immigrant population, and thus where religion figures importantly in the distinctions that natives, whether secular or Christian, draw between themselves and disfavored immigrant groups. Paradoxically, then, multiculturalism, at least of a "soft" kind, has not been affected as much in the United States, despite the traumatic impact of 9/11 there, as it has in some Western European countries.

My main concern in this paper is exploring conceptual approaches to the comparative study of immigrant-group incorporation in contemporary economically advanced societies. The particular focus is on the second generation, those children growing up in immigrant families; but especially those from families headed by low-wage immigrants, as commonly found among Mexicans in the United States, North Africans in France, and Turks in Germany. Such groups have entered societies where today, more than ever, the level of educational attainment determines life chances in the labor market. In particular, post-secondary credentials are required to insure that young people can obtain "good" jobs (with the quotation marks signifying that the relative goodness of jobs is socially defined). In addition to sufficient educational attainment, the right early trajectory in the labor market is necessary to position young people favorably. Given the starting point for this second generation – growing up in families whose heads have very limited education, and frequently leaving school without a diploma – climbing the difficult educational ladder in such societies as France or Germany might seem an impossible task.

It is very common, moreover, for second-generation youth to suffer from a variety of ethnic penalties and yet to have opportunities for mobility and even

assimilation. It is precisely in this area that I think conceptual work remains to be done, especially in correlating the well-developed theories coming from the United States, such as segmented assimilation and new-assimilation theories, with the circumstances in other societies such as France and Germany. I have identified three foci where this future work could be applied. The first is the ethnicity-race distinction, which has worked well in the United States context and where many of our ideas about assimilation vs. other forms of incorporation cluster. Yet this distinction may not be easily applicable everywhere or across historical time. Contemporary immigrant groups tend to display aspects of both concepts: North Africans are, for instance, different on average from native French in phenotypical appearance but also, quite importantly, in religion. It is not useful, I think, to collapse our understanding of these differences into one or the other of these aspects.[1]

A second focus for conceptual work concerns the differences, both obvious and subtle, among these societies in their institutions, self-understandings, and histories. There is an apparent path dependency in the incorporation of immigrant groups in different societies, and we need a way to systematically include this in our approach to studying incorporation. Finally, there is the question of how to think about the relative chances of assimilation vs. something else, let us call it "incorporation into a minority status," which Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou have theorized under the concept of "downward assimilation."[2]

My argument will be that we cannot understand the contemporary stratification dynamics in these societies without taking into account the efforts of privileged native groups to maintain their privileges and relative social superiority. As I have stated elsewhere, native groups typically seek to fortify the boundaries between themselves and new immigrant groups.[3] However, they do not have carte blanche in doing so – they must build upon the already existing institutional and ideological underpinnings currently viewed as legitimate; but these also serve to constrain them in their efforts. Hence, the outcomes of the contemporary immigration situation are not the same everywhere, nor do they necessarily lead to a rigid stratification. While the social advance of some elements of the second generation occurs everywhere in North America and Western Europe, it is arguably greater in settings where the boundaries between native and immigrant groups can be blurred, meaning that under some circumstances the boundaries no longer unambiguously identify members of the two sides. It is also greater in situations that I will characterize, inspired by the somewhat old-fashioned stratification concept of "structural mobility," as involving mobility that occurs in a non-zero-sum fashion; this could happen because of changes in the distribution patterns of different types of jobs, or because of demographic changes that reduce the flow into "good" jobs from those population groups that, in the recent past, supplied the majority of this worker category.

Bright Boundaries

From the perspective of a native majority, the ideal situation is approximated by the kind of boundary I have labeled as "bright." A bright boundary is unambiguous – everyone knows at all times where he or she is placed with respect to it – and charged with a hierarchical valence – one side is superior in social and even moral terms, the other inferior.[4] A bright boundary does not altogether prevent social advance, but it permits it only under restrictive conditions, which include a more-or-less complete assimilation. Advance thus takes the form of crossing the boundary, a process akin to a conversion: in other words, a departure from one group and discarding of signs of membership in it, linked to an attempt to enter another group, with all of the social and psychic burdens a conversion process entails – growing distance from peers, feelings of disloyalty, and anxieties about acceptance. The black-white racial boundary in the United States has historically represented the extreme form of a bright boundary. The case of the New York literary critic and essayist Anatole Broyard, as depicted by Philip Roth in his novel, *The Human Stain*, and analyzed by the literary critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in an essay after Broyard's death, exemplifies the kind of social advance I have in mind. Broyard lived his adult life as a white man but was posthumously revealed to have been born black. His passing as white required that he cut himself off from his black relatives. Broyard's children, who did not know of his racial past, only met their relatives at his funeral, according to Gates.[5]

A bright boundary is intimidating to most members of a minority because of the risks associated with an attempted boundary crossing: such an attempt may be greeted with discrimination and ultimately rejection by those on the other side, while it can forfeit the support of those in the group of origin, who deplore the lack of loyalty displayed by the desire to leave them behind. The social psychology of this situation was analyzed insightfully by Irvin Child in the early 1940s in his book, *Italian or American? Second Generation in Conflict*, which examined the situation of the Italian community in New Haven on the eve of World War II. Child depicted its members as hemmed in by a psychological double bind. If they attempted to assimilate, they risked being rebuffed by the WASP majority, while weakening or losing their ties to co-ethnics because of apparent disloyalty; if they chose loyalty to the Italian group instead, they largely gave up on the chance to improve more than marginally their social and material situation. Child found many of them to be "apathetic" – his term – and unable to choose between these two risky options. As one of his respondents plaintively expressed the dilemma: "Then a lot of times in the show you see Mussolini on the screen and they all start to razz him. Then I feel, 'How the hell do I stand?'"[6]

To understand the nature of a native-immigrant boundary, we have to examine how it is institutionalized, that is, the "web of interrelated" normative patterns governing how the boundary is manifested to social actors.[7] These normative pat-

terns, exemplified by widely shared and often assumed expectations about which and how religious holidays will be publicly recognized (for example Christmas, but not Eid al-Fitr), determine the social distance between majority and minority groups, and the difficulties associated with bridging it. Institutionalization, it should be noted, is not simply a matter of the native-immigrant distinction itself, but also of other distinctions, such as those in religion and language, correlated with it. In an immigration society, this complex of distinctions is typically manifest in many domains (implying that participants enact it with some regularity in their everyday lives) and is associated with salient asymmetries in social status and power.

The construction of immigrant-native boundaries is, in each society, a path-dependent process hinging upon the materials available in the social-structural, cultural, legal, and other institutional domains of the receiving society, as well as on characteristics and histories the immigrants themselves present. Accordingly, boundaries do not have the same character everywhere; and though invariably they do allow for some assimilation to occur, the terms under which this happens vary from one societal context to another.

One illustration of the bright-boundary situation is the citizenship dilemma of second-generation Turks in Germany during the 1990s.[8] As is well known, German law at that time did not grant *jus soli* citizenship to the German-born children of Turkish immigrants, but rather viewed them as having the same citizenship as their parents, according to the *jus sanguinis* principle. To obtain German citizenship then, the second (and even third) generation had to go through a naturalization procedure that, until the law was mitigated in 1993, was no different from what their Turkish-born parents would have had to endure, and required them to relinquish their Turkish citizenship. Until the law changed, in fact, naturalization decisions were made according to the judgments of state-level authorities; there was no legal right to naturalize given that specific conditions had been fulfilled. The decision to attempt to become a German citizen, then, involved a non-trivial degree of risk for Turks. When I was in Germany in the early 1990s, I interviewed some second-generation university students and found them mostly unwilling to naturalize as Germans. When asked why, they frequently enough pointed to the risks: as one university-educated, second-generation Turkish German told me, if she took German citizenship and dropped her Turkish passport, there was no guarantee that the Germans, many of whom were prejudiced against the Turks in their midst, would not eventually change the law to expel the Turkish Germans; where, then, would those who had given up their Turkish citizenship be left?

Now, one has to say that this bright-boundary situation proved unstable. After German citizenship law was changed in 1993 to ease the naturalization of the one-and-a-half and second generations, who had after all been educated in German schools, the naturalization rate among the Turks increased notably. The increase was accentuated by the decision of the Turkish government to facilitate the

resumption of Turkish citizenship by those who disavowed it in order to natura-lize, and the information about the procedure for regaining Turkish citizenship became widespread after a mid-1990s article in *Der Spiegel* about this back-door route to dual citizenship. The situation remains unstable, because the German government has on occasion threatened to denaturalize those Turkish Germans who had resumed their Turkish citizenship after naturalization. Another situation that may test this principle of exclusive German citizenship could arise from the 1999 law granting provisional *jus soli* citizenship to the German-born children of authorized immigrants. As is well known, this law requires these young people to choose between German citizenship or their parents' nationality by the age of 23, and there are certain to be legal challenges to the requirement that they give up their parents' citizenship in order to retain German citizenship.

Religious Dimensions

In general, though, we should think of native-immigrant boundaries as an assem-blage of specific settings in which the inequality between the native majority and immigrant minority is spelled out and contested. For that reason, I believe it is important to take even the religious dimension into account, although the socie-ties presently receiving immigrants appear to be mainly secular. Yet underneath the secular surface often lie institutional arrangements that marginalize the new-comers. In this respect, France is particularly intriguing because, while the na-tional ideology of *laïcité* proclaims a secular public sphere and an absolute separa-tion of church and state, Christianity, especially in its Catholic version, has nevertheless been granted a privileged position and is taken for granted in the national identity. At the same time, Islam is pushed to the margins.[9] One way that this hierarchy is represented is through the list of government-sanctioned national holidays, about half of which are Catholic holy days of obligation; the list obviously goes beyond Christmas and Easter and includes, for instance, the Feast of the Assumption (of the Virgin Mary), August 15. No Jewish or Muslim holy days are included, although the Stasi Commission, which initiated the ban on the wearing of the headscarf and other visible religious symbols, proposed amending the national holidays to incorporate both non-Christian religions; but this proposal was left on the cutting-room floor when the headscarf ban was en-acted.

Another representation of this hierarchy is through religious buildings, a mate-rial concretization of difference. France is filled with magnificent religious build-ings from its Catholic past, such as the Cathedral of Notre Dame, located on the spot where Paris is alleged to have its origins and where, I am told, the zero point of the road system is located. All existing religious buildings standing in 1905, when the French law on the separation of church and state was enacted, became the property of the national and local governments and are maintained by them;

religious congregations are nevertheless allowed to use them for services. At the same time, mosques are barred from this status because they postdate 1905, and they have proven difficult to build, often because of resistance from local residents. Most of the mosques and Muslim prayer spaces in France are makeshift, converted apartments, former residential buildings and factories.[10]

A point often made in rebuttal of the above is that most North Africans in France are not religious, and this may be so. Nevertheless, they surely understand the message in this material and symbolic disparity: the culture that their parents brought, and the religion to which they nominally belong, are regarded as inferior. Just like Child's respondent, they may feel, "How the hell do I stand?" This is all the more evident should they attempt to resort to Islam as a way of claiming "dignity" in situations where their limited prospects for joining the societal mainstream weigh psychologically on them.[11]

Defended Privileges

Now I want to turn to a different facet of the position I laid out at the beginning, namely the creativity of native majorities in devising mechanisms to preserve their privileges. This agency – and, of course, one has to add the agency of the immigrant minority as well – implies that the study of inequality cannot rest on the identification of mechanisms alone, because the mechanisms can change as the native majority responds to changes in the situation as implemented, say, by the state.[12]

The affluent members of the French majority work to preserve their privileges through their influences on the educational system, which shares some similarities with that in the United States but also exhibits some differences.[13] Like the US system, the primary and secondary schools children attend are determined by the neighborhood of residence, and these are racially and economically segregated. In fact, much like the US system, there is a great deal of segregation between jurisdictions, legally incorporated places: in the United States, whites are concentrated in suburbs, while in France the immigrants are found there. In any event, insofar as local authorities bear responsibility for education, this segregation gives rise to clear-cut disparity in treatment.

However, there is a large difference between the systems in the degree to which sub-national, as opposed to national, authorities are responsible for educational funding, and this at first glance ought to create a greater tendency toward equality among the educational institutions in France. For in the United States, there is famously much greater fiscal responsibility in the hands of local and regional (in other words, state) authorities, and accordingly substantial inequality among schools and school districts, with heavily minority districts generally being the least well-funded. In France, by contrast, the national government has a greater role. Moreover, far more than in the United States, France has attempted to re-

dress inequalities through the school system. For instance, in 1981 the French government put in place a policy, the ZEP (for Zones of Educational Priority), to provide additional funding to schools in difficulty according to criteria including the percentage of immigrants in the catchment area. The French system has also undergone a significant "democratization" in recent decades, with the aim of opening up pathways for working-class and immigrant students to the *baccalauréat*, the indispensable credential earned at the end of high school, which grants access to higher education.[14] A major element of democratization has been the creation of new types of *baccalauréat*, deemed "professional" or "technical." They allow students who are not willing, or allowed, to commit to the classical curriculum of the traditional *baccalauréat*, and who take an educational track that prepares them for a career, to continue into the university system. In theory, these differences ought to lend themselves to greater disadvantages for the children of immigrants in the United States.

Yet, when we compare the educational attainments of two similar second-generation populations, Mexicans and North Africans, in the United States and France, respectively, against those of the native majorities in these societies, the degree of inequality appears very similar.[15] At the lower end of the educational distribution, marked by those who leave school without a secondary-school credential, the disparities in both countries are broadly similar, even though the absolute percentages attaining a particular level of education are quite different. For instance, Mexicans are between 2.5 and 3 times more likely than their Anglo counterparts to leave without a high school diploma, and the ratio for the North Africans in relation to the native French. At the other end, if we focus on the top category of university education, designated in the United States as the attainment of the bachelor's degree and in France as more than two years at university, the ratios of inequality are again very similar: among young men, the disparity is at least 2-to-1 in both cases.

How is it, then, that the French system, whose underlying institutional structures appear more egalitarian than their equivalents in the United States, produces results so similar to those we find on the other side of the Atlantic? One reason has to be that schools and native French parents, especially the more privileged ones, have reacted to the democratizing tendencies by creating new mechanisms supportive of inequality. One example is the growth of supplementary educational activities during the primary years, such as so-called *classes de nature*, involving excursions with a pedagogical character and even exchanges with other countries, the latter often connected with instruction in foreign languages, with costs paid by local school authorities and parents. Needless to say, the schools in the more affluent areas organize such activities more frequently, because of parents' pressure on schools to provide this form of cultural and educational enrichment and their willingness to pay the extra costs. Another example is the creation by some secondary schools, especially those anxious to upgrade the social origins

of their students and thus their reputations, of so-called hidden curricula (*curricula cachés*), which typically involve difficult modern or ancient languages.

Middle-class French parents see mechanisms that create small advantages for their children as essential because of how the stages of the French system interlock to create ultimate disparities in life chances: the quality of the middle school (*collège*) a child attends is determinative of the quality of the high school (*lycée*) he or she can attend. The *lycées* make up a strictly hierarchical educational world, as the differences in quality among them are so well recognized that the media have published rankings of all the high schools in the country and, in response, so has the Ministry of Education. These rankings are especially critical to parents and students who aim for the uppermost strata of the educational system, the so-called *grandes écoles*, the French equivalent to the Ivy League in the United States. Admission to the *grandes écoles* is by competitive examination; however, to prepare for the examination, students generally spend two years in so-called *classes preparatoires* after high school. Attendance at a well-ranked *lycée* is a prerequisite for entry to the *classes preparatoires*. In contrast to the United States, only one of the *grandes écoles*, Science Po, has so far implemented an affirmative-action-like policy of recruiting students from poor neighborhoods. The educational institutions preparing young people for entry into French elites remain quite homogeneous.

The disparities between the native majority and the children of disfavored immigrants continue to grow once school is finished and young people confront the labor market and its possibilities. Youth unemployment is high in France – widely estimated at more than twenty percent of 18-24 year olds at the time of the Fall 2005 riots. One consequence is a systematic favoritism displayed by employers for native French (and other groups that are viewed positively). The brunt of the unemployment is borne by North Africans and a few other groups (including sub-Saharan Africans).

In research that Roxane Silberman, Irène Fournier and I have conducted, the discrepancy in unemployment between the native French and the North Africans is marked for both sexes.[16] The data come from the Génération 98 survey, in which a random sample of all school leavers in 1998 was interviewed three years later. Even after several years out of school, the ratio of North African-to-French unemployment is 2-to-1. The higher rate of unemployment among the North Africans is somewhat explained by their lower average levels of schooling, but only partly so. Moreover, even when the North African youth are employed, they work at jobs that, in their perceptions, are more likely to be below their level of competence. They are also more likely to be pessimistic about their future employment.

Discrimination by employers appears to be part of the explanation for these labor-market disparities. The North Africans (and sub-Saharan Africans) report, according to the survey, very high levels of multiple incidents of discrimination at the hands of employers. Discrimination is especially likely to be reported by young men, almost a third of whom say that they have been victimized more than

once. This discrimination is not just racial – only half of the North Africans who have suffered discrimination believe that skin color is at its basis. It is also ethnic and cultural – and hence more than half perceive their names as a characteristic singling them out.

These reports of discrimination do not correspond very well with the level of education – it is not, in other words, that the less well-educated, who suffer from higher levels of unemployment, report discrimination as the cause. If anything, it is the best-educated among the North Africans, those with university educations, who are more likely to report discrimination. Among the young men, it appears also that the perception of discrimination is the highest among those with the deepest roots in metropolitan France, in other words those who have parents born there. This suggests, not unreasonably, that those who perceive themselves as most entitled to equal treatment are the most sensitive to unfairness at the hands of employers.

So far, we have been analyzing ethnic stratification in a way that is quite congenial to most sociologists, and suggests a picture of a relatively stable stratification order between the native majority and at least some immigrant-origin minorities. This picture does not preclude boundary crossing for some members of these minorities, but it suggests that it is unusual. The picture I have drawn may lead some to wonder what has happened to the assimilation possibilities described in *Remaking the American Mainstream*.[17]

Opportunities for Assimilation

Now I want to shift gears by suggesting that, in all the economically advanced societies, the potential exists for greater porousness, if not blurring, in native-immigrant boundaries through the socioeconomic advance of substantial portions of the current second generation. One potential cause lies in changing demography, in the eventually declining numbers of natives in the age cohorts coming to maturity, and hence in the decreasing numbers of natives from the more privileged social strata, who would be expected to monopolize the better positions in the work force. The beneficial consequences of this changing demographic for immigrant-origin minorities are certainly not guaranteed to occur, but if members of the second generation are poised to take advantage of the openings, their advance would certainly be supported by ideologies of equal opportunity which are widely accepted in all these societies.

Opportunities of the sort I am about to present are rarely the subject of sociological examination, as the focus – indeed, the obsession – of sociologists is generally with the documentation of inequality and the identification of the mechanisms that produce it.[18] I believe that identifying opportunities for change and the contingencies that, according to sociological knowledge, are likely to affect the outcomes should be considered as equal responsibilities.

I will use changes already ongoing in the United States to make these points. I view these changes as an instance of a phenomenon I have argued has affected the assimilation of Italian-Americans and other European ethnics during the twentieth century, namely "non-zero-sum mobility."[19] I will regard mobility as "non-zero-sum" when it does not require downward mobility by more privileged groups to occur. During the mid-twentieth century, such mobility was generated by changes in the occupational structure, which is to say the distribution of the workforce across occupations, such that openings were created in the middle and upper portions of this structure; at the same time, there was an enormous expansion in post-secondary education, which trained many second-generation (and third-generation) ethnics to take these positions. Upward mobility of this sort by less-favored groups is less likely to be accompanied by an intensification of competition along ethnic and racial lines, allowing for the relaxation of boundaries. This is what happened during the mobility of the European ethnics, who were able to convert their socioeconomic progress into social proximity to other whites, as evidenced by decreased residential segregation and increased intermarriage.

Is mobility of this sort occurring in the United States today? I suspect that it is, although my evidence for the mobility having a non-zero-sum character falls well short of proof.[20] There are two special features of the US context which should be borne in mind and are ambiguous with respect to the non-zero-sum aspect: one is that the United States has rather strong anti-discrimination laws, which as Alba and Nee argue has had an impact on opening up the mainstream labor market to minorities; and the other is that affirmative-action policies, however disputed they may be, are still meaningful in some institutional sectors, above all in post-secondary education, and they create opportunities for immigrant and non-immigrant minorities to obtain the educational credentials needed to position themselves to take jobs in the upper tiers of the workforce.[21]

This impact can already be seen in the recruitment into "good" jobs in the American economy. Suppose we define such jobs in terms of the best-paid occupations. For this exercise, let us define such occupations as those accounting for twenty-five percent of the full-time labor force (the top quartile of jobs). Not all the holders of these jobs, it should be underscored, are found among the best-paid workers; these cross-sections of the labor market are defined in terms of the characteristics of occupations, not of individuals, some of whom are, in any event, just beginning their work careers. Looking at the labor force in this way does allow us to see how individuals of different racial, ethnic, and nativity statuses are distributed across positions associated with systematically different potentials for economic reward.

When the data from the 2000 US Census are analyzed, one finds that the social origins of the incumbents of the best jobs in the US labor force are shifting, because of demographic changes and also probably because of affirmative action.

In the oldest age group, individuals aged 55-64 in 2000, 84 per cent of the holders of the best jobs were native-born non-Hispanic whites; in other words, members of the dominant majority population of the society. This fraction shifted very slightly in the next oldest age group (45-54 in 2000), but changed more noticeably with each younger group. Among those aged 25-34 in 2000, 74 per cent of the top quartile jobs were occupied by native-born whites. Indeed, 22-23 per cent of these top jobs were held in this age group by non-whites and Hispanics; this fraction doubled between the oldest and youngest cohorts.

To be sure, equal chances to occupy the best jobs has not been attained: whites remain highly privileged. A substantial portion of the non-whites and Hispanics who are entering these jobs come from the ranks of immigrants, not native-born minorities. However, the proportions occupied by native-born blacks and Hispanics, in particular, are clearly rising. From a paltry five percent of the top quartile jobs in the oldest age cohort, their share rose to ten percent in the youngest. Nevertheless, the large fraction of jobs held by foreign-born Asians deserves to be noted: they hold six percent of the top quartile jobs in the youngest age group.

Fading Boundaries

What sorts of changes are to be anticipated by, say, 2020? Overall change in the composition of the top jobs is programmed by the succession of cohorts, which will lead to the massive disappearance from the labor market of the jobholders who were aged 45-64 in 2000. These are the cohorts most dominated by native-born non-Hispanic whites, and their places will be taken by those aged 25-44 in 2000, where the presence of non-whites and Hispanics has increased.

What will the composition of the younger cohorts look like in 2020? It is impossible to say for certain, in part because the answer must depend on future immigration. But two observations point to further increases in the proportions of minorities in top jobs. One is the decline in the absolute number of native-born non-Hispanic whites available to take them; because of the timing of the post-World War II baby boom, this is particularly noticeable in the birth cohorts that in 2020 will supplant the 35-44 year-olds of 2000. The native-born white holders of top jobs in that age group were recruited from a baby-boom contingent which, despite the mortality by early middle age, still numbered nearly thirty-one million individuals. However, as of 2000, the 15-24 year-olds who will replace them contained only twenty-four million native-born non-Hispanic whites, and mortality is likely to winnow this group by about half a million between 2000 and 2020. By comparison, there is a roughly stable parity in native-born whites between the 25-34 year-olds of 2000 and the group that forms their replacements, aged 5-14 in the census.

However, even there stability will not guarantee the whites' share of these jobs, for their number is likely to increase. Between 2000 and 2020, Census Bureau

population projections suggest a total population increase on the order of twenty percent. Very likely, the occupations in the top quartile will expand at least as fast as the rest of the labor force, if not faster (as shown by the projections of the Bureau of Labor Statistics about future changes in the American job scene), and recruitment will have to expand accordingly. That will probably mean that the share of whites in these jobs will decline sharply. The fall-off is likely to be especially pronounced among the 35-44 year-olds of 2020: if the recruitment of native-born whites to these jobs remains at the same proportion relative to the population base as it was in 2000, then there will only be enough of them to fill about sixty percent of the available positions.

A drop this great may be an unlikely outcome, and in any event one cannot predict the future changes in top jobs with any precision. Perhaps the recruitment of native-born whites to these jobs will cut more deeply into that population group in the future than it has in the past. Perhaps the decline in the availability of qualified non-Hispanic whites will be compensated by greater immigration. We do not know, but forecasting some degree of continuing decline in the non-Hispanic white share of the best-paid occupations seems a safe bet, given the changes of the recent past and foreseeable demographic shifts.

These changes do not mean an end to racial and ethnic inequalities. When groups are compared in the aggregate, they will continue to show large average disparities. Behind these disparities, though, there will be some reshuffling, as the overlaps between the overall distributions of white and minority status increase. This is another way of saying that a growing number of minorities will interact on a regular basis and as equals with whites, as well as with others whose origins are different from their own, and most whites will find themselves increasingly confronted with inescapable diversity. This interpenetration of social worlds is anticipated by assimilation theory.

In sum, the next two decades will offer an extraordinary opportunity for minority mobility and for a dismantling of the major racial/ethnic boundaries of US society, which David Hollinger has described with the phrase, "ethno-racial pentagon."[22] Yet, other than a more diverse mainstream than exists today, it is impossible to be very precise about the nature of the changes that may occur. This is in part because they will not be dictated by demographic and socioeconomic structures, which are to a great degree predictable, but forged by human agents. Thus, among the questions that remain to be answered are the following:

First, to what extent will socioeconomically mobile minorities be able to realize broader social gains from their entry into higher-status occupational spheres? Assimilation in its broadest sense depends on the ability to integrate into mainstream social settings – to mix with whites and others of the same socioeconomic strata and, thereby, to provide a favorable starting position for one's children. An enormous stream of research about African-Americans shows that, because of discrimination and institutional racism, they have generally been unable to realize

these gains – for instance, they have usually been confined to largely black residential areas regardless of their economic attainments.[23] What research there is suggests so far that Asians and light-skinned Hispanics are not as constrained in residential choice as blacks historically have been.[24] However, this is just one indicator of ability to integrate, and the research on it is hardly definitive.

Second, to what extent will majority-group Americans be willing to invest in the educations of minority and immigrant-origin youth, to enable them to take advantage of the opportunities for mobility now opening up?[25] The public-school system in the United States, especially in heavily minority areas, is increasingly in disarray, troubled by segregation and inadequate funding (such as California's Proposition 13). Poor educational institutions will limit the ability of youth from low-income families to rise far above their origins and seize the occupational positions becoming available because of the decline in the number of whites.

Third, will future changes affect African-Americans and immigrant-origin groups equally? One of the profoundly rooted patterns in US history is the preference for immigrants over native minorities, especially African-Americans. This pattern operated during the twentieth century, in the ability of once-despised southern and eastern European groups, such as the southern Italians, to distance themselves from black Americans and rise into the white American mainstream.[26] This historical process is of course the subject of "whiteness" literature, which has emphasized the policies and devices that enable ethnics of recent immigrant origins to separate themselves from blacks and to gain acceptance as whites. There is a substantial risk of this pattern repeating itself in the contemporary era. This risk is visible in two ways: the continuing preference of majority-group Americans for immigrants, who are seen as unlike blacks in the degree to which they work hard to improve their lives and to provide opportunities for their children; and the emerging tensions between immigrants and black Americans.

In a study of new Latin American immigrants in the smaller cities of upstate New York, my colleagues and I have found that the immigrants find African-Americans to be very hostile, while white Americans are perceived as welcoming or, at worst, neutral.[27] Hence, the immigrants, who often live side by side with African-Americans in very poor neighborhoods, are motivated to separate themselves from native-born minorities as soon as they can. This could lead to the emergence of the African-American/non-African American distinction as the key fault line in US society.[28]

The demographic dynamics I have identified as at work in the United States are not to be found there alone. The foreseeable demographic changes in European societies point in the direction of racial and ethnic shifts across birth cohorts that are as pronounced as those in the United States, and to shortages in the labor market as well (particularly in countries like Germany, which have experienced low levels of fertility in the native population for a sustained period). These demographic conditions could favor non-zero-sum mobility for the European-born

and/or -raised members of immigrant minorities who have acquired the educational, cultural and social capital to take advantage of opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. If such non-zero-sum mobility does develop, then the brightness of the boundaries that currently distinguish the native population from the immigrant-origin one could fade, at least on some levels of these societies. This claim is, granted, still quite hypothetical, and demography is not destiny, because the ultimate outcomes will be shaped as much by human agents as by demographic and socioeconomic structures. We can only think fruitfully about boundary change if we have concepts acknowledging the possibility of it occurring, and helping us to identify the conditions that facilitate it.

The Social-Boundary Concept

In conclusion, I have tried to establish three central points in this essay, which has been concerned with the role of social boundaries in the construction, maintenance and reduction of racial and ethnic inequalities arising from contemporary immigration of third-world immigrants into the societies of North America and Western Europe. I have argued, first, that the character of these boundaries is not the same everywhere, for they depend on social-structural, cultural, legal, and other institutional domains of the receiving society, as well as on characteristics and histories that the immigrants themselves present. This character has consequences for the opportunities available to minorities.

The second and third claims concern changes that boundaries may undergo. On the one hand, the native majority, the dominant population in the society, may seek to reinforce boundaries in order to preserve its privileges in the face of the increasing racial and ethnic diversity produced by immigration. On the other hand, boundaries may be challenged and eventually reduced in their salience by non-zero-sum opportunities for second-generation mobility, foreseeable as a result of demographic change throughout the advanced economies; this change is associated in particular with the declining size of the birth cohorts of the majority population that will be entering adulthood during the next quarter-century. All three of these points are intended to demonstrate the usefulness of the social-boundary concept for illuminating the forces affecting racial and ethnic inequality.

Notes

1. Howard Winant, *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Ethnic Politics since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
2. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," *The Annals* 530 (November 1993): 74-96. Ethnic pluralism combined with socioeconomic parity is a third possibility in their scheme.

3. Richard Alba, "Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (January 2005): 20-49.

4. Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class and Immigration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

5. Henry Louis Gates, "The Passing of Anatole Broyard," in *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man* (New York: Vintage, 1998).

6. Irving Child, *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 88.

7. Victor Nee and Paul Ingram, "Embeddedness and Beyond: Institutions, Exchange, and Social Structure," in *The New Institutionalism in Sociology* ed. Mary Brinton and Victor Nee (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998).

8. Claudia Diehl and Michael Blohm, "Rights or Identity? Naturalization Processes Among 'Labor Migrants' in Germany," *International Migration Review* 37 (2003): 133-162.

9. Alba, "Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries."

10. Nancy Foner and Richard Alba, "Immigrant Religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?" *International Migration Review* 42 (2008): 360-92; Jonathan Laurance and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006).

11. Farhad Khosrokhavar, "The Muslims of Western Europe," talk given at the University at Albany, 2005.

12. Cf. Barbara Reskin, "Motives and Mechanisms in Modeling Inequality," *American Sociological Review* 68 (2003): 1-21.

13. This section draws on a paper I have written with Roxane Silberman, and I am entirely indebted to her for what knowledge I have of the way the French educational system works in practice. Richard Alba and Roxane Silberman, "The Children of Immigrants Encounter Host-Society Educational Systems: Mexicans in the US and North Africans in France," Teachers College Record (2009).

14. But see Stéphane Beaud, *80% au Bac? Et Après? Les Enfants de la Démocratisation Scolaire* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2002).

15. See the data in Alba and Silberman, "Children of Immigrants".

16. Roxane Silberman, Richard Alba and Irène Fournier, "Segmented Assimilation in France? Discrimination in the Labor Market Against the Second Generation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30 (January 2007): 1-27.

17. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

18. Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Reskin, "Motives and Mechanisms."

19. Richard Alba, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985).

20. For a more complete exposition, see Richard Alba and Hui-shien Tsao, "Connecting Past, Present and Future: Reflections on Immigration and the Possibilities for Racial and Ethnic Change in the US," unpublished paper, Center for Social and Demographic

Analysis, The University at Albany, 2007; Richard Alba, *Blurring the Color Line: The New Chance for a More Integrated America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

21. Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*; William Bowen and Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Sigal Alon and Marta Tienda, "Diversity, Opportunity and the Shifting Meritocracy in Higher Education," *American Sociological Review* 72 (2007): 487-511.

22. David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 10th anniversary edition (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

23. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

24. Richard Alba, John Logan and Brian Stults, "The Changing Neighborhood Contexts of the Immigrant Metropolis," *Social Forces* 79 (December 2000): 587-621.

25. Dowell Myers, *Immigrants and Boomers: Forging a New Social Contract for the Future of America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007).

26. Stanley Lieberson, *A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants since 1880* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White; The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

27. Jacqueline Villarrubia-Mendoza, Nancy Denton and Richard Alba, "Gateway State, Not Gateway City: New Immigrants in the Hudson Valley," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, 2007.

28. Herbert Gans, "The Possibility of a New Racial Hierarchy in the Twenty-First Century United States," in *The Cultural Territories of Race: Black and White Boundaries*, ed. Michèle Lamont (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

Coherence, Difference, and Citizenship: A Genealogy of Multiculturalism

Ed Jonker

Debates on social and cultural identity have a long, rich, and diverse history. Theories of multiculturalism and social pluralism are fairly recent additions to a long-standing dispute on the nature of culture and society. The most vehement polemics developed during the twentieth century, while the roots of these conflicting theories go back to the nineteenth, and even the eighteenth century. The conflicting interpretations offered by Enlightenment and Romanticism, often characterized as "human" universalism versus "cultural" particularism, opened up discussions of political loyalties and cultural preferences that preoccupy many Western countries to the present day.

The framework of this discourse has not really been changed after September 11, 2001. The ensuing War on Terror only exacerbated disputes on loyalty and citizenship. It still threatens to narrow down the debate on multiculturalism to the position of the Islamic minorities in Western countries. That is one of the grounds for putting recent debates in a broader perspective.

A natural starting point for tracing the history of these disputes is the genesis of modern citizenship in the context of the nation-state. The humanities and social theory played a significant role in this discourse about citizenship. Initially, they were the producers of the new, often conflicting identities. Historians, linguists, and philosophers developed the concepts instrumental in creating national identities. In that sense, the humanities contributed to social and political exclusion. Later, many historians and cultural scholars regretted the role their disciplines played in nation-building. In the wake of World Wars I and II, they tried to set the humanities free from this legacy by helping to deconstruct nationalism.

Not everyone was convinced by their attempts, however. This distrust gave rise to a second, parallel discourse, born out of misgivings about the historicizing humanities. Ideas of nationalism were replaced by notions of multiculturalism. Many political and cultural theorists distrusted historical arguments as such and tried to get rid of history altogether. They did not succeed. In the face of current political and cultural uncertainties, historians have again been asked to deliver narratives of social cohesion and national purpose.

The Historiography of Coherence

Nations require a unified national citizenship. Generations of historians have contributed to the making of these national identities, sometimes in a purely romantic and particular fashion, sometimes with a more enlightened and universalist flavor. To this end, they have developed a whole range of political and cultural concepts, which can be divided into two different traditions. A somewhat older historiographic dichotomy is that between "objective" and "subjective" conceptions of the nation. The objective conception is founded on the idea of shared characteristics based on descent or on a common culture. This often boils down to a shared language. This idea is the basis for cultural nationalism, as formulated by the German cultural thinker Johann Gottfried Herder. He deemed communal identities "objective" because their cultural character exists independently of the preferences of their individual members. Their cultural peculiarities are primordially determined. An echo of this view is still to be heard in the definition of citizenship on the basis of the *jus sanguinis*, that is: biological descent. The subjective concept, on the other hand, does not look for predetermined biological or fixed cultural inheritances, but perceives the nation as a free act of willpower, as a "daily plebiscite," in the famous catchphrase of the French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan.

The objective concept of nationhood has of course been heavily attacked by historians and political scientists, who associate it with the delusions of racial purity and pseudo-biology that have given birth to the twentieth-century genocides. The same goes for the idea of cultural primordialism, the idea that cultures possess a timeless core, and in some mystic way are present before they come into existence. Contemporary anthropologists and historians see these communities of descent as cultural constructions. The rigid, stable cultures of Herder are now primarily viewed, in the well-known phrase of Benedict Anderson, as *imagined communities*. Both of these objectivistic concepts – the biological and the cultural – are distrusted and condemned as "essentialist," a term of abuse for attempts to justify a fixed cultural and national unity with the argument that it simply has always existed. Opponents accuse essentialist thinkers of creating a kind of right of first birth for their own "kin," thereby excluding outsiders and new immigrants.[1]

The subjective idea of the nation has a somewhat more positive standing. The concept is not German, but French in origin, and is therefore less associated with the hateful idea of *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil). Adherents of the subjective view present it as voluntaristic in the sense that, in theory, individuals are free to decide whether they want to participate in the national community. On closer inspection, however, the "daily plebiscite" turns out to be a binding and long-lasting collective identity. It has an enduring continuity and shows traits of a concept of the general will, the *volonté génerale*, which is not always really democratic. The

related definition of citizenship, that of the *jus soli*, may distance itself from deterministic blood ties, but it allows the inhabitants of its soil no room for opting out, certainly not on a massive, collective scale.

In practice, this voluntaristic nationalism was very much akin to its objectivistic counterpart. Renan developed his subjective idea of nationalism in the service of French nationalist revanchism after the lost Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Although the inhabitants of Alsace used the German language and were of Germanic descent, Renan declared that they had chosen to belong to France, at least from the French Revolution onward. That decision extended to the generations of Alsatians who were under German political rule after 1870. Renan did not really ask for a daily confirmation: "Frenchness" more or less had become a part of the "genetic" make-up of the Alsatians.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that both models of identity, the subjectivist and the objectivist, are *imagined communities* to which the believers try to ascribe a transcendent nature that denies the historical, contextual, and contingent character of these social configurations. This tendency to reification has been intellectually enhanced by the inclination of many social scientists and humanities scholars to think in terms of orderly, tidy, coherent, and stable research units. Continuity and familiarity also are political desiderata. We see this reflected in the recent demand for cultural and political canonization. Politicians hope to foster social cohesion by promoting a coherent national identity.[2]

The Historiography of Difference

So, most historians and social scientists have come to regard both the subjectivist and the objectivist concepts of national and cultural identity as "essentializing" constructions. In the past two or three decades, historiography and cultural studies have moved in a new direction. They have taken leave of coherence and are foregrounding differences. In trying to avoid essentialism, historians and anthropologists emphasize the cultural diversity and the provisional nature of cultural units and political arrangements. They prefer to speak of the informal fragmentation hiding behind the façades of official uniformity, of the contingency of existing institutions, and of the temporality of solutions. Coherence has become a doubtful axiom, politically and culturally, as well as from a scholarly point of view. Nation-states are presented as accidental constructions, cultural homogeneity as temporary, and coherent explanations as superficial and misleading.

We hear the distant drums of postmodernist deconstruction. After the demolition of the *grand narratives* with their vast coherence, even minor counter-narratives or micro-histories with modest, "thin" coherences have been severely criticized. Distrust of big structures and traditional consistency has become pervasive.[3] Postcolonial theories have torn apart Western imperialist assumptions. The European colonial empires turn out to have been cultural, multi-ethnic

patchworks, just like their predecessors, the older Asiatic empires. The same applies to the modern nation-states in Europe itself. Whether they presented themselves as "objective" *ethnic nations* or as "subjective" *civic nations* is considered inconsequential. Both lines of argument are now regarded as the ideologically motivated masking of underlying cultural diversity.

Recent historiography tends to see modern nation-states not only as artifacts, but also as failures. The result is, as Donna R. Gabaccia argues, that "...in both Europe and in the neo-Europes created by its empires around the world, earlier histories of homogeneous nations have given way to explorations of relations between national states and their diverse populations."[4] She characterizes this multicultural approach in recent historiography in these words:

> Some of these "multicultural" histories acknowledge that nations are multi-ethnic; that is they recognize that nations include people who speak different languages or worship and live in quite diverse ways. Other multicultural histories focus on the diversity of cultural identities among citizens who have origins in other countries or who have experienced various forms of religious, racial, or ethnic persecution.[5]

The history of traditional immigration countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia can no longer be written within the framework of concepts like that of the *nation of immigrants* or the famed *melting pot*. Historians today prefer to speak of the *salad bowl*, the *mosaic*, or the *kaleidoscope* to acknowledge the lasting existence of multi-ethnicity. Americans are fond of *hyphenated identities*, made up of at least two components: African-American, Native-American, Asian-American. Even these are contested concepts. The label Asian-American, for example, seems to designate a class of American citizens, who happen to be non-white, non-black, and non-native. The artificiality of this administrative coherence has been criticized. Rather than "Asian", is their cultural identity not primarily Chinese, Japanese, or Korean? Even these classifications may themselves be too broad and artificial.

Latin-American countries like Brazil and Mexico boast their multi-ethnic and hybrid character. Creolization has changed from a word of abuse into a proud statement. Racial diversity has been proclaimed the essence of Brazilian identity. Mexico has proudly announced the advent of a new "cosmic" race, resulting from inter-racial breeding. While understandable as a counterpoint to the traditional identity politics of the United States, these attempts at nation-building on the basis of multiculturalism are just as artificial as the older mono-cultural European examples. It makes one sympathize with those political thinkers who want to try and go "beyond ethnicity."[6]

The recent historiography of Europe shows comparable trends. The artificial and provisional nature of existing nation-states is highlighted. The unification of

Germany in the nineteenth century is now depicted as the formation of a nation of immigrants. France is a mosaic of distinct regional identities, and Italy is a hodgepodge of fragments that have never really been glued together. Crown witnesses for this pluralistic interpretation of national histories are the newly rejuvenated regional identities in Europe. The current vitality of Scottish, Catalan, Basque, and Corsican communities is cited as proof of the demise of the homogeneous nation-state.

Paradoxically, these regional or even local ethnicities are rather credulously portrayed as natural, homogeneous units. That minorities constitute imagined communities, in the same way dominant majorities do, is disregarded. Their exclusivist and sometimes oppressive character is often overlooked, even in the face of nasty internal conflicts on the nature – the essence – of these small, seemingly harmless identities. To be fair, it must be said that these problems of parochialism, exclusiveness, and intolerance within small communities have recently been more openly debated.[7]

The Condition of Late Modernity

Many Western intellectuals feel a heavy responsibility for the political and ethical quality of debates about identity and citizenship. Because the main intellectual culprit in this debate still is Western nationalism, they prefer to discuss these issues in the more universalistic framework of modernity and modernization.

To many social and political thinkers, traditional historical representation is an awkward guide in these matters. The close ties modern, Western historiography has had with national identity and white colonialism form an uneasy legacy. These philosophers, sociologists, and political scientists think that history belongs to the past. History, in the disciplinary shape we recognize as familiar, is a product of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It belongs to the period of "heavy modernity." This expression was coined by the British-Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. By heavy modernity, Bauman means traditional modernity, built on heavy industry and sturdy institutions like companies, banks, stock exchanges, labor unions, and nation-states. These states possessed clearly demarcated territories and coherent cultural identities. This is where history came in handy: it offered an identity to a national community living in an organized country. In this setting (national) historiographies delivered their contributions, for better or for worse.

Now the situation has dramatically changed. We no longer live under conditions of heavy modernity, with its reassuring continuities. Instead we have entered the stage of late modernity, which Bauman calls "liquid modernity." Here uncertainties abound: heavy institutions are withering away, national states are giving way to international corporations, and national governments are losing power to supranational alliances. Cultural identities are not stable, but called into

question. Citizens of late modernity are free-floating individuals, looking for new affiliations and new loyalties. When they find them, they will be of a contingent and temporal nature. Liquid modernity breeds a nomadic consciousness.[8]

The German social philosopher Ulrich Beck is of the opinion that we live in an age of risk production. Traditional modernity, with its centralized economic and political institutions, realized a controlled wealth production. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we have lost control. Beck states that we live in a "risk society", with different uncertainties than those earlier generations encountered. The risks we now run are of a global, fundamental character; they threaten the existence of the human species. Traditional control mechanisms, mostly on a national scale, no longer work. They are incapable of containing these risks. What is needed is a new organization of society and politics, with new associations of conscious citizens. We require a new awareness of the risks we run in perpetuating traditional modern economic and political practices. Beck aims for a "reflexive modernity" in which we acknowledge and act upon our ecological responsibilities.[9]

In a comparable way, the British sociologist Anthony Giddens speaks of "manufactured uncertainties" in an age of high or late modernity. He is somewhat more optimistic and practical than Beck. The risk society we live in is also a trust society. What needs to be done is to organize "active trust" in new domains of sub-politics, like schools and health care centers. Giddens pleads for "institutional reflexivity" and a reform of the welfare state. This is in essence what Beck too is after.[10]

It would be wrong to dismiss these theories out of hand as another episode of a-historical sociological overconfidence. Bauman, Beck, and Giddens are not announcing that we live in a totally new, post-modern condition. They link late modernity to its heavy or traditional past. High modernity is considered an exacerbation of trends already visible in earlier modern societies. These social thinkers are in fact trying to make sense of our new surroundings. One could even maintain that they are searching for a new historical worldview, developing a new historiographical framework.

Significantly, historians are not of much help in this quest. Professional history seems to be sedentary, not nomadic. What history has on offer is either traditional heritage or academic critical precision. The best that historians can deliver on a grander scale seems to be doomsday scenarios on failing civilizations, like Jared Diamond's *Collapse* and Richard Posner's *Catastrophe*.[11] That is heavy history indeed. No wonder that many thinkers turn elsewhere for more creative incentives.

Citizenship without History

This aversion to history has been translated into systematic theories on citizenship. In this field, many efforts have been made to circumvent history. One of the most appealing experiments is John Rawls's theory of justice. Rawls tried to reason out an idea of human rights and freedom by abstracting from the historical environment. His vantage point for the design of a just society is reasonable thinking without contextual impediments. He argues that members of a society should define their "primary goods" behind a so-called "veil of ignorance," unhampered by historical memories or interests. These goods turn out to be basic human rights, together with a political system that safeguards the freedom of individuals. Rawls's original position in his *Theory of Justice* from 1971 has been severely criticized for being naive and a-historical.

Multiculturalist and postmodernist critics have accused him of extolling a particular solution, that of Western liberalism, into a universal directive for political organization. Though later, in his 1995 work *Political Liberalism*, Rawls came round to a position of granting the possibility of several ways of conducting decent politics, to many adherents of cultural pluralism this still was not good enough. They pin down Rawls and other liberals as protagonists of Western hegemony.[12]

Remarkably, these pluralist and multiculturalist critics do not have much use for historical arguments. For instance, the Canadian theorist Will Kymlicka, one of the foremost political thinkers on multiculturalist citizenship and minority rights, explicitly discards historical arguments. Only because people have been taught to treasure them, he argues, can these historical representations not be totally ignored. Unhappily, they mostly stand in the way of resolving conflict situations.[13]

What makes historical thinking difficult to stomach for these often anthropologically oriented thinkers is the tacit definition of cultural identity many historians exploit. In particular, the cultural theory of Herder, the darling of many historians, is frowned upon. The tradition of Herder seems at first glance a pluralistic and tolerant one. Herder thought that all cultures have an undeniable right to existence, though he was somewhat fonder of great nations than of smaller ones. As a rule, though, cultural communities may expect that other groups acknowledge and respect their cultural activities as valuable.

According to the British political philosopher Bhikhu Parekh, this is only a halfway house. Parekh values Herder's attempt at a hermeneutic understanding of foreign cultures. Herder's accomplishment certainly is to view cultures as separate and at the same time equal to each other. Yet his cultural pluralism is only partial, because he sees distinct cultures as tension-free, harmonious wholes. Herder, Parekh says, is allergic to the idea of contradictions within cultures: "He cherishes a cultural plural *world*, but not a culturally plural *society*."[14] Parekh sees this idea of coherent cultural units as false. The postulation of stable, demarcated,

and autonomous cultures or communities allows no room for divergence and is in fact essentialist. Parekh sees as the net effect that in the United Kingdom responsible multiculturalism is defined in a way that has a suspicious likeness to liberal, protestant citizenship.

In his *The Multiculturalism of Fear*, Jacob Levy, too, describes Herder as a dangerous guide to solving actual multicultural problems. First, there is Herder's moral imperative. Members of a culture are entitled to express and fulfill their cultural needs. This means that they are not only allowed to enjoy their culture, but that, in addition, they have the moral obligation to do so. This moral mission has led to many political disasters. Second, Herder's definition of culture also is problematic. Herder delineated cultural communities mainly along the lines of shared languages, a criterion that boils down to the demarcation of ethnic-national unities. Inside these nations, no internal divisions could exist. Nations were thought of as homogeneous, coherent, cultural and moral unities. That, Levy argues, has rarely, if ever, been the case in reality. Cultural and political differences do not confine themselves to national boundaries; they are disputed within contested national societies, which in addition change over time. We recognize here the historiography of difference, the only kind of history that is acceptable to the participants in this discourse.[15]

Coping with Difference

The common wisdom among these scholars is that there exist not so much clashes between essentialist cultural blocks as disputes within changing civilizations. The way to deal with such cultural and political conflict is not to try and homogenize societies. Multiculturalists like Will Kymlicka advocate a political recognition of cultural differences. The phrase *politics of recognition* has been made famous by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. Taylor has written a famous historical analysis of the genesis of the modern self, but at heart he remains a philosopher and theologian. This results at one point in a remarkably anti-traditionalist way of thinking. Taylor and other multiculturalists have been accused of uncritically venerating each and every cultural practice which, critics maintain, makes them conservative allies of obscurantist traditions. This is not totally fair. Certainly, Taylor thinks that it is important to value foreign cultures. He is not over-idealistic about this in that he does not think that we will all live together happily ever after. He proposes more realistic ways of coping with cultural differences.[16]

Consequently, Taylor regards cultures not as mysterious, sacrosanct entities immune to criticism or change. He translates his dispassionate position into a striking anti-heritage argument. Existing cultures do not ipso facto have the right to eternal perpetuation. Taylor sees no moral obligation to guarantee the life of each and every cultural community through countless future generations. In this

respect, Taylor is in agreement with the German defender of enlightened modernity Jürgen Habermas, who opposes the artificial conservation of outdated cultures. If a culture is not viable under conditions of late modernity, it will disappear; there is no moral imperative to support non-viable cultural arrangements. Habermas objects to the often-made analogy with ecological conservation. Cultural survival is not comparable to species preservation, because a culture has to be consciously willed by its participants. Individuals must have the right to give up cultural practices and to leave their cultural communities behind. The philosopher Anthony Appiah has made a similar observation. He holds that cultural conservation may seem a lofty ideal, but that it can restrict the autonomy of individual and even of future participants. New generations will be groomed to conform to the social expectations of "their" culture. This would force people to act out conventional life scripts written for them by others.[17]

The American intellectual historian David Hollinger seeks to go beyond multiculturalism to "postethnicity." He asks for a rehabilitation of the liberal generations that dominated the intellectual debates from the 1930s to the 1960s. He mentions social scientists such as Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Robert Merton, and (even) Talcott Parsons. These thinkers stood in the tradition of the Enlightenment, advocated universal human rights, and used generalizing social-scientific concepts for the explanation of social and cultural behavior. We can now see that their cosmopolitanism was less encompassing than they themselves thought it to be. Their universalism was of a very Westernized kind. In criticizing this, from the 1970s onward the intellectual trend has been one of "historicity" and "localism." In the footsteps of Thomas Kuhn, Clifford Geertz, and Richard Rorty, everything was reduced to local knowledge. The emphasis changed from species-centered analysis to ethnos-centered empathy. The intellectual effort concentrated on problems of cultural understanding, which unfortunately took the form of uncritical acceptance of each and every assertion of collective cultural identity. Hollinger supports the American historian Peter Novick, who deplores the fact that the old democratic war cry of Carl Becker – every man his own historian – has degenerated into a conformist straitjacket in which every group has to pay tribute to its own provincial history.

The cure, Hollinger thinks, may be a shot of good old universalism. The older liberal generations may have been somewhat particular in their definition of world citizenship, but they meant well. Their merit is that they spoke out against racism, nationalism, and other forms of obscurantism.[18]

History's Revenge

Yet, something seems amiss with these systematic analyses, whether they have been inspired by universalism or motivated by a comparative multiculturalism. In both strands of thought, culture remains an elusive and uncomfortable category.

Of course cultural convictions and practices can be analyzed rationally, but that does not guarantee a real understanding of what makes them tick. Moreover, culture and religion breed identities that certainly are contextual constructions, but some of them prove very persistent. Perhaps coherent and steady cultural identities do exist after all?

In "liquid," late modernity, nations and nationalism still, or again, are anchoring points. National identities are shored up to provide emotional assurance to frightened citizens. The British-French-Jewish-American historian Tony Judt has expressed his unease with the recent return of national history in Europe. He sees the resurgence of heritage as a nostalgic defense mechanism against psychic angst of the insecure future. Unknown risks are threatening existing social practices; uncertainties abound.[19]

Because these feelings of anxiety have become politically significant, many governments in Western countries are trying to boost morale by (re-)creating national historical and cultural consciousness. In France, history teachers are now by law obliged to explain to their students that the French presence in its former colonies, especially Algeria, has benefited the people living there because they were offered the rewards of French civilization. The message is of course that this *mission civilatrice* now has to be repeated in the French *banlieues*. Although not formulated as bluntly everywhere, many countries have launched programs of "civic enculturation" in which history education plays a vital role. The United States has waged its cultural wars over the National History Standards, in Germany the position of the *Leitkultur* has been enhanced, and the Dutch have been presented with a government-sponsored history canon.[20]

Why is this revival of heritage tied up with national histories? Because, Judt says, there is no real European identity. The only two things the vast majority of Europeans have in common are soccer and the welfare state. The European Community may be an economic reality, but the social and cultural arrangements are organized along national lines. The European Community is inhabited by consumers; national states are peopled by participating citizens. Judt concludes that "... men live not in markets, but in communities."[21] In times of uncertainty it is still the national government that provides its citizens with safety and protection. This shelter also requires cultural and emotional attachment.

For the same reasons, civic nationalism does not work. It refutes the older emotional roots of national communities. This cannot succeed, for nations are not of a rational but of an affective nature. This is the thesis of Anthony Smith in his *Antiquity of Nations*:

> All nationalisms are committed to the Romantic ideals of cultural diversity, authentic self-expression, and will in action, even where some of them supplement these ideals with other, more "civic" and liberal notions.[22]

Because nations are inherently exclusive of outsiders, any effort to sanitize them is, to Smith, doomed to failure. In times of adversity, social and economic antagonisms will be unavoidably translated into old ethnic enmities. To understand the tenacity of these processes, we would do well to look at the long-term ethnic sources of nationalist identity. To this end, Smith advocates an ethno-symbolist approach. Is this a new name for cultural history? Certainly his way of thinking shows an affinity with Herder. To be fair, Smith does not think of nations as primordial, essentialist entities. Nations are cultural constructions, imagined communities if you like, but as such, old, tough, and stable cultural units that are not easily dissolved or controlled. Judt reluctantly concedes that for the foreseeable future, nations are here to stay. Contrary to Smith, he hopes for the development of an open, hospitable kind of nationalism that is not exclusive or xenophobic.[23]

Decent History

What moral and methodological lessons can be learned from this debate? How do scholars in the humanities and the social sciences meet their ethical and academic responsibility? Clearly, there are some intellectual *do's and don'ts* in the current debates on identity, loyalty, and citizenship. Social solidarity and cultural coherence are not accepted as natural, self-evident phenomena, but instead we perceive these as man-made constructions that need explaining. Such explanations are meant to demythologize grand narratives of everlasting communities, with their absolute claims on the loyalty of their members. The defenders of coherent identities are unmasked as an essentialist rearguard, composed of wicked abusers of power.

While such deconstruction is a necessary and sensible thing, it may result in a politically overcorrect one-sidedness. When all forms of solidarity and community are ipso facto suspect, when every tradition becomes an invention, distrust has run wild. This is not to deny the analytical and intellectual gains we have made. Awareness of the constructive nature of cultural, social, religious, and political coherence helps us realize how vulnerable our social arrangements are. These seem firmly anchored, until they are put to the test. Social and cultural rituals may fail, political procedures can go wrong. They demand continual maintenance.[24]

Such maintenance can only be achieved by responsible and informed citizens who freely engage in dialogue and deliberation. Essential to this process are individual human rights, derived from liberalism. Theoretically, these fundamental rights are systematic and universal. In practice, they can only flourish in the context of collective identities, of cultural communities. So universalism has to be squared with particularistic peculiarities. There are no fix-it-all solutions to this problem of combining Enlightenment and Romanticist strands of thought. In

political practice we will have to make pragmatic choices, without unduly compromising basic principles. In cultural theory, we can and should acknowledge competing points of view, without resorting to ethical helplessness or intellectual incapacity. What we need is a decent theory of history.

An interesting proposal to this end has been made by the German philosopher of history Jörn Rüsen. Basically, he wants historians to make intercultural comparisons. In order to create a framework for this, he needs to posit a general standard of cultural behavior. This approach resembles that of anthropology in its quest for human universals. Rüsen himself refers back to the cultural theory of Herder which, as we have seen, is something many anthropologists would rather not do. Rüsen tries to connect the general concept of Humanität, humanity, with that of particularity and diversity by paraphrasing Herder: "This idea of humankind conceptualizes the unity of the human species as being manifest in a variety of cultures and historical developments."[25]

Distinct cultures and particular historical periods are regarded as individual expressions of general human qualities. Their cultural forms may be outlandish, sometimes odd, but they are not totally alien to us. We are able to understand foreign cultures, because they embody special blends of essential characteristics we recognize in various civilizations, including our own. This line of reasoning is not only a remedy against ethnocentrism; it will protect us from radical cultural relativism as well. Rüsen is not a friend of naive multiculturalism or uncritical particularism. His message is that if we give up on our capacity for mutual human understanding, we will fall into cultural despair. When we start thinking it impossible to reconcile diverse cultural perspectives, we threaten to bring on the clash of civilizations we want to prevent.

Notes

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition (London: Verso, 2003).
2. Cf. Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman, ed., *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-first Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
3. William H. Sewell, "The Concept(s) of Culture", in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnel and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 35-61.
4. Donna R. Gabaccia, "The Multicultural History of Nations," in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, ed. Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 432-446, 433.
5. Gabaccia, "Multicultural History," 433.
6. Gabaccia, "Multicultural History," 436-437. Cf. David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).
7. Cf. Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition,"

in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Guttman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-74; Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

8. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 6-10, 36-37 and 49.

9. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London, New Delhi: Sage, 1992), 36-49 and 80.

10. Anthony Giddens, "Risk, Trust, Reflexivity," in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition, and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, ed. Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (Cambridge: Polity, 1994) 184-197, 192-195.

11. Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2005); Richard A. Posner, *Catastrophe: Risk and Response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Cf. the amusing review by Clifford Geertz, "Very Bad News," *The New York Review of Books* 52, no. 5 (24 March 2005): 4-7.

12. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Idem, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

13. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 118.

14. Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 112 (emphasis in original).

15. Jacob T. Levy, *The Multiculturalism of Fear* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101-105.

16. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 41.

17. Jürgen Habermas, "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Guttman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 107-148, here 130-131; K. Anthony Appiah, "Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction," in Ibidem, 149-163, 157-63. Cf. Alan Ryan, "The Magic of 'I'," review of The Ethics of Identity by Kwame Anthony Appiah, *New York Review of Books* 52, no. 7 (28 April 2005): 35-37.

18. Hollinger, *Postethnic America*, 54-56 and 60-69.

19. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Heinemann, 2005), 773-793.

20. Cf. Grever and Stuurman, *Beyond the Canon*, 19-48.

21. Judt, 803.

22. Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge, Polity, 2004), 243-253, quote on 253.

23. Judt, *Postwar*, 796.

24. On this vulnerability see Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981) and Idem, *Islands of History* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985). On non-stop maintenance, see Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984).

25. Jörn Rüsen, "How to Overcome Ethnocentrism: Approaches to a Culture of Recognition by History in the Twenty-first Century," in *History and Theory* 43 (December 2004): 118-129, cited on 128.

Cultural Reflections of the Unthinkable

Indecent Exposure: Picturing the Horror of 9/11

Rob Kroes

In the wake of the terrorist onslaught of 9/11, there might have been more of an ethnic backlash than in fact occurred. Among the many historical parallels that came to people's minds, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was one. Yet the aftermath of that event, the "relocation" of all people of Japanese origin from the Pacific Coast states to internment camps, was never suggested as a model for the treatment of Arab or Muslim minorities in the United States after 9/11. Indeed, there were a few nasty incidents, but if anything, the official response, from the White House on down, aimed at containing such retaliatory impulses. President Bush had the right instincts in his September 11 address to the nation when he said: "This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world."[1]

Although we may differ in our views on how the president later pursued this course, his call at the time chimed well with the nation's needs for rituals of collective mourning and displays of patriotism. Indeed, "Americans from every walk of life," in all their ethnic diversity, united in their expressions of grief and common nationhood. The Stars and Stripes were once again the emblem of such national unity, truly representing Americans of all stripes. Only later would ethnicity become a dimension of the government response to the threat of terrorism. Attorney General John Ashcroft, who oversaw the entire domestic response to the attacks of September 11, among many other projects launched the Special Registration program. In the words of Georgetown Law Professor David Cole, this amounted to a national campaign of ethnic profiling that required all male immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries (some 80,000 men) to report to immigration authorities and be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed, regardless of whether there was any other basis for suspicion than ethnicity.[2]

Nor should the impression of America closing ranks behind its President and Commander-in-Chief lead us to forget those dissenting voices, which in the days following 9/11 argued that America was reaping what it had sown in preceding decades, in variations on the theme of "blowback," as historian Chalmers John-

son uses the term.[3] Susan Sontag, true to her calling as a public intellectual, raised the unwelcome questions, asking: "Where is the acknowledgement that this was not a 'cowardly' attack on 'civilization' or 'liberty' or 'humanity' or 'the free world' but an attack on the world's self-proclaimed super-power, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions?"[4] True to his name, black preacher Jeremiah Wright, in the grand manner of the sermon as jeremiad, reminded his flock that 9/11 was a matter of "America's chickens coming home to roost."[5] His was a voice and a view that would later come to haunt a member of Wright's congregation, Barack Obama, during the Democratic primaries in 2008.

Yet, if the point of this paper is to look for ethnic difference in the response to 9/11, I will be looking elsewhere. I will train my lens differently, and focus on the role that photography has played in visually conceiving of the enormity of 9/11 and helping people cope with this traumatic event. Many were the uses of photographic documents. They were aimed predominantly at staunching the emotional wounds inflicted by the terrorist onslaught, at helping people restore the bonds of family, neighborhood, and nation in the wake of the violent rupture of 9/11. However, there are instances where photographic images induced contested readings that may reflect differences inherent in multicultural societies. I will explore such instances in the course of my argument.

Shock and Awe in New York City

I was on the phone when it happened. I was talking to my wife across the Atlantic from Boston. I had flown in the previous night from Washington DC to Logan Airport. My landlady came up, frantically gesticulating. "Rob, come, you must see this." I followed her to the TV room and stood transfixed. One of the towers of the World Trade Center in New York was ablaze. Then a plane, ever so tiny it seemed, slammed into the second tower, exploding in a burst of fire and debris. It was an arresting moment, and my mind duly froze it. My thoughts, like those of everyone watching this, instantly went out to what must be going on inside the towers, to people trapped on floors above the level of impact, to others trying to escape the inferno. There were a few images of people jumping to their self-chosen deaths, tiny figurines tumbling down – yet as I remember them forever suspended in flight. As I watched the fires rage, there were eerie moments of déjà-vu, of Hollywood images popping up, almost instantly, yet inadmissibly, aestheticizing the spectacle. I stood ashamed at my own train of associations. Then, as I remember it in almost slow motion, the giant towers imploded, one after the other. There were images of people in the streets, running for cover, chased by a billowing cloud of dust and smoke.

The rest of that day, images of the disaster were replayed over and over again on all major channels. Nevertheless, some instantaneous editing took place. Images of people falling, unavoidable in the initial direct reporting, were, if

shown at all, carefully contextualized, as in the case of two people holding hands as they tumbled down. In one therapeutic talk show, the falling couple was seen as an emblem of human grandeur far transcending the inhumanity of the terrorists. Yet the bulk of the images being replayed were those of the second plane coming up and hitting the second tower, strangely naturalizing the event as if it were a matter of a volcano bursting, causing death and devastation. Images of people running, the awareness of people missing, of thousands dead, of others bereft and grieving, stories of heroic rescue actions by firemen, produced an instant narrative of a cataclysm, an emergency of stupendous proportions affecting each and all, regardless of individual station or status. It caused an outpouring of solidarity, of people thronging to give blood, of wakes all over town to help people cope with grief and revive the bonds of community.

Old memories of heroism in the face of disaster inspired public rituals, as in the case of firemen raising a flag on the rubble of the Twin Towers while taking their choreographic cues from the famous Iwo Jima photograph by AP staff photographer Joe Rosenthal.[6] Television images may have produced the "flash-bulb memory" of the event that millions share, yet photography played an indispensable role in anchoring the moment in individual memory. It did so in a number of ways. Photojournalists rushed out to document the disaster. Some could not reach the site and took panoramic photographs from across the Hudson or East River, freezing consecutive dramatic moments in the midst of a Manhattan skyline that looked otherwise unperturbed. Others managed to get close and were able to put a human face on the disaster.

The evening newspapers of that day relied on photographic witness to a larger extent than normal. Within days many newspapers brought out special editions, prominently featuring photographs documenting the attack on the towers as well as the public's response to it. Part of the response in the days following September 11 crucially centered on photography. People wandered about Ground Zero holding up photographs of dear ones that were missing, and before long the *New York Times* would publish a daily section with photographs of individuals killed in the towers' collapse, accompanied by short biographical notes. Also, by late November, a variety of 9/11-related exhibitions had been quickly organized, especially in New York where local audiences were in need of collective, therapeutic relief from the trauma they had suffered. The displays were constantly crowded. Some, like a museum show that featured the work of members of the elite Magnum Photos news agency (who happened to be in town for their annual meeting on the weekend preceding 9/11) were exclusive; others, like "This is New York: A Democracy of Photographs," were radically inclusive and unedited. Any snapshot taken that day was accepted.

In the nature of such responses to urgent emotional needs, many were transient. Shows came to an end, newspapers were discarded. A range of publications did preserve selected images for later use. As selections, though, they pose their

own problems for the collective memory of the event and its impact. On this point, in a collection published by Magnum Photos, Thomas Hoepker, vice-president of Magnum, has this to say:

> I strongly believe in documentary photography, in taking pictures of real life. When I looked at the pictures from our photographers, there were some that were wonderful or clever compositions, but they emphasized the artistry in photography rather than telling the story. We didn't put those pictures in this book. I don't think they belong in this book because they do not serve its purpose, which is to bear witness. In a moment like this you must be very humble. When something like this happens, nothing you do can adequately respond to the monstrosity of the event.[7]

Hoepker himself had been unable to make it to Manhattan and was stuck on the other side of the East River. From there he took photographs, several of which are reproduced in the Magnum volume, of a stark Dante-esque quality, showing downtown Manhattan engulfed in an unspeakable inferno. One, tellingly, has a cemetery in the foreground, sunlit and peaceful, with a shrouded Manhattan farther off. Yet, in weighing his own photographs with a view to including them in the book, he must have used criteria for selection other than just the one of unwanted artistry. One of his photographs from across the river shows a group of young people taking a rest, chatting, having a drink, a bicycle parked in their midst. They are relaxed, and have their backs turned toward the Manhattan inferno, displaying utter disinterest in what is happening. This too, of course, was part of the public response, yet not a part that Hoepker wished to integrate in his construction of the memorable. The photograph, I assume with Hoepker's permission, was included in a volume, entitled *Underexposed*. As the editor, Colin Jacobson, explains, it "investigates some of the most glaring examples of photographs which have been banned, doctored, suppressed or manipulated in order to dupe the viewer."[8] The volume had initially been planned as a special issue of *Index on Censorship*, an international magazine that had for thirty years devoted itself to defending free expression. In the volume as it was then separately produced, Hoepker's image is the concluding example in a collection of hundreds of photographs meant to reveal the hidden history of the twentieth century through "photographs the public weren't supposed to see."[9]

We will never know the full extent of the self-censorship and manipulation behind the public construction of disaster striking downtown Manhattan, of the many ways of bearing witness and of responding to this traumatic experience. Professional photographers may have different criteria when they order photographs in the service of collective memory than ordinary citizens do. Yet all relied on the medium of photography to help them remember what had happened. Television footage and newspaper photographs allowed the whole world to be a

witness. Yet locally, among the residents of New York's boroughs, there was a different need for visual documentation, a different mnemonic urgency, a hunger for photographs that local residents had collectively produced and went on to display in an impromptu show of about five thousand pictures, taken by three thousand photographers, in an empty shop fifteen blocks away from the disaster. Initially a therapeutic self-help venture for those affected, the project expanded into a photographic documentation exercise intended both as an archive and as an alternative media publicity outlet. In a display of visual control reclaimed from the media, it showed what local people had seen and what they wished to remember. As an all-volunteer effort, a selection of photographs from the show went on tour to a number of cities in the United States and Europe, at locations including the MoMA in New York (February-May 2002).[10] The initiator of this project, Michael Shulan, in summarizing its particular characteristics, describes it as not so much a conventional art exhibition as an improvised memorial for the dead and an exercise in documenting the monstrous, with the fundamental principle that it was open to anybody and everybody. As Shulan writes in the introduction to the exhibition catalogue: "In order to come to grips with all this imagery which was haunting us, it was essential, we thought, to reclaim it from the media and stare at it without flinching."[11] Surprisingly, then, the catalog ends with the ultimate symbolic gesture of suturing: the concluding pages show us a view of the Manhattan skyline intact once more. As if time were cyclical, a return to the past may suggest a view of the future. Only so, in cyclical time, may one hope to reach closure.

Iconic Photographs and Their Afterlife

Why is it that photographs have a power of epic concentration, condensing larger moments in history into one iconic image? The quest for an answer may lead us to reflect on the way the human mind stores arresting moments. Psychologists, in their use of the metaphor of "flashbulb memories," suggest an analogy between pictures of the mind – photographs taken by the human eye – and the medium of photography.[12] The power of iconic photographs derives precisely from our feeling that such photographs have done the work of memory for us. They have an impact on the human mind similar to what our eyes would have, had we been present. They produce "flashbulb memories" for us, turning us into vicarious witnesses, irrespective of distance and time. Crucially, the effect has to do with what one student of the medium has called "le silence sauvage de la photographie," the savage silence of photographs.[13] They speak no words, use no rhetorical flourish, no linguistic embellishments or evasions. They freeze transient motion into lasting stillness. Neither film nor television footage has this power of silence. Stopping time and motion, photography "emplit de force la vue," forcibly fills up our view.[14] Photographs come to us like documents from "the other side,"

beyond time, beyond life. They are like testaments, last wills drawn up in the service of memory.

The power of photography, thus conceived, is intrinsic to the medium. It does not critically depend on artistry or aesthetics, on an inner vision in the mind of the photographer seeking expression. Iconic photographs, freezing history into memory, have an autonomous expressive force unconnected to authorial intent or control. The afterlife of such photographs is most clearly the area where the photography of history blends into the history of photography. From this perspective, photographs most clearly take their place as agents of history, rather than being its mere reflection. From the moment that photographs acquire iconic status and enter the realm of the mass circulation of images, they begin to affect history rather than merely reflect it.

The Iconic Photograph That Never Was (Nor Will Be?)

There is a rich visual record of the traumatic events of 9/11, the day that terror (and, as it later turned out, terrorists) struck the United States. Among the various sites where hijacked planes crashed, the attack on the World Trade Center in New York is most richly documented. Tens of thousands of stunning photographs, which will forever reflect the images that burned themselves into our collective memory, show the many faces of the cataclysm. Many have become iconic through the epic concentration that their frames provide to what at the time may have seemed unfathomable. They now appear as capturing the essence of the moment, the horror, the heroism, as well as the grim beauty of it all. Yet this was not a volcanic eruption, not a natural disaster. This is what men did to fellow human beings. They had set out indiscriminately to bring thousands to an untimely death.

Indiscriminately indeed, because their act of terrorism killed thousands, regardless of their religion, gender, class, race, ethnicity, or age. Images of those rushing from the scene of evil, or of the faces of those staring in horror and grief at the scene of carnage which arose literally out of the blue, depict the range and variety of people living or working in downtown Manhattan as almost a representative sample of America's multicultural and multi-ethnic society. If the attack was indiscriminate, so too, it may appear, was the response to it. No discrimination was made: America responded as one, grieved as one, closed its ranks as one. How then, using photographs or other documents relating to 9/11, can one begin to explore the question of ethnic distinctiveness in the way that Americans responded to the tragedy?

Here a closer reading of one particular photograph may suggest an approach to exploring this question. It is the picture that is now emblematically referred to as the falling man. It recently provided Don DeLillo with the title for his novel on the tragedy of 9/11. Or in fact, more than just the title; the falling man is a haunting

presence in the story itself. Drawing on the rich resonance of the falling man as a remembered iconic image, DeLillo, in an inspired distancing strategy, introduces *not* the person so unforgettably caught in mid-fall by a camera, but the enigmatic character of a performance artist, David Janiak, who specializes in re-enacting the fall, or more dramatically: the photographic still, hanging upside-down above the pavement, secured to a harness. In DeLillo's words: "There was something awful about the stylized pose, body and limbs, his signature stroke. But the worst of it was the stillness itself."[15]

Only much later in the novel is the connection between the photograph and the re-enactment made explicit. Upon reading an obituary of David Janiak in the newspaper, dead at 39, apparently of natural causes, the woman protagonist of the novel does an advanced computer search and reads about a dispute over the issue of the position Janiak assumed during the fall, the position he maintained in his suspended state. Was this position intended, she reads, to reflect the body posture of a particular man who was photographed falling from the north tower of the World Trade Center, head first, arms at his sides, one leg bent, a man set forever in free fall against the looming background of the column panels in the tower? "She did not read further but knew at once which photograph the account referred to. It hit her hard when she first saw it, the day after, in the newspaper. ... Headlong, free fall, she thought, and this picture burned a hole in her mind and heart, dear God, he was a falling angel and his beauty was horrific."[16]

Thus, almost in passing, DeLillo evokes the afterlife of a single photograph that managed to burn holes in the minds and hearts of so many. DeLillo himself creatively adds to the afterlife of the photograph through imagining an impersonator, David Janiak, whom he could flesh out to the point of giving him a generic Slavic ethnicity, while leaving the original iconic falling man an anonymous enigma. There is more we can say here, however, about the afterlife of this photograph and the ways people found to accommodate its unsettling impact.

At the time of the attack on New York's Twin Towers, many sat in front of their television screens, trying to imagine in anguish and impotence what was going on in the towering inferno of the World Trade Center. Yet one response among those trapped in the buildings above the level of impact was clear for all to see. Rather than burn or choke to death, people in their hundreds had opted for a death of their own choosing, delivering themselves to the pull of gravity as they jumped from windows on all four sides of the towers. Television images showed many of these hapless individuals until the various channels covering the events stopped broadcasting them. The images were deemed too gruesome, too unmediated a confrontation with the horror of the moment. An additional consideration may have been that the images were seen as appealing to the voyeurism of the spectators, as too much of an unseemly intrusion into the utter loneliness of those who were only seconds away from death.

Although the "jumpers" epitomized most starkly the horror and tragedy of the event, images of their freefall were safely tucked away from the public gaze, preventing their becoming part of a collective memory that would soon be cast in terms of the heroism and bravery of the victims and their saviors. Yet the mental shock and trauma of those who beheld the spectacle of so many people falling, and who will never forget the loud thud of bodies hitting the ground – "It was raining bodies," one firefighter wailed in shock once he was safely back at his station – does seem to need its own closure through sharing the memory with others.[17]

What is it exactly about images of these anguished people falling to their deaths that elicits public reticence? Is it the gulf between the jumpers' final experience, lasting not more than thirty seconds, and that of a larger public yearning to empathize, yet prevented doing so? Is it so hard to recognize a redeeming grandeur in the jumpers' fate? Tellingly, one photograph related to this particular tragedy did make its way around the world and reached iconic status. One of the falling people, *Esquire* magazine later reported, "hit a fireman on the ground and killed him; the fireman's body was anointed by Father Mychal Judge, whose own death, shortly thereafter in one of the two towers, was embraced as an example of martyrdom after the photograph – the redemptive tableau – of firefighters carrying his body from the rubble made its way around the world."[18] Apparently Father Judge's display of compassion and humane grace in the hour of his own death made it easier to see redemptive value in the photograph, and to evoke empathy from many.

The rich store of photographs and of film and television footage may allow makers of historical documentaries to return to the images of falling people and to contextualize them carefully. Ric Burns, for example, in his documentary film *New York: The Center of the World*, has a section on 9/11.[19] He has chosen to give it the narrative structure of a Biblical passion play, telling a story that makes it clear to the viewer that the horror of the terrorist onslaught has given rise to the collective redemption of New Yorkers. Good in the end emerged from evil. In spite of the risk of seeming disrespectful to the dead, Burns has not shied away from showing footage of people leaning out of the upper floors of the two towers, clinging to windowpanes first, then choosing a freefall to certain death. The camera pans from body after body falling down to the stunned faces of the crowd. "My God. Oh, my God," is the continuing litany one hears. There is one voice, though, addressing the cameraman – one must assume – shouting: "You can't take pictures of this." That voice must have spoken on behalf of all those whose gut feeling was one of revulsion against filming this particular aspect of the horror of the World Trade Center attacks.

That feeling must have prevailed in the days following 9/11. The history of a photograph of one man falling, taken by Associated Press photographer Richard Drew, testifies to this urge to suppress. Drew had trained his telephoto lens on

one man and shot eight frames. Back in his office at the Associated Press, as *Esquire* magazine reported later, "he inserted the disc from his digital camera into his laptop and recognized, instantly, what only his camera had seen" with its uncanny power to catch the unconscious optics of human perception, "*das optisch Unbewußte*," in Walter Benjamin's words.[20] A moment no observer's eye could have consciously noticed was forever frozen in a frame. There was something iconic in the extended annihilation of a falling man. Drew did not even look at any of the other pictures in the sequence. He didn't have to. "You learn in photo editing to look for the frame," he says. "You have to recognize it. That picture just jumped off the screen because of its verticality and symmetry."[21] The next morning the photograph appeared on page seven of the *New York Times* and in a number of other newspapers across the country. Yet, as Richard Drew remembers it, "[m]ost newspapers refused to print it. Those who did, on the day after the World Trade Center attacks, received hundreds of letters of complaint. The photograph was denounced as coldblooded, ghoulish and sadistic. Then it vanished."[22]

Drew had photographed dying before. As a 21-year-old rookie photographer on a supposedly routine assignment, he was standing behind Robert F. Kennedy when he was assassinated. He was so close that Kennedy's blood spattered onto his jacket. He kept taking photographs, even when a distressed Ethel Kennedy tried to fend off the intrusive camera eye. Nobody at the time refused to print those photographs. They became iconic images and established Drew's fame. What then is it about Drew's image of the falling man that people find so offensive?

As Tom Junod describes the photograph in *Esquire* magazine, it differs from all other photographs of people falling from the twin towers. All the other images show people "who appear to be struggling against horrific discrepancies of scale. They are made puny by the backdrop of the towers, which loom like colossi, and then by the event itself."

They flail, twist and turn, their shoes fly off. There is no semblance of control. The man in Drew's picture, by contrast, is perfectly vertical, head down, seemingly poised and in full control of his posture. The image, Junod goes on to say, movingly and perceptively,

> shows him in perfect accord with the lines of the buildings behind him. He splits them, bisects them: Everything to the left of him in the picture is the North Tower; everything to the right, the South. Though oblivious to the geometric balance he has achieved, he is the essential element in the creation of a new flag, a banner composed entirely of steel bars shining in the sun. Some people who look at the picture see stoicism, willpower, a portrait of resignation; others see something else – something discordant and therefore terrible: freedom.[23]

He does not appear intimidated by gravity's lethal force; rather, he seems to defy it. His arms are by his side. His left leg is bent at the knee, almost casually. He offers the ultimate image of grace in the face of death. Yet only seconds before or after, like the others who had jumped, he had flailed, twisted, and turned. No human eye could have caught this passing moment of transcendence.

To those who are willing to set aside their sense of disrespectful intrusion, this detached reading of the photograph suggests all the elements that make for an iconic photograph. In its suggestion of grandeur and grace, in its intertextual evocation of Jasper Johns' many variations on the theme of the American flag, it would appear to offer, in epic concentration, all that brought out the best in Man in the face of a Man-made cataclysm. It would seem to make it the perfect American icon, representing the resilience of Americans at a time of national sorrow.

But there are those who may never summon such Olympian detachment and see the redemptive power in the picture of the falling man. As Tom Junod tells the story, there have been attempts to establish the identity of the man in the photograph. Different trails led to different potential relatives and may give us a clue to the ethnically different ways of interpreting the act of jumping to a chosen death. One trail led to a Catholic immigrant family from Latin America, the Hernandezes, another to a woman from Connecticut. The Hernandez family, when confronted with the photograph, refused to accept that the photograph might show their husband and father, who had been a restaurant worker on the top floor of the World Trade Center. As they saw it, he would never have jumped. They viewed the decision to jump as a betrayal of love, as an unconscionable suicide that goes against everything their religion teaches them. The woman in Connecticut had lost two sons in the terrorist attack, both working on the equity desk of an investment firm in the Twin Towers. From a different religious and cultural background, she looked "at the decision to jump as a loss of hope – as an absence that we, the living, now have to live with. She chose to live with it, not by angrily rejecting the picture, but by looking, by seeing, by trying to know – by making an act of private witness."[24]

Yet a third trail led to the family of a black preacher from Mount Vernon, New York. The man in the picture may have been Jonathan Briley, the preacher's son. The strong religious worldview of the family may have inspired them to see the falling man in a different light. As his sister Gwendolyn ruminated, "I never thought of the falling man as Jonathan, I thought of him as a man that just took his life in his hands for just a second. Did that person have so much faith that he knew that God would catch him or was he afraid to experience the end up there? I hope we're not trying to figure out who he is and more to figure out who we are through watching it."[25]

These different responses may suggest a more general clue, based in different ethnic cultural traditions, to the widely different ways in which Americans have coped with images of people jumping to their deaths from the Twin Towers. I

know of no research data to confirm this hunch. On the Internet, though, long lists can be found of statements by individuals, paying homage to whoever they think the jumper may have been, Norberto Hernandez or Jonathan Briley. The attempts at identifying the lone jumper may have served many people to cope with the enormity of so many unidentified, anonymous people choosing to jump and fall to their deaths. It may help them to sympathize and find the redemptive quality in all these singular desperate acts. These statements, highly personal as they are, do give a sense of the variety of ways in which people can now respond to the spectacle of "the falling man." Ethnicity may be too broad a category to account for the ways in which people reacted to the enormity of 9/11. In the end it will always be a matter of individuals drawing on their life experiences, their memories and cultural repertoires, including those that are ethnically rooted, when they attempt to give meaning to 9/11.

There may come a time when Drew's picture will be seen and remembered in its full iconic power, finding its place in the continued quest for the meaning of 9/11. Struggling to come up with the proper language, the proper metaphors, for understanding what the collapse of the Twin Towers may have signified, those reflecting on the meaning of Ground Zero may well come to construct their narratives around the central metaphor of the fall, in all its rich, intertextual resonance. In a perceptive essay, Devin Zuber, like Walter Benjamin's *flaneur redivivus*, reflects on the changed reading of Roy Shifrin's *Icarus*, one of the largest and most unknown public sculptures in lower Manhattan, several blocks north of the World Trade Center. The sculpture depicts Icarus at the very end of the Greek legend. The torso is headless and wingless, tilted at such an angle as to suggest not Icarus's winged ascension, but his fall from the sky. The sculpture was positioned in such a way that the form was perfectly juxtaposed against the looming bulk of the Trade Center towers. At night, one had the perspective of the statue falling down the dark space between the two towers. Only now can the sculpture assume its full mythological power as an emblem of human hubris "before the fall."[26] If the statue can be seen to prefigure 9/11, Art Spiegelman, in his *In the Shadow of No Towers*, after the fact creatively reconfigures the imagery and meaning of falling from the sky.[27] Once again using the medium of the comic book, or graphic novel, that he had used to such great effect before in *Maus*, Spiegelman tries to control the traumatic impact of witnessing the events of 9/11, and the flood of his earlier traumatic memories as a secondary Holocaust witness that 9/11 triggered in his mind. Plate # 6 of *In the Shadow of No Towers* shows on the left-hand side a full-length image of the tower in the last moments before its collapse. A man is seen jumping from it, preferring the freedom of the sky above death by fire, performing, as the text has it, "a graceful Olympic dive as his last living act." The amazing thing is that the author admits that he is "haunted now by the images he didn't witness." What turned him into a secondary witness, much like the protagonist of *Maus*, may well have been Drew's image of what

truly was a graceful Olympic dive captured by Drew's camera.[28] Thus, in his own creative way, Spiegelman too illustrates the way in which a person's repertoire of memories, ethnically rooted, may affect the reading of 9/11.[29]

Notes

1. George W. Bush, "Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation," 11 September 2001, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html (last accessed 1 October 2008).
2. David Cole, "The Grand Inquisitors," *New York Review of Books* 65, no. 12 (19 July 2007): 53-56: 54.
3. Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000). The 2004 reprint has an introduction addressing the post-9/11 situation.
4. Susan Sontag, "Talk of the Town," *The New Yorker*, 24 September 2001.
5. Reverend Wright kept varying on the theme of 9/11 as rightful retaliation for the devastation visited by American power upon its domestic minorities, from its native peoples to the descendants of its slave population, as well as upon foreign nations. Several of his sermons in this vein can be found on the Internet:
   http://mediamatters.org/items/200803130008; http://www.youtube.com/; http://essence.typepad.com/news/2008/03/listen-to-rev-j.html; http://odeo.com/episodes/1789079 3-Rev-Jeremiah-Wright-s-God-Damn-America-sermon.
6. Hal Buell, *Moments: Pulitzer Prize-winning Photographs; A Visual Chronicle of Our Time* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal, 2002), 20-24. On the afterlife of this iconic photograph, see David Nye, "Introduction," in *American Photographs in Europe*, ed. D.E. Nye and M. Gidley (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994). Also: Ralph Blumenthal, "A Son Pierces the Long Silence of a Flag-Raiser," *New York Times*, 17 May 2000.
7. Magnum Photographers, *New York September 11*, introduction by David Halberstam (New York, Powerhouse Books, 2002).
8. Colin Jacobson, ed., *Underexposed* (New York: Vision On Publishing, 2002).
9. Ibid, 6.
10. At the same time, under US State Department auspices, a show of 9/11 photographs by professional photographer Joel Meyerowitz was sent on tour abroad, affirming the transatlantic solidarity with the United States in the early months following the terrorist onslaught. See: Cynthia Schneider, "Diplomacy That Works: 'Best Practices' In Cultural Diplomacy," *Cultural Diplomacy Research Series*, Center For Arts and Culture, Georgetown University, 2003. Liam Kennedy has also chosen to look at the Meyerowitz show in the light of cultural diplomacy: "Remembering September 11: Photography as Cultural Diplomacy," *International Affairs* 79, no. 2 (March 2003): 315-326.
11. Michael Shulan, "Introduction," in *Here Is New York: A Democracy of Photographs*, ed. Giless Peress (Zurich: Scalo, 2002), 8.
12. L.R. Brown and J. Kulick, "Flashbulb Memories," *Cognition* 5 (1977): 73-99. Also: M. Conway, *Flashbulb Memories* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1995).
13. Alain Mons, *La Traversée du Cisible: Images et Lieux du Contemporain* (Paris: Les Editions de la Passion, 2002), 32.

14. Ibid., 30.

15. Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (New York: Scribner, 2007), 168.

16. DeLillo, ibid., 221-2.

17. The firefighter is shown in the documentary film 9/11, produced by Jules and Gédéon Naudet, two French documentary filmmakers who happened to be in New York making a film about one rookie firefighter who underwent his fire baptism on the day of 9/11. The film contains gripping footage from inside one of the burning towers. *9/11, A Film by Jules and Gédéon Naudet and James Hanlon* (Goldfish Pictures Inc., 2001).

18. Tom Junod, "The Falling Man," *Esquire* 140, no. 3 (September 2003).

19. Ric Burns, *New York: The Center of the World; A Documentary Film* (Boston: WGBH, 2003) Episode Eight: 1946-2003.

20. Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner Technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), 138 ["The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 236-7].

21. Junod, "The Falling Man."

22. Richard Drew, "The Horror of 9/11 That's All Too Familiar," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 September 2003, http://articles.latimes.com/2003/sep/10/opinion/oe-drew10.

23. Junod, "The Falling Man."

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Devin Zuber, "American Studies at Ground Zero: Walter Benjamin, Public Memory, and Memorial Aesthetics," unpublished paper, presented at the John F. Kennedy Center for North American Studies of the Free University in Berlin, 12 February 2005.

27. Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

28. For a subtle reading of Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, see Kristiaan Versluys, "Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*: 9/11 and the Representation of Trauma," *Modern Fiction Studies* 52, no. 4 (January 2006): 980-1004.

29. Parts of this article have been published in Rob Kroes, *Photographic Memories: Private Pictures, Public Memories, and American History* (Hannover: University Press of New England, 2007).

"The Dead Are Our Redeemers": Culture, Belief, and *United 93*

Phillip E. Wegner

It has become something of a commonplace to suggest that one of the fatalities of 9/11 – alongside the US Constitution, democratic institutions, procedural justice, and civil liberties – has been multiculturalism, especially in the form of broad tolerance for diverse cultures and their practices. In no way do I want to deny the fact that in the weeks and months following 9/11 there was a marked upsurge in xenophobia and its accompanying violence.[1] Moreover, even the most superficial of web searches will yield evidence of a continued virulent loathing of multiculturalism on the part of radical religious conservatives.[2] In European countries, too, the "War on Terror" became an excuse for banning forms of religious expression, such as the wearing of headscarves.

However, I want to argue that the case has always been more complicated than such a narrative would allow. President George W. Bush himself famously issued a call after 9/11 for increased tolerance of Muslims and their culture. What can be called "corporate multiculturalism" appears to continue on unabated in the present. In this form of managed multiculturalism, diversity has become an administrative instrument where, as Susan Hegeman argues, "it seems to come down to the rather trivial matter of one's Christmas dessert menu, which is to say that cultural difference (already somewhat shallowly conceived) is nothing much more serious than a set of innocuous consumer choices."[3]

According to Slavoj Žižek, the particular concept of culture underlying this form of multiculturalism represents "the very field of disowned/impersonal beliefs – 'culture' is the name for all those things we practice without really believing in them, without 'taking them seriously.'" Žižek further argues that what remains most intolerable for multicultural tolerance, especially in the form practised by the Bush administration or corporate America, are those who in fact act according to deeply held beliefs: "And is this also not why we dismiss fundamentalist believers as 'barbarians,' as anticultural, as a threat to culture – they dare to *take their beliefs seriously*?"[4] However, it is exactly at this point that the conservative anti-multicultural position and liberal multiculturalism would seem to converge. For clearly evident in their common stance toward "others," such as Muslim fundamentalists, is what Friedrich Nietzsche describes as *ressentiment*, a

destructive envy aimed at those imagined to possess a secret key to happiness – in this case, the capacity to "take their beliefs seriously" and to act accordingly.[5] That is, both sides resent these imagined others-who-believe, precisely to the degree each group fervently wishes to be described as such. One of the deepest attractions of 9/11 for both groups was that it seemed to offer the opportunity to fulfill this fantasy.

Ward Churchill's Battle over Victimhood

I want to argue that this complicated nexus of attitudes toward belief, victimhood, and multiculturalism is on display in one of the first major Hollywood film representations of the events of 9/11: Paul Greengrass's 2006 film, *United 93*. Before turning to the film, however, it is useful first to look at a very different and far more controversial document: Ward Churchill's now infamous essay, "Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens," first published in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. This essay and the ensuing debate surrounding it render in stark relief much of what is at stake in the struggle over the representation of the events of September 11, 2001. Churchill's essay was one of a number of efforts in those first weeks and months to counter the rapid, organized, and concerted efforts to hegemonize the traumatic event of the al-Qaeda strikes, to provide legitimation for the implementation of the global post-Cold War neoconservative agenda announced a few years earlier by the Project for the New American Century.[6] Much of Churchill's essay is devoted to challenging the rapidly rigidifying characterization of those who died that day, both those involved in the terrorist acts and those who died as a result of the attacks.[7]

Like other similar efforts, Churchill's essay was at the time almost completely ignored by the media. It remained obscure until January 2005 when, as a result of his being invited to speak at Hamilton College in upstate New York, Churchill's essay was "rediscovered" and read on Fox News's conservative talk show, *The O'Reilly Factor*. The subsequent sensational media firestorm resulted in the cancellation of Churchill's talk by the university administration, an attack on Churchill in the Colorado state legislature, calls from the governor for his firing from the university, and subsequent investigations into his earlier scholarship and public claims of Native American heritage. Finally, as a consequence of this unprecedented public outcry, Churchill was dismissed from the university in summer 2007, purportedly for "research misconduct." However, a jury concluded on April 2, 2009, that he had been wrongfully dismissed from his position, as "political views had been a 'substantial or motivating' factor in his dismissal."[8]

Apparently at the heart of the controversy was a paragraph in which Churchill offered his assessment of those killed in the towers:

Let's get a grip here, shall we? True enough, they were civilians of a sort. But innocent? Gimme a break. They formed a technocratic corps at the very heart of America's global financial empire – the "mighty engine of profit" to which the military dimension of US policy has always been enslaved – and they did so both willingly and knowingly. Recourse to "ignorance" – a derivative, after all, of the word "ignore" – counts as less than an excuse among this relatively well-educated elite. To the extent that any of them were unaware of the costs and consequences to others of what they were involved in – and in many cases excelling at – it was because of their absolute refusal to see. More likely, it was because they were too busy braying, incessantly and self-importantly, into their cell phones, arranging power lunches and stock transactions, each of which translated, conveniently out of sight, mind and smelling distance, into the starved and rotting flesh of infants. If there was a better, more effective, or in fact any other way of visiting some penalty befitting their participation upon the little Eichmanns inhabiting the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers, I'd really be interested in hearing about it.[9]

It is important to analyze why this paragraph in particular provoked such a violent and excessive hysteria upon its belated "discovery." On the one hand, Churchill's argument directly challenges the characterization of all those murdered that day as "innocents." Indeed, this is precisely the term that is repeated throughout the Colorado State House of Representatives' unanimous resolution of February 2, 2005, passed in response to the Churchill controversy. The resolution begins, "WHEREAS, The tragedy of September 11, 2001, marked one of the darkest days in American history; and WHEREAS, The terrorist attacks cost more than 3,000 innocent people their lives." Its final "whereas" clause again asserts: "The victims at the World Trade Center were innocent in every sense of the word and should always be remembered as innocent victims of an unprovoked attack on America." The resolution then claims that Churchill's crimes are three-fold: he "strikes an evil and inflammatory blow against America's healing process"; his "essay contains a number of statements and contentions that are deplorable and do not reflect the values of the people of the State of Colorado"; and most significantly, he "claims that the victims at the World Trade Center were not innocent," as he "goes on to compare the innocent victims of the September 11, 2001, attacks to Adolph Eichmann, the man who executed Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews during World War II."[10]

This last claim is of particular interest in this context, for it suggests that part of the loathing directed toward Churchill's essay is provoked by the ways in which it potentially disrupted a process begun in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, and continuing throughout the next few years, aimed at creating an identification between the US victims of the al-Qaeda attacks and the Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust.[11] Such an identification of the victims of 9/11 and the Holocaust was

also reinforced in the choice of Daniel Libeskind, then best known for his stunning Jewish Museum in Berlin, as the lead designer for what would become a World Trade Center memorial site.[12] Moreover, such a self-identification of the United States with Holocaust victims – another example of what Žižek refers to as a "brutal instrumentalization of the Holocaust" for political ends – furthered a continued self-erasure of the nation's own history of genocidal violence, not only abroad, but most immediately, for Churchill at least, directed against the aboriginal peoples of the North American continent.[13] Indeed, Churchill concludes that in addition to the ghosts of Iraqi children killed by US-imposed sanctions and strategic bombing, there were many others who made an appearance on 9/11, "a vast and silent queue of faceless victims, stretching from the million-odd Filipinos slaughtered during America's 'Indian War' in their islands at the beginning of the twentieth century, through the real Indians, America's own, massacred wholesale at places like Horseshoe Bend and the Bad Axe, Sand Creek and Wounded Knee, the Washita, Bear River, and the Marias."[14] It is these unnamed and uncounted victims of genocide that Churchill in turn would ask us to "never forget."

Thus, in his challenges to institutionalized US myths, both newly minted and long established ones, Churchill becomes for his most virulent critics at one with the terrorists, his violence more symbolic but no less destructive. One of the more depressing spectacles surrounding Churchill's dismissal from the University of Colorado were those academics who tacitly, if not explicitly, supported this action, arguing that Churchill was simply receiving a long-overdue comeuppance for his repeated violations of proper academic protocol. In this way, it became clear that Churchill himself, no less than the al-Qaeda terrorists, became the object of *ressentiment*, at once loathed and envied for his "beliefs" and, even more significantly, for his willingness to act upon them.

Another damning statement occurs in the next paragraph of Churchill's essay: "The men who flew the missions against the WTC and Pentagon were not 'cowards.' …. Whatever else can be said of them, the men who struck on September 11 manifested the courage of their convictions, willingly expending their own lives in attaining their objectives." The implication that these men were willing to sacrifice their very lives for deeply held beliefs, and that in this possibility, if not in their actions themselves, there might be something worthy of admiration, risked transforming these figures of monstrous Evil ("cowards") into human beings engaged in a struggle for justice ("courage of their convictions"). Moreover, in their evident capacity for belief, the terrorists exposed something we in the West at the end of the post-Cold War 1990s seemed to lack. This humanization of the terrorists thus threatened the entire ideological structure that had been built upon 9/11, and which in turn was used to justify a war in Iraq that was, at the moment of the controversy surrounding Churchill's essay, taking a turn for the worse. For all of these reasons, Churchill's essay was perceived as such a terrible menace. Church-

ill himself was condemned as "an outright collaborator with the nation's enemies at a time of war."[15]

Dedicating 9/11 in *United 93*

Films like *United 93* and *World Trade Center* (2006) offer rejoinders to Churchill's representation of both the terrorists and those who died in the attacks. Oliver Stone, in his promotional statements for *World Trade Center*, declares that his film is "a story about the men and women who fought back."[16] Stone here, unconsciously I am sure, echoes the title of Churchill's essay, suggesting that what is really the site of struggle in both *World Trade Center* and *United 93* is the identity of who in fact is "fighting back" on 9/11. In this way, *United 93* participates in the process that Susan Willis names the "federalization of 9/11": "Employees of private enterprise have become with their deaths America's war heroes."[17]

Interestingly, while the most reproduced images from that day, including in *United 93*, are of the planes striking the two World Trade Center Towers, many of the earliest fictional film treatments of 9/11 – the television docudramas, *93: The Flight that Fought Back* (2005), *Flight 93* (2006), and, of course, *United 93* – focus on what was in fact the un-witnessed, and more significantly *unrecorded*, downing of United Flight 93 in rural Pennsylvania. *United 93* is composed of two different alternating narrative strands. First, we are offered a plot focused on the initial recognition of and response to the attacks, presented to us through the diverse viewpoints of those working in eastern seaboard Federal Aviation Administration facilities and in a military command center.[18] Then, we are given a pseudo-documentary recreation of the events on board the doomed flight. The two narratives run parallel to each other, and each is thus meant to address the same question, albeit on different scales: when precisely does the War on Terror begin? Indeed, in the initial screenings of *United 93*, the film concluded with a title card on a black screen that read: "America's war on terror had begun."[19]

The film opens with images taken from everyday life: people arriving at the airport or at work, engaging in small talk about family, work, and their plans for the future, eating breakfast, and so forth. This is interspersed with other images whose uncanny effects are the product of retrospection, transformed as they are into premonitions of things to come: a "God's-eye-view" aerial camera shot of Manhattan with Islamic prayers being chanted in the background; a fixed shot of an American Airlines plane taking off; the World Trade Center towers glimpsed briefly through the window over the shoulder of one of the terrorists on United 93. The deliberately measured and ominous pace of this early section of the film contrasts with the frenetic action of its later moments, suggesting that somewhere in between something has occurred that "changes everything."

Yet when can this change be said to have occurred? Such a question is crucial, the film suggests, for it is this change that marks the real beginning of the new

global situation of the War on Terror. Such a change has clearly not yet occurred when, in the very first sign that trouble is brewing, an air traffic controller has trouble contacting American Flight 11; nor when he briefly hears "foreign-sounding" voices coming from the plane's radio. Nor has it yet occurred when those working in the air traffic control center realize they have a hijacking situation on their hands; nor even when a tape recording of a cockpit broadcast is analyzed and the ominous note that "we have hijacked planes" – in the plural – is first sounded. Even more significantly, it has not yet occurred even when the head of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) tells his staff to turn on the television, and together they see the image of the gaping hole in the smoking first World Trade Center tower. Nor has it yet begun even when the air traffic controllers realize that their missing plane is the one that has crashed into one of the towers, and that a number of others have been hijacked as well.

Something similar occurs in the narrative strand focused on the events unfolding on board Flight 93. It is clear, for example, that this threshold has not yet been passed, even when the terrorists explode into action, stabbing a flight attendant and one passenger, exposing what we know to be a fake bomb, murdering the pilot and co-pilot, and taking over the plane. Indeed, the European-accented voice of one of the passengers advises everyone to remain calm – if they do so, he assures them, their attackers will let everyone live. He thus reframes the events according to an old and familiar paradigm, that of the classic aircraft hijacking. Of course, this initial misreading of their situation will prove disastrous.

In order to effectively answer the question of when things do change and the War on Terror has thus begun, there is another detail from the early section of the film on which I would like to put some emphasis. As the hijackers first take their seats in the La Guardia terminal, the camera cuts to one of their fellow passengers, as he talks on his cell phone. In a beautiful example of Brechtian estrangement, the audience realizes at this moment that many of the people around them are similarly engaged in cell-phone conversations. This image is so estranging because it is another premonition of the well-known fact that the plane's passengers communicated by cell phone with people on the ground and left final messages with loved ones.[20]

Within the discursive economy of Greengrass's film, this image plays another significant role for, I would argue, the film maintains that it is only through the representation of the attacks by way of communication technologies – that is, in their mass-mediated *repetition* – that the true meaning of these events finally takes hold and a new field of action emerges. In this way, the film brilliantly highlights the role of the media and new communication technologies in shaping the emergent global regime known as the war on terror.[21] In short, as *United 93* presents it, these technologies provide what Fredric Jameson calls the "cognitive mappings" of the first events of the new War on Terror.[22]

This is clearly the case on board the plane, as it is precisely at the moment when the passengers learn *through their cell phone conversations* that both the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon have been struck that they understand that this event is something different – a "suicide mission," as one passenger puts it – and they begin to prepare themselves to "fight back." However, the representation in the first narrative strand, of this moment when the entire nation is transformed into combatants in a new global war, is even more startling. In a breathtaking visual sequence, the film gives us, first, the perspective of the men working in the control tower of Kennedy Airport when they see Flight 175 on its collision course with the south tower of the World Trade Center. This is followed by a cut to a full-screen image of the CNN broadcast of the plane hitting the tower. Finally, we are offered the viewpoint of those working in the military center as they witness the crash, mediated through the television screen. Crucially, it is only after *this* televisual event that the men in charge of the two facilities acknowledge the new realities they are confronting. FAA chief Ben Sliney chillingly states that of the thousands of aircraft still in the air, "Anything is suspect now." The commander of the military facility also acknowledges this new reality when he says, "We need rules of engagement." A little later, Sliney declares his impatience with a military liaison who, still operating according to the old paradigm, can only present him with official updates: "No, I need action," he asserts. Finally, when he does act, issuing the command to close international airspace, he can now confidently do so under the firmly held belief that "we're at war with someone." Of course, the same is true for the terrorists on board United 93, as when they learn through the plane's communication screens that the two towers have been successfully hit, one of them declares, "Tell the others our time has come."

A similar transformation overtakes the passengers on board the plane. The film shows us that through their actions, they join the initial combatants in the new war on terror – and ultimately, of course, some of the war's first casualties – as they "fight back" against their captors. The film presents this transformation as a switching of places with the terrorists, the passive innocent victims becoming the aggressors. This is borne out visually, through the representation of the attack on the hijackers, in a way that recalls the earlier savage violence perpetrated by the terrorists themselves. At this later point, a group of American men literally swarm over the body of the first hijacker, before repeatedly smashing his skull with a fire extinguisher, blood flying everywhere. Even more significantly, the film suggests that these people recognize that in fighting back in this way they, like the hijackers, are engaged in an act of collective suicide. The passenger who is to pilot the plane says that if they are not to crash, they need to seize control of the cockpit in what everyone understands to be an impossibly swift fashion. This then cuts to scenes of many of the passengers contacting their loved ones and leaving their wrenching farewell messages.

In this way, the film uses the collective iconography of the passengers – intentionally identified throughout as a group – to imagine all of those who died that day as engaging in an act of *sacrifice*, and thereby partaking in what Ross Birrell describes as the movement from a "restrictive" to a "general economy of suicide-terrorism."[23] Crucially, this film and similar documents enact an erasure of the suicide-sacrifice of the terrorists, and the adoption of this general economic logic by the plane's passengers. This too suggests that what is truly threatened by Churchill's essay is the identity of the sacrifice. Who really commits "suicide" on 9/11, making the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for a higher cause: those who crashed the planes into the towers and the Pentagon, or those who were killed? Who, in other words, has broken with a weak sense of cultural identity and embraces belief, the supreme confidence in the truth and necessity of their actions? The brilliance of *United 93* lies in its illustration of precisely the moment when the passengers, as symbolic figures for the United States more generally, take over the place of the terrorists and emerge as heroic emblems of those-who-believe.

A similar vision of the transformation of the American nation was articulated only days after 9/11, when the Republican Party activist and *Newsday* columnist James P. Pinkerton declared that the events of September 11, 2001, represented a "crushing defeat for irony, cynicism, and hipness" – values associated with a lax, broadly tolerant, multicultural liberalism, most clearly expressed, according to Pinkerton, in one of the hit television shows of the dissolute 1990s, *Seinfeld*. That day taught us all the importance of belief, "that there's more to life than nothing, that some things really matter." Of course, Pinkerton has a specific and deeply nationalist set of beliefs in mind. "The victors now," he crows, "are sincerity, patriotism and earnestness."[24]

This transformation makes the American deaths on 9/11 not endings, but rather the crucial inaugural act, the moment when things change, in the new infinite sequence of the War on Terror. Again, this momentous change would have been confirmed in the original ending title card, "America's war on terror had begun." Žižek points out that such a claim has very little to do with the actual participants in these events; rather, it takes place in a long line of similar "elementary ideological acts of self-legitimization," beginning with Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Žižek writes:

> By dedicating ourselves to the task of successfully bringing to an end the work of those who sacrificed their lives, we will make sure that their sacrifice was not in vain, that they will continue to live in our memory; in this way, we will effectively commemorate them; if we do not accomplish this task of ours, they will be forgotten, they will have died in vain. So by dedicating the place to their memory, what we actually do is dedicate, legitimize ourselves as the continuators of their work – we legitimize our own role. This gesture of self-legitimization through the other is ideology in its purest: the dead are our redeemers,

and by dedicating ourselves to continuing their work we redeem the redeemers.[25]

It is thus precisely fictions like *United 93* that prevent the healing disingenuously called for by the Colorado legislature in their resolution condemning Churchill, keeping open the deep wound of 9/11 as such narratives do. This is made explicit in the case of this particular film by the black void that fills the screen at the moment the plane crashes into the ground. A similar process occurs in the original designs for the commemoration at the World Trade Center site. As one commentator aptly put it, "[t]he ruling above-ground gesture of Libeskind's plan, seen especially in the towers that would ring the site, is that of the shard, the sharp fragment unleashed by shattering or explosion. Combined with the idea of keeping the pit as open as a fresh wound, the shards seem to aestheticize the violence of Sept. 11."[26]

How we might begin to close such wounds and construct other forms of commemoration and redemption of all the 9/11 dead remain crucial tasks for the future.[27] This would involve what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok call a true mourning, a "decrypting," working through or "introjection" of this trauma instead of a crippling "incorporation" into our national psyche of the open trauma of this event, keeping us locked in a repetitive and destructive cycle of violence.[28] Such an alternative set of practices would overcome the identification of the United States as a victim in the current global situation, and contribute in an important way to the project of moving beyond the false opposition of corporate multiculturalism and inflexible nationalist "beliefs" that is still very much part of our cultural landscape.

Notes

1. For one particularly tragic example of the consequences of this, see the moving documentary, *A Dream in Doubt* (2007; dir. Tami Yeager).
2. For example, the website "Sword-at-the-Ready" asserts – in a posting alongside such rants as "Obama's Henchmen and the Rise of Commu-Fascism" [sic] – "Multiculturalism in the West is a poison that has weakend [sic] Christian Civilization, and empowered the beast of Jihadist Islam." "Unintended Consequences: Tolerance Turns Moderate Muslims Militant," Sword-at-the-Ready, http://swordattheready.wordpress .com/2008/02/15/unintended-consequences-tolerance-turns-moderate-muslims-militant/ (accessed 9 October 2008).
3. Susan Hegeman, "The Santa Claus Problem: Culture, Belief, Modernity," in *The Cultural Return* (forthcoming). The discussion that follows is deeply indebted to Hegeman's careful reading of the contemporary tensions between culture, religion, modernity, and belief, as well as the continued importance of the concept of culture in our era of globalization. Also see the distinction between "critical" and "corporate multiculturalism" developed by the Chicago Cultural Studies Group, "Critical Multiculturalism," in

Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), 114-39.

4. Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003), 7. Hegeman too notes that a fundamental tenet of the liberal humanism of which multiculturalism is a key value "is precisely freedom from belief: if there is a liberal humanist subject position, it is one constituted around a fundamentally negative principle."

5. For a related critique of the attack on radicalism, "the properly leftist project of emancipatory rage," in Peter Sloterdijk's recent *Zorn und Zeit* [*Anger and Time*] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), see Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (New York: Picador, 2008), 185-94. Žižek's analysis here has the additional virtue of reminding us of the danger of leveling the charge of *ressentiment*: it may in fact be no more than an expression of our own unacknowledged resentments and envy.

6. For a useful brief discussion of the Project for the New American Century, see David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

7. I'd like to take this opportunity to offer a brief aside on the real dangers of conspiracy theorists such those making up the movement Scholars for 9/11 Truth. It wasn't as if neoconservatives needed to stage the events of 9/11 – its inevitability was widely recognized by political analysts and popular cultural texts such as the films *Independence Day* (1996) and *Fight Club* (1999), something I discuss in some detail in my book, *Life Between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). Rather, the real lesson of these events was that the neoconservatives were prepared for its occurrence, and ready to hegemonize it in particular directions, in a way that any left opposition was not.

8. Kirk Johnson and Katharine Q. Seeyle, "Jury Says Professor Was Wrongly Fired," *The New York Times*, 2 April 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/us/03churchill.html (accessed 8 April 2009).

9. Ward Churchill, "'Some People Push Back:' On the Justice of Roosting Chickens," Kersplebedeb, http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/s11/churchill.html (accessed 10 October 2008). A revised version of the essay was printed in *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequences of U.S. Imperial Arrogance and Criminality* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003), 5-27.

10. "Resolution of Colorado House of Representatives, 2 February 2005," Kersplebedeb, http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/s11/churchill_hor.html (accessed 11 September 2008).

11. A challenge to this equation, related to Churchill's, is offered in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), which suggests that if there is an historical identification for those who died on September 11 it is with the victims of the US bombings of Dresden and Hiroshima.

12. I discuss Libeskind's memorial plans in *Life Between Two Deaths*, chapter 1.

13. Žižek, *Violence*, 110. Žižek also briefly discusses *United 93* in this book, 181-83.

14. Churchill, "Some People Push Back."

15. Johnson and Seeyle, "Jury Says Professor Was Wrongly Fired."

16. Jeff Strickler, "Stone Pays Homage to Patriotism in Movie," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 6 August 2006, http://www4.vindy.com/content/entertainment/286730525311813.php (accessed 10 October 2008).

17. Willis, *Portents of the Real*, 25.

18. The film employed many of those who were involved in the events of that day, including the former FAA National Operation Manager Ben Sliney, to reenact their roles.

19. In the theatrical and DVD releases, this was changed to "Dedicated to the memory of all those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001." "*United 93* (film)," Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_93_(film) (accessed 10 October 2008).

20. Similarly, these conversations, told from the perspectives of both the passengers and those on the ground, are the focus of the earlier made-for-TV movie, *Flight 93*.

21. The role of these communicational technologies in an earlier moment of neoliberal globalization is also one of the topics of Greengrass's previous film, *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004).

22. For Jameson's classic discussion of cognitive mapping, see his *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), especially 50-54 and 408-18. I discuss the development of this concept in my essay "Periodzing Jameson: Notes Toward a Cultural Logic of Globalization," in *On Jameson: From Postmodernism to Globalization*, ed. Caren Irr and Ian Buchanan (Albany: State University of New York Press), 241-280.

23. Ross Birrell, "The Gift of Terror: Suicide-Bombing as *Potlach*," Sparwasser, http://www.sparwasserhq.de/Index/HTMLjan5/jesper2.htm (accessed 10 October 2008).

24. James P. Pinkerton, "Tuesday's Act Was Not About Nothing," *Newsday*, 16 September 2001, http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2001/tuesdays_act_was_not_about_nothing (accessed October 10, 2008). I discuss the critique in William Gibson's fascinating post-9/11 novel *Pattern Recognition* (2003) of this revival of nationalism in my essay, "Recognizing the Patterns," *New Literary History* 38, no. 1 (2007): 183-200.

25. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 194.

26. Christopher Hawthorne, "Living With Our Mistake: Is New York about to choose the wrong proposal for rebuilding the World Trade Center?" *Slate*, http://www.slate.com/id/2079228/ (accessed 10 October 2008). For a further discussion of the debates over the rebuilding of the site, see David Simpson, "The Tower and the Memorial: Building, Meaning, Telling," in *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 55-85.

27. Though let me conclude by suggesting that it is precisely such an alternative logic of commemoration that we find being worked out in some of the most interesting of the post-9/11 fictions, including Foer's *Incredibly Loud & Extremely Close*, Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), Katharine Weber's *Triangle: A Novel* (2006), and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007).

28. See Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Interestingly, images of empty crypts also play a role in two of the earliest documents to address the 9/11 attacks: the science fiction film, *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003) and Foer's

Incredibly Loud & Extremely Close. I discuss the *Terminator* trilogy in *Life Between Two Deaths,* chapter 3.

Real American Heroes: Attacking Multiculturalism through the Discourse of Heroic Sacrifice

Michan Andrew Connor

"I'd marry any fireman or policeman right now": Whiteness and 9/11's Heroes

One of the most significant popular cultural outcomes of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was the elevation of a set of national heroes. New York's firefighters became symbolic embodiments of American courage and self-sacrifice in the face of danger, and thus models of ideal citizenship. While this imagery of heroism was opportunistically used to justify imperial projects of war, I argue that it was also harnessed to serve the ongoing domestic right-wing cultural agenda of defending the privileged cultural, political, and economic standing of white men, though these projects are closely intertwined. The ease with which post-9/11 heroism was appropriated by right-wing causes is evidence of more than mere opportunism in seizing a cultural moment. Rather, manipulators of the image of firefighters as heroes tapped into a deeply entrenched and longstanding American popular culture script that defines the most compelling forms of heroic action as white. This script was in turn used to defend white privilege and to advocate for war.

Acclaim for firefighters was overwhelming. One conservative publication resurrected the hubristic self-identification of late 1990s Wall Street traders and declared the city's firefighters and emergency workers "the real masters of the universe": "Big, beefy working-class guys became heroes once again, replacing the telegenic financial analysts and techno-billionaires that had once held the nation in thrall."[1] Fisher-Price enjoyed revived sales of its existing "Rescue Heroes" toy line because it featured New York's rescue workers. A comic book featuring those same rescue workers raised proceeds for the relief of the families of World Trade Center victims.[2] Firefighters and cops were back in style. Kate Kennedy, a web editor for the right-wing Independent Women's Forum, even declared, "I'd marry any fireman or policeman right now. On the spot. We could go to Vegas."[3] If marriage offers from Phyllis Schlafly disciples constituted the pinnacle of cultural prestige, the blue-collar heroes of New York had reached it.

Beyond the acclaim paid to firefighters, however, the concept of heroism was deployed to indicate particular forms of cultural virtue and construct categories of ideal citizenship. Overwhelmingly, the heroic image of firefighters, police, and rescue workers was harnessed to already existing right-wing narratives. Firefighters were used to legitimize attacks on "big government," affirmative action, and the supposed feminization of American culture.[4] Further, this heroic image was racialized as inherently white, allowing it to be connected to what George Lipsitz calls the central ethos of post-civil rights conservatism, "a countersubversive consensus mobilized around the alleged wounds suffered by straight white men," their privileged status notwithstanding.[5]

A controversy over the memorialization of the New York firefighters who served at the World Trade Center illustrates this phenomenon. The FDNY and the city, working with a private funder, chose to model a memorial statue on a photo taken of three firefighters raising the American flag at Ground Zero on September 11. The three firefighters in the photo were white, but the city requested that the statue depict one white, one African-American, and one Hispanic firefighter to reflect the racial diversity of the department, the city, and the victims of the attacks. This decision quickly drew denunciation from the right as an example of "political correctness"[6] and a "wretched... alter[ation of] historical reality to impose proper quotas on past events."[7]

In response, the right mobilized two related discourses. First, the *National Review* and other conservative periodicals argued that the decision had created a race issue where none was previously present. Rather than representing three firefighters who happened to be white as symbols of "duty and sacrifice, the two virtues to which all firefighters... gave their lives," the proposed monument would force all who saw it to think about race.[8] This argument of course ignored the fact that whiteness is itself a socially constructed racial identity, and that race is inherently present in depictions of white persons. Second, the publication charged that the "diversity" of the statue misrepresented the fire department, which was overwhelmingly composed of white men, while black and Hispanic firefighters constituted less than three and four percent, respectively, of the FDNY's ranks.[9] The *National Review* authors typically attributed this demographic imbalance to individual preference and aptitude, implying both that few minorities could handle the job and that fewer were even interested: "These firefighters say that you can't force minorities to apply for the job, and that it would be morally wrong and possibly dangerous to the public to alter the entrance requirements for the sake of creating a more diverse workforce."[10]

There are substantial reasons why the white-ethnic composition of the FDNY is disproportionate to that of the city at large, many of which relate to the organization of white firefighters to defend civil-service jobs with pensions and a politically strong union. Lipsitz defines such preserves as a "possessive investment in whiteness" which pays material and cultural dividends to whites at all levels of the

class structure, while explaining racial inequalities – as the *National Review* did – as outcomes of individual differences in skill, ambition, and competence.[11] If firefighting is culturally understood as a blue-collar occupation, its financial rewards are nonetheless more commensurate with the profession's cultural esteem. Dangerous and difficult though it is, firefighting is a privileged occupation. That privilege in New York has been protected by and for whites through the operation of ethnic fraternal societies as channels of opportunity and promotion within the FDNY.[12] This shadow bureaucracy within the FDNY appears to enshrine a culture of whiteness in the department. A 2002 discrimination complaint against the FDNY lodged with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleged that the Department operated at every stage, from recruitment to promotion, to deny opportunity to nonwhite applicants.[13]

Because they evaded the question of the historical production of whiteness in the FDNY, right-wing commentators were able to fall back on the comfortable assurance that the 9/11 rescue effort "was essentially a display of heroism by multiculturalism's villain class – white males. An estimated 319 of 343 firefighters who gave their lives at the World Trade Center on September 11 were non-Hispanic whites."[14] With the issues of discrimination and history safely excluded from discussion, *National Review* authors rhetorically positioned themselves to present the testimony of white firefighters as morally compelling evidence of the unfairness of the proposed memorial, and therefore of multiculturalism writ large. The authors denied that the individual firefighters involved sought fame or recognition except for their department as a whole, but nonetheless insisted that the authenticity of the memorial would be irreparably harmed through the depiction of non-white firefighters.[15] What these firefighters appeared to be expressing was an inability to conceive of heroism without a white face. This inability derives from the specific history of the FDNY, but also from a deeply ingrained American symbolic vocabulary of heroism composed chiefly of white symbols.

The ease with which the right has appropriated the notion of heroism to its agenda suggests that the discourse of heroism was not crafted of whole cloth after 9/11; rather, it is a persistent trope in American popular culture, whose history shows how the privileged status of whiteness has been woven into the concept of heroism through stage and screen images. That history profoundly affects notions of cultural citizenship, by giving whites nearly exclusive access to a widely accepted cultural means of validating oneself as a worthy American. Two conceptual frameworks are useful to this investigation. The first framework is the melodramatic as a mode of American popular entertainment. As Linda Williams has thoroughly demonstrated, in the melodramatic mode, suffering creates political legitimacy in which racial anxieties and antagonisms are expressed in a moral economy of villainy and victimization.[16] Williams identifies two chief subject types, typified by the suffering black man of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the threatened white woman of *Birth of a Nation*. Neither of these figures, however, seems to fit

the project of valorizing firefighters.[17] Building on Williams's insights into melodrama, I argue that a concept of *sacrifice* as a special sort of suffering focuses attention on the losses of the relatively privileged, emphasizing the free will of the subject, making it potentially more rhetorically powerful, and certainly more suited to right-wing discourses, than suffering.

Richard Dyer provides a second framework for understanding the racialized discourse of heroism by locating the whiteness of the sacrificing subject within the technology of film, arguing that conventions of lighting, narrative, and framing make light-skinned (white) actors appear to embody a "spirit" signifying a self-possession which transcends their bodily existence.[18] The normalization of light-hued faces as the industry standard for calibrating lighting and exposure results in a potent visual metaphor for spirit, in the light reflected from white faces and absorbed by darker faces onscreen. Lighting practices institutionalized as operating procedure both reflect and shape conceptions of racial hierarchy, as "movie lighting relates people to each other and to setting according to notions of the human that have historically excluded non-white people."[19] For screen heroes, Dyer argues, whiteness is necessary to make physical prowess appear as self-mastery. Structures of narrative that lead toward self-mastery through duty and sacrifice are supported by visual conventions elevating white heroes' suffering to the level of sacrifice.[20] Thus, narrative and visual conventions in film constitute a double layering of hegemonic whiteness at the core of the medium.

Such a bias has consequences for the maintenance of cultural hegemony. T.J. Jackson Lears has argued that through a racialized "spontaneous philosophy," hegemonic values influence politics by "the tendency of public discourse to make some forms of experience readily available to consciousness while ignoring or suppressing others."[21] This suggests that the common sense evidenced by FDNY members over the statue controversy was based in part on their unconscious referencing of images of heroism from other moments of national crisis. The technological biases of film, in addition to whatever political commitments were held by various parties to the memorial controversy, help to explain why neither these firefighters nor, apparently, the general public were readily able to conceive of non-white images of heroism. Although film images alone do not create white dominance, they are useful for protecting it and inherently less useful for challenging it.

Representations of white working-class masculinity have been shaped in the late twentieth century by a host of forces, including rising demands for economic and political empowerment by women and racial minorities, in the context of a crisis of American dominance in world affairs. Lipsitz contends that the selective representations of working-class whites, as either forgotten subjects unfairly victimized by politics or heroic subjects of efforts to restore American glory and power, have been prominent in filmic representations of the Vietnam War since the 1980s. These films have buttressed a conservative politics that recognizes

class inequality but shifts blame for the unfair burdens borne by working-class whites into politics of resentment against women and minorities.[22] The military context of films like *Rambo: First Blood Part II* provides an obvious link between war, masculinity, and whiteness, "establishing patriotism as the site where class antagonisms between men could be reconciled in national and patriotic antagonisms against foreign foes and internal enemies".[23]

However, images of heroic whites have been used to narrate other national crises since Vietnam, even as the economic injuries affecting the white working class have been purged from the national discourse, where neoliberal economics reign supreme and class is described in terms of lifestyle rather than in terms of economic inequality. Sacrifice, rather than suffering, is a melodramatic framing of heroic action ideally fitted to the hegemonic values of this era. By valorizing white sacrifice, heroism is sufficiently separated from uncomfortable discussions about social class so that it can be transferred to any emergent crisis. Reactionary uses of sacrificing heroism emerged so readily after 9/11 because they had been rehearsed for a generation in other contexts.

Armageddon: Heroic Whiteness on the Pre-9/11 Screen

A similar use of racialized imagery of heroism can be discerned in that powerful form of American (and global) popular culture, film. The 1998 film *Armageddon*, directed by Michael Bay, is generally regarded as intellectually insipid and visually bombastic. One reviewer declared that it "decisively crosses the line from mindless, relatively painless garbage into a whole new dimension of summer-movie hell."[24] It is significant, however, as an example of a fictionalized threat to American hegemony in a historical moment of domestic prosperity and an apparent global *Pax Americana*. In *Armageddon*, a group of oil-well drillers, led by two white characters, is recruited to save humanity from a giant asteroid on a collision course with the earth, by drilling a hole in it and planting a nuclear bomb that splits it along an internal fault line. The film exhibits many conventional elements of the action genre, but it nonetheless expresses a political viewpoint that establishes through the melodramatic mode a hierarchy of political legitimacy among its racialized, classed, and gendered characters.

Armageddon's politics follow most overtly the tendency to represent class as a matter of lifestyle, behavior, and attitude, and to repress considerations of either privilege or deprivation.[25] The film's hero, oilman Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis), is introduced by a shot of the frayed hem of his khaki work pants. The camera pulls back to show that Stamper is hitting golf balls from an offshore oil rig at a boat full of Greenpeace activists. Irritating these environmentalists, portrayed as elitist dilettantes despite their Spartan lifestyles and spotty hygiene, reinforces Stamper's blue-collar status even though the audience soon learns that he is not merely a worker on the oil rig, but its owner, with "eight million dollars of [his]

own money under contract" on a drilling site in the South China Sea. Other members of Stamper's crew are similarly identified as blue-collar by their loves of western-style horseback riding, strippers, tattoos, and Harley-Davidson motorcycles, passions which offset their possession of capital and advanced degrees in engineering and geology. These are simply blue-collar guys with money and education.[26] In another reference to class identity, totally detached from any taint of radicalism, the crew decline direct compensation and insist only on being exempt from taxation for life as a reward for their service. The shunning of payment distinguishes the crew from mere mercenaries; their sacrificing spirit is confirmed by their volunteering for a community of duty.

As the crew progresses through recruitment, training, and mission planning, the film's investment in masculinity becomes evident. Stamper finds an ally in NASA administrator Dan Truman (Billy Bob Thornton), who shares his appreciation of the kind of spirit required to complete the mission. Masculinity is overtly depicted as the glue holding this cross-class alliance together, as the film suggests that the blue-collar "drillers" possess a virility and manliness that the effete, over-educated scientists and government bureaucrats lack. Truman, the exception to the rule, has only become a NASA scientist because physical disabilities prevented him from becoming an astronaut. The sexual connotations of "drilling," needless to say, are intentional and repeatedly invoked.

I argue that, while the masculinism of *Armageddon* is all too obviously reflected in its characterizations and dialogue, this community of duty and spirit is also fundamentally a community of whiteness, a fact central to the thin plot of the film. On an overt level, the crew's demand to be exempted from taxation firmly attaches the men to the order of whiteness established by the likes of Rush Limbaugh, evoking the resentments of "hardworking" whites forced to subsidize lazy non-whites through taxes and social welfare programs. More subtly, narrative crises largely hinge on the question of leadership and control over the completion of the mission, and the film, like others, defines the capacity for leadership and control in racial terms. Dyer has argued that "spirit" in Euro-American film can only be expressed through a masculinity that is strong in both body and mind, in which the mind disciplines emotion and the body, separating the white male hero, who alone possesses this discipline, from both gendered and racialized others.[27]

White heroism begins its progress when Stamper convinces Truman to send a crew of oil drillers instead of astronauts into space, arguing that only his men can possibly complete the mission. Stamper's argument hinges on a mystification of the nature of the oil driller's work as not merely a set of skills or knowledge, but the possession of an intuitive capability. As Stamper tells Truman, "You know, drilling is a science, it's an art. Third-generation driller, doing it all my life, and I still haven't gotten it all figured out." This mystification of skill as hereditary property is similar to the intergenerational march of Irish New Yorkers into the

FDNY. Ethnic dominance is seldom discussed as a product of organization and privilege, but most often portrayed (most potently by the ubiquitous bagpipes played at firefighters' funerals) as a cultural inheritance. Drilling successfully requires a spirit, and that spirit, in the universe of action movies, is necessarily white. Truman, sharing in the white spirit, intuitively understands this, and agrees to send Stamper's crew instead of his own into space.

This puts Truman into conflict with his formal superior, the African-American General Kimsey (Keith David). The film promotes an understanding of the actual relationship of Truman and Kimsey through its use of lighting, as well as the dynamics of plot, which reveal that Truman knows more than the general. In scenes where Truman and Kimsey argue, direct lighting reflects from Truman's face, while Kimsey's features are obscured. This repeated representational practice begins with their first meetings to discuss how to defeat the asteroid. Truman forces Kimsey to defer to another white scientist, also brightly lit, warning Kimsey as a parent might scold a child, that "you might want to listen to him."

Notwithstanding Kimsey's low opinion of the crew, the combined moral authority of Truman's whiteness relative to Kimsey and Stamper's innate intuition about the demands of the work inscribe the boundaries of heroism along racial lines. As the plot progresses, Truman fights a constant battle against the rule-bound Kimsey to allow Stamper's men freedom to carry out their mission guided not by official standards of performance or the technical limitations of their machinery but by their innate knowledge of their craft. The final and decisive conflict between Truman and Kimsey occurs when NASA realizes that it will soon lose radio contact with the crew on the asteroid. Kimsey fears that the crew will fail to drill deep enough into the asteroid to destroy it, and moves to carry out "secondary protocol" – detonating the crew's nuclear bomb remotely. Truman, guided by the intuitive spirit he shares with Stamper, knows both that the crew will succeed if left to their task and that Kimsey's plan will fail to destroy the asteroid. He wins the struggle after screaming at the obdurate Kimsey, "This is one order you shouldn't follow, and you fucking know it!" The spirit of whiteness triumphs, reinforcing the film's implicit message: that the alliance of white masculine muscle, brains, and spirit is the only force capable of protecting the planet.

The hypermasculinist pretensions of the action genre do not exempt films like *Armageddon* from consideration as melodrama; the concept of sacrificing heroism works in this film and in the action genre to assign political legitimacy to racialized white subjects.[28] The crew finally succeeds in drilling deep enough into the asteroid to destroy it, but they are unable to detonate the nuclear bomb remotely. A final sacrifice is needed – Stamper volunteers to stay behind on the asteroid and detonate the bomb while the others return to Earth. In his final radio transmission to NASA, Stamper explains why he has decided to sacrifice himself. Instead of declaring his love for humanity, or for the United States, Stamper says that he is sacrificing his own life to protect his daughter. The surviving members of the

crew return to Earth as heroes. In contrast to an early scene in which their work on an offshore rig leaves them blackened by crude oil, they are spotless. Their spacesuits, uniforms of duty and sacrifice, have kept them white.

Re-Articulating the White Hero to Military Crisis: From New York to Kabul and Baghdad

Though fantastic, the threat to American security displayed in *Armageddon* preserved the continuity of narratives of crisis and heroism between the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the War on Terror. Potentially potent narratives about the type of raced, classed, and gendered citizens needed to respond to moments of crisis were rehearsed in pre-9/11 films like this one, and could thus be easily revived as the events of 9/11 refocused the project of cultural hegemony.[29] Assessing the film's depiction of courage as an inherent and essential quality, rather than as a phenomenon of behavior, helps to explain how easily the moral legitimacy attached to the protective courage of *Armageddon*'s drillers or New York's firefighters could be attached to the aggressive courage required by the military.[30] The patterns established by cinematic representations of white heroism are crucial to sustaining the justification for war. If heroic action is inherently white, many advocates of war have asserted a corollary proposition that action by whites is inherently heroic. Nancy Ehrenreich has argued that the implicit whiteness of American nationalism enables masculine violence to become an expression of principle, an embodiment of a noble spirit. Recognizing the racial nature of this claim to principle "helps to explain why 'our' violence in response to the September 11 attacks tends to be seen as brave, rational, principled, justified, and noble, while 'their' violence – the violence of the hijackers – is seen as cowardly, irrational, unprincipled, unjustified, and unadulteratedly evil."[31] Whiteness enables the imagining of an American "us" that provides clarity of purpose by directing anger toward "them" – while obscuring the divisions that plague "us".

This was an essential context of the hostility toward efforts to diversify the image of heroism after 9/11. Columnist John Leo betrayed some of what was at stake in connecting the memorial flap to his fears of a militant multiculturalism "bristling with hostility to whites and white 'hegemony.'"[32] More pointedly, African-American conservative Shelby Steele has argued that multiculturalists are responsible for undermining the US war against Iraq by attaching "white guilt" to all American foreign intervention, preventing the easy assumption of moral legitimacy that enables the military and individual servicepeople to operate at full capacity. This guilt is not based, in Steele's opinion, on judgments of the moral character of the current war, but on an unwarranted association of it with the admitted past sins of racism and imperialism committed by whites. Due to the carping of multiculturalists, "There is now a cloud over white skin where there once was unquestioned authority."[33] While Steele stops short of lamenting the

eclipse of white supremacy as a dominant ideology, he does both deny its continued influence over American policy and claims that by raising the *specter* of racism (again an entirely separate phenomenon from its *presence*), multiculturalists force the United States to fight "two wars, one against an insurgency and another against the past."[34] The energy required to answer challenges to the war's legitimacy is energy not spent killing Iraqi insurgents. The legitimacy of war depends upon the acceptance of the premise that its participants are heroic, an assessment that itself depends upon the war being interpreted through cultural filters shaped by hegemonic whiteness. Thus, its unwarranted claims about the historical elimination of racism notwithstanding, Steele's lament suggests that critical multiculturalism strikes at the heart of the fictions that legitimate war as an instrument of policy.

The threat to war posed by multiculturalism is accordingly reflected in the predominance of white faces among those used to sell the War on Terror in its various geographic incarnations. The most prominent face of heroism used to sell the broader war on terror belonged to the late NFL star Pat Tillman, who left the Arizona Cardinals to enlist as an Army Ranger after 9/11. Tillman first served in the invasion of Iraq before redeploying to Afghanistan, where he was killed by friendly fire in an event which the Pentagon first attempted to represent as an ambush by Taliban loyalists.[35] Conservative provocateur and columnist Ann Coulter gushed that Tillman was "virtuous, pure, and masculine like only an American male can be," while President Bush, demonstrating a solid grasp of the relative solemnity of events, declared Tillman "an inspiration on and off the football field, as with all who made the ultimate sacrifice in the war on terror."[36] The Pentagon had followed Tillman's recruitment and service with interest, though he refused to take a special role as a recruitment symbol outside of his regular duty, and his death came at the politically dangerous moment when the Bush Administration realized that the release of photographs depicting torture in Abu Ghraib Prison was imminent. Tillman's family has accordingly charged that the Pentagon engaged in a cover-up of the circumstances surrounding his death (his uniform and body armor were both burned in the field by US servicepersons) in order to hold on to Tillman as a symbol of righteous sacrifice that could continue to defend by association the righteousness of the War on Terror.

In deploying Tillman's image of sacrifice for duty to the nation, the Bush administration succeeded in obscuring the costs of its policies of war by focusing on prominent but unrepresentative sacrifices of the privileged. Tillman's image was deployed to convince white working- and middle-class families to continue supporting the policies of the Republican Party and its Democratic allies, and to approve of the violent deaths of Iraqis and Afghans. On the other hand, the discourse of heroic sacrifice denies the all too real sacrifices of welfare, property, and life made by poor American communities of color, as unaccounted billions of dollars are funneled to the cycle of destruction and reconstruction in Iraq.

Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans while National Guard troops, trucks, and logistical expertise were tied down in Iraq is only the most dramatic example. Media coverage aroused sympathy for the black poor of New Orleans, but not any suggestion that their suffering be viewed as a sacrifice for war. Likewise, the disproportionate casualty rate for African-American and Latino soldiers goes largely unremarked in heroic discourse, most glaringly as politicians who gladly allow immigrant Latino soldiers to fight seek to militarize the US border with Mexico. The discourse of heroic sacrifice hides the fact that war, while a raw deal for the white middle class, is a catastrophe for the poor of color. Mounting any challenge to this kind of assault from the right requires changing the prevailing cultural politics, providing heroic representations that encourage cross-racial, cross-gendered, and collective action.

The symbolic vocabulary of heroism militates against such cultural work, though the people used as symbols of heroism frequently assert their humanity at inconvenient times. Firefighters across the country have protested the public sector disinvestment that has followed the Administration's war policies. For his part, Pat Tillman not only declined to serve as a poster-boy for military recruitment, but is reported to have told a fellow Ranger during the invasion of Iraq that US actions were "so fucking illegal." Posthumously, Tillman provoked a nearly explosive bout of cognitive dissonance on September 27, 2005, on Fox News "Hannity and Colmes" show, when Coulter and Sean Hannity learned of Tillman's expressed admiration for and plans to meet personally with Noam Chomsky to discuss American imperialism.[37] These breaks in the right-wing discourse of heroism are not in themselves politically progressive, but they do demonstrate how the hegemonic discourse of white heroism works better when those heroes are symbols than when they are thinking, acting subjects.

Further, in the same way that I have argued that 9/11 altered or refocused existing cultural currents more than it created new ones, advocates of multiculturalism as a meaningful critique of policies of war, imperialism, and racism can take some encouragement from the knowledge that, despite the oft-repeated claim that 9/11 "changed everything," much in that struggle remains the same.

Notes

1. "Real Masters of the Universe," *Business Week*, 1 October 2001, 1.
2. Gideon Fidelzeid, "Media Relations: NYC Rescuers Are Heroes to Marvel," *PR Week*, 3 December 2001, 19; Christopher Ostrowski, "Construction Image Grows in Stature after Sept. 11," *Texas Construction*, May 2002, 53.
3. Cheryl Wetzstein, "Hooray for Heroes," *Insight on the News*, 5 November 2001, 28.
4. Marc Steyn, "Local Heroes," *National Review*, 19 November 2001, 34-36.
5. George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 73.

6. Rod Dreher, "The Bravest Speak: Firemen on the Flag-Raising Statue That's Raising Racial Ire," *National Review Online*, 16 January 2002, http://www.nationalreview.com/dreher/dreherprint011602.html; Rich Lowry, "A Monument to PC," *National Review Online*, 14 January 2002, http://www.nationalreview.com/lowry/lowryprint011302.html.

7. John Leo, "Color Me Confounded," *U.S. News & World Report*, 28 January-4 February 2002, 31.

8. Lowry, "A Monument to PC."

9. Ibid.

10. Dreher, "The Bravest Speak."

11. Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment*, 18-19.

12. Dermot McEvoy, "Terry Golway: Demystifying the FDNY," *Publishers Weekly*, 9 September 2002, 36-37. In particular, the Emerald Society operates as a joint fraternal and careerist network for firefighters of Irish descent.

13. "Black NY Firefighters Claim Bias, Sue Department," *Jet*, 28 October 2002, 25. In the post-9/11 climate, attacking the racial policies of the FDNY was viewed as churlish behavior at best, and coverage of the suit by the black-interest media likely created a belief that the suit was petty, selfish, or animated by suspect motives. After all, what kind of person would sue the greatest heroes in the United States?

14. Leo, "Color Me Confounded."

15. Dreher, "The Bravest Speak."

16. Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 6-12.

17. Ibid., xiv. Williams argues that the key icons of racial melodrama are "the suffering black male body and the threatened white female body."

18. Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), 14-15 (embodiment), 89-103 (practices of film technology).

19. Ibid., 102.

20. Elizabeth Abele, "Assuming a True Identity: Re-/De-Constructing Hollywood Heroes," *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* 25, no. 3/4 (2003): 447-454. Abele argues that, paradoxical as it appears, characters who voluntarily subordinate their self-interest to a conception of duty are constructed in films as heroic and self-possessed.

21. T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review* 90 (1985), 577.

22. Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment*, 72-73.

23. Ibid., 72.

24. Dennis Lim, "Film: Armageddon," *Village Voice*, 7 July 1998, 117.

25. Gregg Kilday, "Blueprint for a Blockbuster," *Premiere*, July 1998, 76-80. The film's producers intended this representation of class and understood it clearly as a matter of "jocks versus nerds" rather than of "rich versus poor": Writer Jonathan Hensleigh described to Kilday a plot where "you got brainy, nerdo guys at NASA depending on these ultra-low tech Jack Daniels'-drinking maniacs."

26. In a scene removed from the theatrical release of the film, Stamper pays a final visit to his father before going on his mission. The elder Stamper was also an oilman, and lives in a large and richly decorated house. See *Armageddon*, Criterion Collection (DVD), with commentary by director Michael Bay. Although the reasons given for the excision

of this scene are related to cutting the running time, I believe that this scene may also have been cut because it suggests that Harry Stamper's position in the oil industry comes from his father's success, compromising the representation of Stamper as a blue-collar man made good through his own efforts.

27. Dyer, *White*, 152-3, 146-7, 184.

28. Williams, *Playing the Race Card*, 21.

29. George Sanchez has argued that another highly successful pre-9/11 special effects blockbuster, *Independence Day* (1996), presented an opposite assessment of multiculturalism, in which American ethnic diversity, represented by Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum, was the crucial factor in enabling the people of the world to unite against an extraterrestrial invasion bent on the annihilation of humanity. "Creating the Multicultural Nation," in *Post-Nationalist American Studies*, ed. John Carlos Rowe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 40-41. As I seek insight into attacks on multiculturalism after 9/11, I make no claim about the relative prominence of either tendency in American films. It bears mention, however, that in both films, the American monopoly on military force is unquestioned, presenting interesting questions about the depth of shared assumptions between American multiculturalists and their antagonists in popular culture.

30. Approvingly citing the presence of books by conservative writers and about the 9/11 heroes on the national bestseller lists as the military phase of George W. Bush's "war against terrorism" began in Afghanistan, one commentator noted that "the bestseller list is less about the war itself than about the personal character we'll need to fight it." Stanley Kurtz, Cultural Shift, Web Page National Review Online, 11 January 2002, http://www.nationalreview.com/contributors/kurtzprint011102.html.

31. Nancy Ehrenreich, "Masculinity & American Militarism," *Tikkun* 17, no. 6 (2002): 47.

32. Leo, "Color Me Confounded."

33. Indeed, in Steele's mind, the American intention to spread democracy is axiomatic, and American racist or imperialist motives are oxymoronic. Shelby Steele, White Guilt and the Western Past, Web Page OpinionJournal (Wall Street Journal), 2 May 2006, http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110008318.

34. Ibid.

35. Except where noted, biographical information and discussion of Tillman's posthumous depiction is drawn from Robert Collier, "Family Demands the Truth: New Inquiry May Expose Events That Led to Pat Tillman's Death," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 September 2005, A1.

36. Ibid, Dave Zirin, "Pat Tillman, Our Hero," *The Nation*, 24 October 2005, 6.

37. See http://mediamatters.org/items/200509290001 for video of Fox News' "Hannity and Colmes" program.

"America under Attack": Unity and Division after 9/11

Mathilde Roza

The calculated, meticulously planned and precisely executed attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center were horrific. Creating vast damage and deadly destruction through a heretofore unimaginable application of rationality, technology, and science, the attacks constituted a terrifying display of hubris, power, and control. The fact that the pilots had received their facilitatory training on American soil and had used American planes as their chosen weapons of mass destruction only exacerbated Americans' feeling of profound humiliation. The shared feelings of deep vulnerability, rage, and grief which the events aroused could not help but unite the people affected by this monumental act of violence.

Understandably, the terrorist act was immediately identified as an attack on the nation as a whole. "America is under attack," Andrew Card, then White House Chief of Staff, famously whispered in President Bush's ear after the second tower of the World Trade Center had been hit. The phrase was immediately picked up and used by CNN as their "breaking news" headline.[1] The constant replaying of the attacks on television, to the accompaniment of the ominous headline, helped transform them into a highly symbolic public performance in which some 3,000 Americans had been cruelly forced to participate through their deaths. As a result, it was possible for every American to think of him- or herself as a potential victim, as well as a survivor.

One of the immediate ways in which this sense of American unity was expressed, in addition to acts of symbolic patriotism such as flag-waving and the manufacture of billboards, T-shirts, bumper stickers, and other items bearing the slogan "United We Stand," was the spontaneous production of an unprecedented number of poems. These were left behind on public buildings, in shop windows, and at bus stops across the boroughs of New York City and on the Internet, which, in the words of Karen Alkalay-Gut, "became an extension of Ground Zero."[2] In her article "The Poetry of September 11: The Testimonial Imperative," Alkalay-Gut notes how "almost every literary journal on the Web called for submissions to special issues devoted to September 11," and did so in a "spirit of democratic inclusion." The resulting body of 9/11 poetry which appeared suggested, in Alkalay-Gut's words, that "everyone and anyone [was] equally 'privi-

leged' to express emotion."[3] No one, then, was silenced, it would appear, and everyone was granted the authority to speak of the event.

Nevertheless, Alkalay-Gut continues, "it was clear that a certain kind of censorship prevailed." Poems avoided the inclusion of gruesome and horrific details and refrained from political or moral analysis. Also, there was an absence of "aesthetic" responses, which were deemed "inappropriate" and unsuitable to the deeply felt need to express grief and raw emotion directly. As a result, treatment of the subject tended to be conventional as well as "'positive' – patriotic, elegiac, heroic."[4]

This essay looks at one early post-9/11 poem clearly violating all of these demands: Amiri Baraka's highly controversial "Somebody Blew Up America" (2001). The examination of this poem and its public reception seeks to contribute to the discussion of the nature and definition of the "America" referred to in the phrase "America is under attack." To further contextualize my reading, Baraka's poem will be linked to another controversial cultural production – the 9/11 memorial sculpture proposed by the Fire Department of New York–which likewise projected an image of "America" that could not be brought into connection with the dominant cultural reading and preferred collective memory of 9/11.

Somebody Blew Up America

Baraka wrote "Somebody Blew Up America" a few weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. Despite the immediacy of the poet's response, the poem expressed no emotion about the actual attacks. In further violation of the general expectations regarding 9/11 poetry, the poem paid no tribute or even attention to the tragic deaths of those who perished in the attacks, and provided no room for patriotism. What Baraka offered was an aesthetically complex poem in free verse whose content was intensely political. As Pjotr Gwiazda describes it in an article for *Contemporary Literature*,

> "Somebody Blew Up America" is neither a lament for the nearly three thousand people who lost their lives on that day nor an uplifting tribute to the wounded American spirit, nor, indeed, a call for speedy revenge. Instead, the poem offers an arresting diatribe against the evils of imperialism and the attendant evils of racism as the main forces of injustice.[5]

Baraka, who has adopted a position outside the cultural mainstream throughout his career, and who considers poetry a revolutionary weapon, a battle fought with words, sees every reason to approach 9/11 from a deeply critical poetic angle. In an explanatory and self-defensive article for *CounterPunch*, written in response to the hostile reception of the poem by various groups, especially the Anti-Defama-

tion League (ADL), he explained the poem's dissenting view and the absence of patriotic sentiment as follows:

> [T]he poem's underlying theme focuses on how Black Americans have suffered from domestic terrorism since being kidnapped into US chattel slavery, e.g. by Slave Owners, US & State Laws, Klan, Skin Heads, Domestic Nazis, Lynching, denial of rights, national oppression, racism, character assassination, historically, and at this very minute throughout the US. The relevance of this to Bush's call for a "War on Terrorism" is that Black people feel we have always been victims of terror, governmental and general, so we cannot get as frenzied and hysterical as the people who ask us to dismiss our history and contemporary reality to join them, in the name of a shallow "patriotism," in attacking the majority of people in the world, especially people of color and in the third world.[6]

Although of interest as an aberrant 9/11 poem – of which more examples might be given, such as Lorna Dee Cervantes's "Palestine" and Ani DiFranco's "Self Evident" – the controversy the poem generated in October 2002 offers an illuminating and disturbing example of how the shockwaves produced by 9/11 reverberated and affected all realms of American culture and society, including those of art and art management. Identifying the poem as crucially concerned with issues of knowledge and power, with authority and silence, the discussion of "Somebody Blew Up America" is especially relevant for the processes of inclusion and exclusion that have marked America's post-9/11 cultural and political climate.

Discussing this climate in her presidential address to the American Studies Association (ASA) in 2003, Amy Kaplan takes her cue from the new vocabulary that emerged in the wake of 9/11 – in particular, the concepts of "empire," "homeland," and the "War on Terror."[7] These words, she contends, have ushered in a "dramatic" reconceptualization of the United States. The notion of empire, Kaplan writes, "recuperates a consensus vision of America as a unitary whole, threatened only by the terrorists, but no longer contested and constituted by divisions of race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality."[8] This pull toward consensus and national unity is further cemented by the application of the metaphor of "homeland" to the United States. Kaplan's persuasive reading of this concept through an analysis of the word's various connotations leads to an understanding of the notion of "homeland" as radically at odds with earlier metaphors of the New World – for example, the melting pot, manifest destiny, the frontier – all of which emphasized mobility instead of the "rootedness" the word homeland connotes. Of further interest to the topic of this essay is her assertion that the application of this metaphor to the United States has an exclusionary and racially divisive effect:

[The notion of the homeland] polices the boundaries between the domestic and the foreign not simply by stopping aliens at the borders, but by continually redrawing those boundaries everywhere throughout the nation, between Americans who can somehow claim the United States as their native land, their birthright, and immigrants and those who look to homelands elsewhere, who can be rendered inexorably foreign. This distinction takes on a decidedly racialized cast through the identification of homeland with a sense of racial purity and ethnic homogeneity that even naturalization and citizenship cannot erase.[9]

It is this renewed creation of divisions, as well as the attempt to render these divisions invisible and inconsequential by the nostalgic drive to recover a lost America of unity, that prompted Baraka to respond to 9/11 the way he did in "Somebody Blew up America." The way in which America responded to 9/11, rather than the attacks themselves, provided the impetus and urgent need for Baraka to compose his poem.

In her analysis of "the war on terror," Kaplan comes even closer to what lies at the heart of the contested poem. She is particularly disturbed by the apparent ease with which the terrorist, or even the suspected terrorist, is excluded from the category of the human. As President of the ASA, she urges scholars to take note of the disturbing historical parallels, writing: "As scholars of American studies, we should bring to the present crisis our knowledge from juridical, literary, and visual representations about the way such exclusions from personhood and humanity have been made throughout history, from the treatment of Indians and slaves to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II."[10] It is this project of historical contextualization – the need to remember the radical exclusions made in that past and which continue to be made in the present – that Baraka also embarked upon in his poem.

Baraka provided a clear indication of the poem's direction in the opening lines. There, in parenthetical mode, Baraka announces the poem's rationale and thematic orientation as follows: "(All thinking people / oppose terrorism both domestic / & international... / But one should not / be used / To cover the other)."[11] With this cautionary and self-legitimating opening in mind, it stands to reason that the poem zooms in on 9/11 only briefly. In fact, the sparseness of the poet's treatment of this subject, along with the text's main thematic considerations, allows us to read the title "Somebody Blew Up America" rather differently than as a mere reference to the recent attacks. In accordance with the poem's opening lines, Baraka shifts the focus away from the nation's concern with the identity of those responsible for the attack on "America" on September 11, 2001, to the destruction of "America" – understood as a historical project and radical experiment to create a new and utopian nation built upon the promises of liberty and justice for all. The poem may thus be read as a series of speculations about the identity of

those who "blew up America" time and again, as well as an inquiry into the continuing influence and power of the forces that they unleashed – physical, social, political and ideological – to shape America in their image.

Baraka is unambiguous and far from subtle in his analysis; what really "blew up" America was the overwhelming presence of a violently suppressive white capitalist ideology, which stood at the basis of America's foundational decades and continues to wield its dark power ("Who say they God and still be the Devil?") in the United States and throughout the world. The poem relentlessly indicts the white perpetrators of the crimes, murders, and violence committed in America's past: "Who got fat from plantations / Who genocided Indians / Tried to waste the Black nation ... Who cut your nuts off / Who rape your ma / Who lynched your pa / Who got the tar, who got the feathers / Who had the match, who set the fires / Who killed and hired / Who say they God & still be the Devil." Similarly, the poem moves closer to the present and scrutinizes American foreign policy, for instance: "Who got rich from Algeria, Libya, Haiti, / Iran, Iraq, Saudi, Kuwait, Lebanon, / Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine." Throughout, there is an emphasis on both the political and the cultural power of those who "own" (whether or not through the acquisition of "funny money," as Baraka suggests in the line below through his rhyming technique) and those who do not. For example: "Who own them buildings / Who got the money / Who think you funny / Who locked you up / Who own the papers / Who owned the slave ship." The power of those who "own" to produce information and define the areas of knowledge (as expressed, for instance, in "Who own the papers / Who own television / Who own radio") is identified as a crucial element in the processes of exclusion and silencing Baraka draws attention to. The need to become aware of the ideological power of those who speak is most directly expressed in the crucial line: "They say (who say? Who do the saying ...)."

The effect of Baraka's unremitting interrogation is much intensified by the constant repetition of the word "who," which appears in the poem some two hundred times. Not only does the word itself consciously draw attention to the centrality of the subject position in the circulation of knowledge and power, but the accumulative aural effect is considerable. The sound increasingly comes to recreate the pain and suffering inflicted by "America" throughout its history, through genocide, slavery, violence, and the overall abuse of white power, as well as through the continuation of these practices through imperialism and aggressive foreign policy. The effect is heightened further by the transformation of the word "who" from an angry demand for information into a wild and hooting lament. An angry lament, we might argue, not just at the damage "America" has caused, but also at the nation's failure to fulfill its many promises – at the dream not deferred but actually already destroyed. The poem thus climaxes in its final lines as follows: "Who and Who and WHO who who / Whoooo and Whoooooooooooooooooooooooo!"

In addition to expressing anger and grief, the sound of the word "who" also serves to arouse in the listener a strong sense of fear, even panic. In this way, as a response to 9/11, the poem may well be said to echo the dominant psychological mood immediately following the attacks. To determine whether fear is in fact a genuine emotion of the poem itself, it is helpful to note that the syllable "hoo" has been brought into connection with white fears of African Voodoo. In her essay "'HOO, HOO, HOO': Some Episodes in the Construction of Modern Whiteness," Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes: "[H]oo is a scare word when used by a white person, a word alluding to African American and African Caribbean ritual practices that have undertones of witchcraft, sorcery and power."[12] DuPlessis analyzes the significance of "Hoo" in three modernist poems (by Vachel Lindsay, Wallace Stevens, and T.S. Eliot), and concludes that it is "meant in these works to stand simultaneously for some vibrant, aggressive threat and a promise which thrills and jolts."[13] Following DuPlessis's remarks, Baraka's bombardment of multiple "whos" may in fact serve to summon up the specter of the "Black Boogeyman" spooking white America with its sinister yet titillating evil. Read in this way, the poem suggests that, in addition to the ideology of white supremacy, "America" was destroyed by irrational fear and paranoia, and continues to allow itself to be spooked – even by a poem, one might add, judging by the public outrage at "Somebody Blew Up America". To the extent that Baraka actually personifies the "boogeyman" when he delivers close to two hundred "hoo"-sounds in the performance of his poem, the poet may at the very least be accused of having played on white America's fear of blackness quite deliberately to drive his point home.

Contested Readings

Baraka recited the poem in various places in Africa, Europe, and the United States, and had the poem circulated on the Internet in the months following its completion. It was only in September 2002, however, that the poem acquired notoriety. What triggered the uproar was Baraka's recital of the poem at the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in Stanhope, New Jersey, where Baraka made his appearance (in the company of poets Robert Bly, Grace Paley, Robert Pinsky, Rita Dove, Li-Young Lee, and others) as the newly elected Poet Laureate of the state of New Jersey – an honorary position created in October 1999. The position had first been held for two years by New Jersey poet Gerald Stern, who was succeeded by Amiri Baraka in August 2002. This contextual framing of the poet and the poem at the Poetry Festival proved lethal when the poem was denounced as anti-Semitic by *The Jewish Standard*, a New Jersey newspaper, and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which immediately wrote to the governor of New Jersey, James E. McGreevey, requesting Baraka's removal from the post of poet laureate.[14] "It may be that as a poet, Mr. Baraka may say what he chooses, no matter how ugly, irresponsible or deceptive," the ADL wrote. "However, we don't believe that the residents of

New Jersey, nor their representatives, should have such venom spewed in their name."[15]

Under the pressure of a growing national scandal, which was covered by the major newspapers and television channels, Governor McGreevey saw no alternative but to demand that Baraka resign as poet laureate. When Baraka refused, and the governor found himself unable to legally fire the poet, new legislation was drafted to eliminate the position altogether. The new bill was introduced to the New Jersey Senate in October 2002, passed, and became effective on July 2, 2003.[16]

Specifically, "Somebody Blew Up America" was denounced for spreading what became known as the "Big Lie," the theory that posited Israeli foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks. The charge was based on only a few lines, which occurred in the following parts of the poem (italics added):

> Who know why the terrorists
> Learned to fly in Florida, San Diego
> *Who know why Five Israelis was filming the explosion*
> *And cracking they sides at the notion*
> …
> Who set the Reichstag Fire
> *Who knew the World Trade Center was gonna get bombed*
> *Who told 4000 Israeli workers at the Twin Towers*
> *To stay home that day*
> *Why did Sharon stay away?*
> …
> Who, Who, Who

In his lengthy defense against what he called the "dishonest, consciously distorted and insulting non-interpretation of [the poem] by the 'Anti-Defamation' League," Baraka explained how, in writing the lines, he had done no more than repeat "information" that already circulated in the public domain.[17] Drawing on readily available material in such newspapers as *The Star Ledger* and *The New York Times*, as well as Israeli newspapers and the Internet, Baraka reproduced the many uncertainties, questions, "facts" and rumors that were launched into a cultural climate dominated by fear, suspicion, anger, and conspiracy theories, which arose as part of the frantic attempt to identify the "somebody" who "blew up America." As Piotr Gwiazda points out: "Baraka's speculations about September 11 are certainly difficult to defend, but they take only a little further some of the thoughts many Americans struggled with in the days and weeks after the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks had been identified."[18] Reading the contested lines in this fashion is wholly in step with the poem's overall scrutiny of responses to and reporting on 9/11, and what this might suggest about America.

Of particular interest in the context of this essay, however, is not so much the accusations against Baraka's poem as the way in which art, or the language of art, was interpreted to fit the demands of the particular political and cultural climate that emerged. What characterizes the attack on the poem is the detractors' insistence that "Somebody Blew Up America" – its opening lines notwithstanding – is unambiguously a poem about the attacks of 9/11. In a political climate intolerant of ambiguity and consequently placing strong restraints on language use, poetry, too, is robbed of its particular freedoms. In demanding that the poem tell "the truth" about 9/11, the poem was reduced to a factual statement, on a par with the news (this despite the fact – irony of ironies! – that Governor McGreevey actually cited William Carlos Williams's line "it is difficult to get the news from poems" in the proclamation that named Baraka as poet laureate[19]). The repressive action against Baraka's poem, then, does not just threaten freedom of expression as guaranteed by the First Amendment, but even more so the freedom of artistic expression and aesthetic form. As if to underscore the very accuracy of Baraka's inquiry into the privilege of those who "do the saying," Baraka's detractors ensured that the poem would be treated as a 9/11 document, by reproducing only those lines that actually referred to the terrorist acts. With the removal of the poem's overall aesthetic framework – dependent, in this case, on African-American formal techniques such as signifying, participatory oratory, and rhythmical performance in which the poetic effect and meaning slowly but inexorably take shape – "Somebody Blew Up America" was effectively disarmed.

This stripping down of the poem, as if to its bare essentials, gave rise to some terrible ironies. The ADL, for instance, in focussing entirely upon how the poem might affect the public understanding of 9/11, ignored the poem's many references to America's racist treatment of American Indians, African-Americans, and other minorities as well as its indictment of white supremacists like David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan. They further dismissed the poem in their letter to Governor McGreevey as "anti-American", and as an expression of support for the terrorists responsible for 9/11: "We know that you as Governor of the State of New Jersey do not agree nor support the anti-American hostility, tied to the terrorist attack on America, expressed in the poem."[20]

The dismissal of "Somebody Blew up America" as "anti-American" and, consequently, in support of terrorist activity, is a pertinent example of the immense snowballing effect of the terrorist attacks as political America transformed itself into an increasingly Manichean state. As Gwiazda bitterly observes:

> As a result of what the Bush administration calls "the War on Terrorism," we currently live in a country in which voicing intelligent criticism of our leaders can be seen as a subversive activity. With the United States supposedly engaged in the primal struggle between Good and Evil, even questioning that

convenient, self-serving binary puts one at risk of being viewed an enemy to "the American way of life."[21]

Speaking of America's post-9/11 cultural climate, Deborah Jacobs, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Jersey, warned that the trauma inflicted by the terrorist attacks of 2001 had exactly this blinding effect: "We can't continue to use our pain and fear to justify our disregard for freedom, justice and equality. When we allow for the disintegration of our core democratic beliefs, then we're really giving in to the terrorists."[22] Outraged at what the ACLU considered a violation of Baraka's First Amendment rights, Jacobs demanded, in near-Barakian spirit: "Who are our government officials to decide which ideas we will or won't hear? Who are they to deprive New Jerseyans of opportunities for dialogue and growth?"[23]

Divisions in Unity: "Raising the Flag at Ground Zero"

Another post-9/11 controversy lays bare a similar pull toward the removal of "minority" presence and perspective in the construction of the crucial American experience of 9/11. This controversy, which took place in January 2002, concerned the memorial statue that was proposed by the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) as a tribute to the 343 firefighters who died during the attacks on the World Trade Center. The bronze statue was to be based on the famous photograph "Raising the Flag at Ground Zero" by photojournalist Thomas Franklin. Franklin's photograph resonated strongly with the Joe Rosenthal photograph which inspired the much-praised Iwo Jima memorial, and instantly acquired iconic status. "Raising the flag at Ground Zero" shows three FDNY firefighters attempting to raise the American Flag while standing on a heap of World Trade Center rubble. Unlike Rosenthal, Franklin did not have his subjects pose for the photograph. He recalled the moment as follows:

> I would say I was 150 yards away when I saw the firefighters raising the flag. They were standing on a structure about 20 feet above the ground. This was a long lens picture: there was about 100 yards between the foreground and background, and the long lens would capture the enormity of the rubble behind them. ... As soon as I shot it, I realized the similarity to the famous image of the Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima. This was an important shot. It told more than just death and destruction. It said something to me about the strength of the American people and of these firemen having to battle the unimaginable.[24]

Franklin's photograph was reproduced tens of thousands of times and also appeared on the "Heroes 2001" stamp that was issued by the US Postal Service as

part of the six-month commemoration of 9/11 in March 2002.[25] While the use of the Franklin photograph as the basis for a memorial sculpture was applauded because of the historical parallel to the Iwo Jima memorial, the actual design of the proposed sculpture caused an uproar. The controversy was aroused by the three Caucasian firefighters depicted in the photograph having been replaced by one white, one black, and one Hispanic figure. Instantly, the statue was dismissed by many as "political correctness run amok" and "an attempt to rewrite history."[26] Under pressure of the spreading controversy, the project was abandoned, and the prototype of the sculpture was destroyed.[27]

While the charges of political correctness and revisionism may have been countered by the argument that, after all, 2.7 percent of the NYFD workforce were indeed black and 3.2 Hispanic,[28] this argument would not just be too slight but also largely beside the point. At stake here is less the representation of the NYFD than the representation of American society as a whole. Bridging the gap between the literal and local reading of the photograph on the one hand, and the metaphorical and ideological purpose of a memorial on the other, however, proved a bridge too far. The vision of unity out of diversity that the statue attempted to project was lost on many. Sticking to a literalist reading, many were in fact offended by what they saw as the removal of two of the three firefighters, by popular analogy, it would seem, to the argument that affirmative action effectively takes away jobs, houses, and opportunities from whites. As one respondent wrote in protest:

> Where have we come as a nation that this quest for political correctness has led us to believe that it is unacceptable for three white firemen to be shown as white? Where have we come that we will put reality under the knife lest the simple conveyance of that innocuous reality offend some? And those who would be offended by reality, how can they not see that a large segment of society is greatly insulted and offended by the removal of the two white firefighters? Is it not permissible to ask them to practice a little sensitivity and acceptance of their own?[29]

Particularity, however, was exactly what the statue had tried to avoid. Fire Department spokesman Frank Gribbon explained the proposed alteration of the photograph as follows: "Given that those who died were of all races and all ethnicities, and that the statue was to be symbolic of those sacrifices, ultimately a decision was made to honor no one in particular, but everyone who made the supreme sacrifice."[30] Expectedly, this statement was countered with many sarcastic rejoinders, such as the following: "Having one black, one white and one Hispanic man is a good start, but not enough. I know FDNY obeys the Americans With Disabilities Act, so the statue should include persons in wheelchairs from each ethnic group."[31]

The rejection of the memorial sculpture as "political correctness run amok" resonates with the suggestion made by Amy Kaplan and others that "the war on terror, some would like to believe, has supplanted the so-called culture wars."[32] Indeed, on the numerous websites that discuss the controversy, statements such as the following can easily be found: "Sadly, when it comes to the raging priority of advancing the multiculturalist agenda, nothing is sacred – not even a hallowed memorial to our national heroes and victims. At a time when we ought to be thinking of our unity and common cause as Americans, we are forced to focus on our differences."[33] The insignificance of race to the unity of America is evoked in a large number of responses. Many, in denouncing the statue, explicitly state that America should be moving toward a "color-blind society"[34] and urge America to adopt a radical postethnic perspective, in which the significance and social relevance of race are completely annulled – this to prevent what Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has popularly termed the "disuniting of America." The following is a telling example of such a response: "There are no African Americans. There are no Irish Americans. There are no Asian Americans. We are Americans, period. ONE NATION, ONE LANGUAGE, ONE FLAG. That is what America is about, not catering to each little diverse group, for it breeds resentment and division."[35]

In their discussion of multiculturalism in the 1990s, in a chapter aptly entitled "Multiculturalism's Unfinished Business," Christopher Newfield and Avery F. Gordon analyze the backlash against affirmative action (and with that, political correctness, which is typically attacked for largely the same reasons). They position the backlash in relation to the antiessentialism advanced by theorists of multiculturalism in recent decades, and especially the idea that "race" is not a fixed category, but a complex social and historical construct, and hence a variable. The theory itself is promising. As Newfield and Gordon point out: "Some have argued that once we understand the multiple and sometimes contradictory and indeterminate sources of racial identity, we can no longer use race as an index of disadvantage."[36] This argument, however, is vulnerable to misinterpretation and abuse and may result in "premature claim[s] of the declining significance of race." The authors believe, therefore, that affirmative action will prove to be the "crucial test of antiessentialist race consciousness."[37] The successes of affirmative action will depend on the "renewed explanation" of the seemingly paradoxical relationship between antiessentialism and the social and political reality of racially based identities. If properly understood, Newfield and Gordon argue, antiessentialist perceptions of racial identity "make it *easier* to show that white-majority institutions are white rather than neutral."[38] The Franklin monument illustrates the need for such explanations: the arguments that rendered race consciousness irrelevant and meaningless to the situation at hand – even though this involved the creation of an American monument to an American experience – hinged on the assumption that the white presence in the experience of 9/11 was neutral.

Both "Somebody Blew up America" and the contested firefighters' memorial – each in their own way – reveal that the notion of "America," too, was immediately reconstructed as people sought to respond to the horrific and overwhelming attacks. It is now becoming increasingly apparent that the proclamations of American unity in fact only masked, or even repressed, America's diversity and dividedness. With new insights into the processes of exclusion and inclusion, both historical and contemporary, and the role of race, ethnicity, and religion as well as gender and sexuality, America may move beyond the vast trauma inflicted by the terrorist acts of 9/11 – not just upon the individuals directly involved in the attacks, but upon the very definition of the nation itself.

Notes

1. See "Card: 'America is under attack', Former White House Chief of Staff Andy Card talks about informing his boss of the attacks (September 11)," CNN, http://www.cnn.com/search.
2. Karen Alkalay-Gut, "The Poetry of September 11: The Testimonial Imperative," *Poetics Today* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 258.
3. Ibid., 265.
4. Ibid., 268.
5. Piotr Gwiazda, "The Aesthetics of Politics/The Politics of Aesthetics: Amiri Baraka's 'Somebody Blew Up America,'" *Contemporary Literature* 45, no. 3 (October 2004): 464.
6. Amiri Baraka, "The ADL Smear Campaign Against Me. I Will Not Resign, I Will Not Apologize," *CounterPunch*, 7 October 2002, http://www.counterpunch.org/baraka1007.html.
7. Amy Kaplan, "Violent Belongings and the Question of Empire Today," Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 17 October 2003, *American Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2004): 8. See also Amy Kaplan, "Homeland Insecurities: Reflections on Language and Space," *Radical History Review* 85 (2003): 82-93.
8. Kaplan, "Violent Belongings," 8.
9. Ibid.
10. Kaplan, "Violent Belongings," 7.
11. Amiri Baraka, "Somebody Blew Up America," October 2001, http://www.amiribaraka.com/blew.html.
12. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "'HOO, HOO, HOO': Some Episodes in the Construction of Modern Whiteness," *American Literature* 67, no. 4 (December 1995): 670.
13. Ibid., 668.
14. "ADL Writes to the Governor of New Jersey," Anti-Defamation League, 27 September 2002, http://www.adl.org/anti_semitism/ltr_mcgreevy.asp.
15. "ADL Writes to the Governor of New Jersey."
16. The Library of Congress, "U.S. State Poets Laureate, New Jersey," http://www.loc.gov/rr/main/poets/newjersey.html.
17. Baraka, "ADL Smear Campaign."
18. Gwiazda, "Aesthetics of Politics," 478.

19. Marc Santora, "Poet Laureate Returns Critics' Rage," *New York Times,* 18 October 2002: B3.

20. "ADL Writes to the Governor of New Jersey."

21. Gwiazda, "Aesthetics of Politics," 468.

22. Cited in Suzy Hansen, "Baraka Stands by His Words," *Salon.com*, 17 October 2002, http://dir.salon.com/story/books/feature/2002/10/17/baraka/index.html.

23. Deborah Jacobs, "Government Attempts to Limit Speech," ACLU-NJ website, http://www.aclu-nj.org/issues/freespeechexpression/governmentattemptstolimits.htm.

24. Thomas E. Franklin, cited in Victoria Mielke, "Icons: The Photo Seen Round the World," http://septterror.tripod.com/firephoto.html.

25. Ibid.

26. Stephanie Gaskell, "Flag-Raising Statue Draws Criticism," NYC Rugger Firemen, 11 January 2002, http://wesclark.com/rrr/nyc_firemen.html.

27. Correspondence Ivan Schwartz, Founder and Director of StudioEIS to author, 25 October 2008.

28. See Stephanie Gaskell, "Fighting Terror – New Threat – American Symbol: Flag-Raising Statue Stirs Debate over Authenticity," *Boston Globe*, 12 January 2002:A12.

29. Evan Coyne Maloney, "My, How Far We've Come," *Brain Terminal*, 18 January 2002, http://brain-terminal.com/posts/2002/01/18/my-how-far-weve-come.

30. Frank Gribbon, cited in Mielke, "Icons."

31. Walter Williams, "Politically Correct Art," *Capitalist Magazine*, 2 February 2002, http://www.capmag.com/article.asp?ID=1388

32. Kaplan, "Violent Belongings," 8.

33. David Limbaugh, "'Racializing' Sept. 11," *Jewish World Review*, 16 January 2002, http://www.jewishworldreview.com/david/limbaugh011602.asp.

34. Maloney, "My, How Far We've Come."

35. Carl J. Toti, "Tampering with Reality," 5 January 2002, http://www.targetofopportunity.com/tampering.htm.

36. Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield, eds, *Mapping Multiculturalism,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1996), 104-105.

37. Gordon and Newfield, *Mapping Multiculturalism*, 104.

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"This Godless Democracy": Terrorism, Multiculturalism, and American Self-Criticism in John Updike

John-Paul Colgan

> Even though I knew the view [from the top of the Empire State Building] was incredibly beautiful, my brain started misbehaving, and the whole time I was imagining a plane coming at the building, just below us. I didn't want to, but I couldn't stop. I imagined the last second, when I would see the pilot's face, who would be a terrorist. I imagined us looking each other in the eyes when the nose of the plane was one millimeter from the building.
> I hate you, my eyes would tell him.
> I hate you, his eyes would tell me.
> – Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

The description of America as "this godless democracy" comes from John Updike's short story, "Varieties of Religious Experience," first published in *The Atlantic* in November 2002. One of the first works of fiction by an established American writer to attempt a representation of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the story takes the form of a series of brief episodes, each providing different perspectives on 9/11. It features, for example, a section focusing on an office worker trapped in one of the World Trade Center towers, one describing the crisis of faith experienced by another man who watches from a rooftop in Brooklyn as the towers collapse, and one depicting an elderly woman caught up in the hijacking and passenger mutiny on board United Airlines Flight 93.

Multicultural Encounters

Most interestingly, Updike devotes a long section of the story to an account of a meeting between Mohamed Atta, the Egyptian engineer believed to have been the ringleader of the 9/11 hijackers, and Nawaf al-Hazmi, one of the young Saudi men involved in the plot. This meeting takes place in a Florida strip club a week before the attacks. Typical of Updike's work, his account of the meeting makes extensive and highly instructive use of free indirect discourse in which the characters' senti-

ments – in this case those of Mohamed Atta – are blended with those of a more conventional third-person narrator. The strip club is described as "a dim, unholy place" whose staff and patrons are redolent of "soured American opportunities" and which serves food that resembles "garbage not fit for a street dog."[1] Because he has been living in America for only a short period, the food, we are told, tastes particularly "poisonous" to Atta's young companion. Nevertheless, Atta is clear about how their presence at such a venue relates to their mission. He thinks: "Their instructions were to blend in, and getting drunk was surely a way of merging with America, this unclean society disfigured by an appalling laxity of laws and an electronic delirium of supposed opportunities and pleasures." Later, when the time comes to pay the bill, Atta examines the presidential portraits that adorn the currency in his wallet and thinks that he is gazing upon "the dead heroes of this godless democracy."

An Egyptian man, reflecting on issues of cultural assimilation in contemporary America, as he drinks Scotch and later boasts to the bartender of being a pilot for American Airlines; Updike's imagining of an American multicultural encounter that is "pre-9/11" – definitively so to the extent that it actively enables the events of 9/11 – is arresting to say the least. In this version of multiculturalism, Mohamed Atta and the other hijackers achieve their goal of superficial assimilation into America by imitating what they regard as the very worst characteristics of their host society. Their indulgence in drunkenness, unclean food and an ultimately joyless pursuit of pleasure grants them ostensible entry to a particularly squalid version of the American melting pot, and this – aided by what they identify as an inherent weakness in America's laws – allows them to blend and plot and eventually to strike at the heart of this same society. In other words, the idea of a terrorist "sleeper cell" here becomes a dystopian product of multicultural contact at its most extreme. Atta's resolve is strengthened by his exposure to the decadence of the strip club, as he idly compares one of the dancers to a figure in an Egyptian wall painting, reflects on his contempt for the "imitation Western goods" accumulated by his parents in Cairo, and ponders the significance of several key verses from the Qu'ran – at the same time as it works to destroy the promise of multicultural harmony.

What is even more surprising about this depiction of Muslim rage and disgust on the eve of 9/11 is that it comes from a writer not normally noted either for his treatment of multicultural issues in contemporary America or for giving voice to violently anti-American views. A critical monograph from 2000 describes Updike as an author who "mainly stayed home, thinking it his primary task to give us reports ... on American manners," and this focus on a largely white, middle-class milieu is conventionally regarded as Updike's hallmark.[2] In his 1989 memoir, *Self-Consciousness*, he stated that, "[i]n politics ... my instinct [has] been merely to stay out of harm's way."[3] There appears, however, to be very little of this caution in evidence in his decision to depict the events leading up to 9/11 by imagining Mo-

hamed Atta's reaction to American excess. In fact, Updike's decision to grant a voice to Atta represents a significant departure from the reciprocal "I hate you" imagined by Jonathan Safran Foer's young protagonist, Oskar Schell, in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005). In its failure to move beyond a deadlock of mute enmity, Oskar's articulation of terrorist fury is actually an acknowledgement of inarticulation – of an inability or unwillingness to voice the thoughts of the suicide pilot – whereas Updike's narrative of 9/11 presumes an ability to grant expression to the fury of Mohamed Atta and the other hijackers. In this way, Updike pre-empts Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007), which includes three short passages imagining Atta's emotional and religious journey from Hamburg to the moment of impact of American Airlines Flight 11 as a quest "to fight against the need to be normal," and also Martin Amis's short story, "The Last Days of Muhammad Atta" (2006), whose protagonist is driven by an indiscriminate and obsessive hatred – referred to as "the pan-anathema" – and seeks relief in his foreknowledge of "the war-cycles that would flow" from his actions.[4]

Attempting, in 1999, to account for the frequency with which he is asked to write and speak on national issues, Updike suggested, "It may be that among living American authors, I take an anomalously positive or at least hopeful view of our Republic's progress."[5] He elsewhere describes this attitude toward America as "unduly patriotic" – an instructive phrase that proclaims loyalty whilst simultaneously appearing to cast doubt on the object of that loyalty.[6] More recently, when pressed by Ian McEwan, during a 2004 interview, for a response to the photographs of prisoner abuse which had just emerged from Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, Updike sidestepped the issue by once again referring to his sanguine attitude toward America as a curious anomaly. "I have," he noted, "an inappropriate streak of defending the US."[7]

How this habitual defense of America comes to coexist in Updike's writing with the articulation of strains of anti-American anger – as typified by the thoughts of Mohamed Atta as he sits "among the infidels" – is one of the issues this essay will explore. More specifically, it will examine how Updike's depiction of anti-American thought – often, but not always, accompanied by terrorism or the threat of terrorism – relates to his construction of a self-critical national identity, and how both of these issues relate to the question of multiculturalism in contemporary America. In particular, what follows will gesture toward some of the ways in which multiculturalism frequently acts in Updike's work as a lens, through which he is able to examine America and its position in a wider global context. Rather than preoccupying himself with issues of cultural identity politics or exploring alternative models of assimilation – the fictional terrain of, for example, Philip Roth, Amy Tan and Sandra Cisneros – it will be argued that Updike's primary interest in multiculturalism is in its ability to offer him a perspective of critique, a "fresh pair of eyes" through which to examine present-day America, and in particular the question of whether America has succeeded in living up to

the ideals that lured those of other cultures to its shores in the first place. After outlining Updike's view on the role of national self-criticism in American writing, the development of this strand in his own fiction will be traced, demonstrating how characters from outside mainstream American culture begin to act in Updike's work as America's most vociferous critics. The focus will then shift to his 2006 novel *Terrorist*, analyzing how its depiction of a young Arab-American drawn into a terrorist plot relates to issues of multiculturalism and American self-criticism.

The Declension of Patriotism

In a 1990 interview, Updike recalled the distress he had felt in the late 1960s at what he perceived to be the "American self-hatred" at the heart of the domestic anti-Vietnam War movement. He accounts for this distress in *Self-Consciousness*, where he states, "I, whose stock in trade as an American author included an intuition into the mass consciousness and an identification with our national fortunes, thought it sad that our patriotic myth of invincible virtue was crashing, and shocking that so many Americans were gleeful at the crash."[8] Somewhat curiously, this reference in the interview to how out-of-step and alarmed Updike felt during what is now regarded as the quintessential era of American protest was followed by a brief digression on American self-criticism and its role in fiction among American writers. Updike noted that:

> We were founded as a Utopia, and it's always in our minds that we're falling short of being a Utopia. This is one of the things that makes American self-criticism so savage and so relentless. It controls the tone of American fiction to a degree. We're extra hard on ourselves, but this feeling that we should be better gives a kind of point and bite to American fiction.[9]

In the context of Updike's substantial *oeuvre* – the result of what is now over half a century of prolific literary production – this idea of a "savage and relentless" critique of America having a salutary effect on the nation's literary efforts grabs the attention largely because it seems, on the surface at least, to be at odds with the tone of much of Updike's own writing. This tone, as has been demonstrated, Updike himself regards as "optimistic," "hopeful," and "unduly patriotic." In fact, in a fiercely critical review of Updike's 1996 family saga, *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, Gore Vidal lampooned this patriotic reflex, stating that "[i]n the presence of authority, Updike is like a bobby-soxer at New York's Paramount Theater when the young Frank Sinatra was on view."[10] Even if this caricature is toned down – and it is worth noting that Updike once stated that he never looks at a blue mailbox "without a spark of warmth and wonder and gratitude that this intricate ... service is maintained for my benefit" – it is clear that an instinct to maintain faith

in a nation beset by criticism from within and without recurs throughout Updike's writing.[11] He summed this up most clearly in lines from "Minority Report," a poem from the late 1960s, which read: "Don't read your reviews / A*M*E*R*I*-C*A: / You are the only land" – a passage that once again gestures toward the concept of "undue patriotism."[12]

Interestingly, however, Updike's own writing from the late 1960s onward increasingly becomes a vehicle for these negative reviews, as the inherently nostalgic idea of America as a nation in irreversible decline from the prosperity and vigor of the 1950s to an enervated and second-rate present begins to recur. As D. Quentin Miller points out, Updike's fiction becomes the site for a constant negotiation between what America was once hoped to be and what America actually is.[13] Perhaps most famously, this declensionist trajectory is explored in Updike's celebrated quartet of *Rabbit* novels, where American decline is represented synecdochically by the dwindling of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom from acclaimed high school athlete to a life mired in compromise – and, in fact, predicated on national diminution – as a salesman of Japanese cars.

Increasingly, throughout this period, what we might call a type of home-grown American self-criticism – for example, Rabbit's belief that America is "running out of gas," as he thinks at the start of *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), and "falling apart," as he thinks at the start of *Rabbit at Rest* (1990) – is joined in Updike's writing by a negative evaluation of present-day America, by characters from different national and cultural backgrounds; characters whose outsiders' perspectives appear to give them greater critical purchase on America.[14] We see this first in *Rabbit Redux* (1971), which begins with Rabbit's uneasy acknowledgement of America's increasingly visible ethnic diversity, as the extroverted behavior of black teenagers with whom he shares a bus journey causes him to think, "It's as if ... seeds of some tropical plant sneaked in by the birds were taking over the garden. His garden."[15] The novel later introduces a character named Skeeter who, influenced by the Black Power movement, reads aloud to Rabbit from Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois and refers to Rabbit's beloved nation as the "Benighted States of Amurri-ka," as well as a Greek-American character named Charlie Stavros, with whom Rabbit's wife has an affair, who calls Rabbit "paleface" and for whom the American flag sticker on Rabbit's car means "screw the blacks and send the CIA into Greece."[16] In other words, if – as was famously stated in a short story from 1972 – "America is a vast conspiracy to make you happy," it is as though Updike senses that characters from outside mainstream white American culture are in a better position to see through this conspiracy to its flaws and contradictions.[17]

For example, *The Coup* (1978) depicts Hakim Felix Ellelloû, the Islamic-Marxist demagogue and leader of the fictional African state of Kush, a character whose anti-American polemic is partially based on the experience gained during his college education in the US. Along with attacking America on religious grounds,

Elleloû also expresses disgust at its broader culture, referring to the land of his education as "that fountainhead of obscenity and glut."[18] Later in the novel, he rails against the decadence and superabundance enjoyed by the "capitalist infidel" thanks to its access to and plundering of what Elleloû refers to as "the priceless black blood of Kush."[19] Interestingly – for Updike is not normally regarded as a culturally or politically prescient novelist in the mould of Thomas Pynchon or Don DeLillo – *The Coup* also suggests that radical Islam represents a power and a threat capable of supplanting the rigid binary structures of the Cold War. "The prophet's vivid paradise," Elleloû states, "is our atomic bomb."[20]

The role of oil in a new global paradigm, in which America is not only increasingly dependent on events and nations beyond its borders but also increasingly subject to violent critique from these very nations, is further explored in *Rabbit is Rich*, the action of which begins with the oil shortage of 1979 and ends with America embroiled in the Iran Hostage Crisis. When, in response to a reference to the newly acquired wealth of Arab states, one of Rabbit's country club friends exclaims, "Jesus, those Arabs.... Wouldn't it be bliss just to nuke 'em all?", he is not only betraying a sense of impotent annoyance at his nation's precarious dependence, but is also revealing the shortcomings of America's continued reliance on a no-longer-tenable Cold War-style adversarial framework.[21] Later in the novel, the extent to which a newly assertive and violent critique of America is beginning to seep unbidden into the national consciousness is suggested by the following description of Rabbit's exposure to the dispiriting news from Tehran:

> Ma Springer's television set, when he listens, is still on – a rumbling, woofing, surging noise less like human voices than a noise Nature would make in the trees or along the ocean shore. She has become a fan of the ABC eleven-thirty special report on the hostages and every morning tells them the latest version of nothing happened. Khomeini and Carter both trapped by a pack of kids who need a shave and don't know shit. ... A muffled sound of chanting comes through the papered wall, Iranians outside the Embassy demonstrating for the benefit of the TV cameras. Rabbit's throat constricts in frustration.[22]

As the chanting from Tehran surges at the shores of Rabbit's consciousness and undermines his confidence in America's physical and ideological invulnerability, he is self-defensively forced to hear these dissenting voices as inhuman, ambient noise or at the very least to deny the protesters any legitimacy of thought or expression. Nevertheless, the constriction in Rabbit's throat – denying him a voice with which to counteract or respond to the protesters – illustrates the increasing impact of this opposing force.

By the time of *Rabbit at Rest* ten years later, this force has become central and irrefutable, violently breaching America's sense of itself as unassailable in the form of the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, an event which acts as

a controlling metaphor in the novel. The enemies, it would seem, are now firmly within the gates – a point that is made clear following the description of some mild vandalism at the condo complex in Florida where Rabbit and his wife now spend the winter months: "[They're] out there, the criminals, watching and waiting for the security guards to nod, so the fortress of sleeping retirees can be stormed."[23]

This sense of an enervated and vulnerable America also manifests itself in the form of a harsh lesson in late-Cold War economic realities at the hands of a visiting Japanese executive, who lectures Rabbit on American indiscipline and decline before removing from his family's car lot the Toyota franchise that has underpinned Rabbit's wealth. Prior to the depiction of Mohamed Atta's anti-American revulsion in "Varieties of Religious Experience," this passage in *Rabbit at Rest* represented the most concerted critique of contemporary America in Updike's writing since Ellelloû in *The Coup* and is, therefore, worth quoting at some length. The caricaturing of the Japanese accent in this passage can perhaps be attributed to Rabbit's clinging to World War II-era stereotypes of the Japanese as his frustration mounts. Mr. Shimada tells him:

> Arrays we in Japan admire America. As boy during Occupation, rooked way up to big GI soldiers, their happy easy-go ways. ... But in recent times big brother act rike rittle brother, always cry and comprain. ... Riving now five years in Carifornia, it disappoints me, the rack of disciprine in people of America. ... In United States, is fascinating for me, struggle between order and freedom. Everybody mention freedom, much rove and talk of freedom. ... In Carifornia, dog shit much surprise me. Everywhere, dog shit, dogs must have important freedom to shit everywhere. Dog freedom more important than crean grass and cement pavement.[24]

As with the positing of Mohamed Atta's fanatical distaste at "an unclean society disfigured by ... appalling laxity," this portrayal of America as disordered and oversold on freedom chimes with Rabbit's assertion earlier in the novel that America is "going down the tubes," as well as with Updike's observations, in an article from 1992, that "a once-sinewy nation, exultant in the resourcefulness that freedom brings, now seems bloated and zombified, pillaged and crumbling, all around us."[25] In other words, Updike is primarily interested in the perspective available to these characters as a result of their being rooted in another culture, whilst simultaneously being alert to the gap between American ideals and American reality. As a result, the criticism of America voiced by Atta and Shimada represents, to some extent at least, a sort of ventriloquism on the part of the author. Updike's reflections on American decline and lassitude are voiced by characters who, having arrived from the geographical "East" and having lived for a time in the United States, are a testament to American multiculturalism at the same time

as they recoil from American excess and profit – albeit in vastly different ways – from American indiscipline.

Scrutinizing Post-9/11 America

Speaking in 2004 of his plans to continue the analysis begun in 2002 with "Varieties of Religious Experience" by writing a full-length novel about post-9/11 America, Updike stated, "I'm not sure what shape [this] would take, since everything happens so violently and quickly, [but] I think if you're a writer you try to make something out of everything that happens."[26] The novel *Terrorist* (2006) represents the fruits of this attempt. Its depiction of a young Arab-American from the ominously named city of "New Prospect" who gets drawn into a plot to detonate a truckload of explosives under the Lincoln Tunnel, made it one of Updike's most talked-about novels in years. Reviewing the novel for *The Independent*, Justin Cartwright asserted, "This is a book that must be read by anyone interested in America, terrorism, and serious literature." Even Christopher Hitchens's excoriation of the novel in *The Atlantic* acknowledged Updike's attempts at keeping abreast of current events by turning his attention to radical Islam.[27]

In a short piece written in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Updike wrote of his amazement that "[d]etermined men who have transposed their own lives to a martyr's afterlife can still inflict an amount of destruction that defies belief."[28] This solemnity of interest, of course, stands in stark contrast to Rabbit's dismissal of the student protesters in Iran as "a pack of kids who need a shave and don't know shit." In fact, Updike's fascination with the power of terrorism underpinned by fanatical religious conviction means that of the full-length fictional responses to 9/11 written since the attacks – among them by Jay McInerney, Jonathan Safran Foer, Ian McEwan, Paul Auster, and Don DeLillo – his is the only one that attempts a sustained presentation of the perspective of a terrorist. As has previously been mentioned, both Martin Amis and Don DeLillo followed Updike in composing relatively brief portraits of 9/11 ringleader Mohamed Atta. In *Terrorist*, however, Updike's use of the novel form, as well as his creation of a protagonist who has himself lived through the events of 9/11, allows him to escape the confines of 9/11 as historical event and to examine the issue of terrorist motivation in greater depth.

Given Updike's uncertainty as to how to tackle the subject of post-9/11 America, it is perhaps no surprise – but is certainly highly instructive – that the novel once again sees him engaged in a ventriloquisation of American self-criticism, through characters granted a critical perspective on the nation by their immersion in multiculturalism. In the process, *Terrorist* comes very close to imagining al-Qaeda-style terrorism as a type of severe critique of an America that has lost its way. This also made it Updike's most controversial novel for many years, with several

reviewers commending him for writing an "emotionally daring" and "risky" novel with well-intentioned ambitions to "shock readers."[29]

From the novel's opening paragraph, we see that for Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy – the titular terrorist – the clamor, indiscipline, and materialism of contemporary America represents a threat to the self-denial at the heart of his Muslim faith:

> *Devils*, Ahmad thinks. *These devils seek to take away my God.* All day long, at Central High School, girls sway and sneer and expose their soft bodies and alluring hair. Their bare bellies, adorned with shining navel studs and low-down purple tattoos, ask, *What else is there to see?* Boys strut and loaf along and look dead-eyed, indicating with their edgy killer gestures and careless scornful laughs that this world is all there is – a noisy varnished hall lined with metal lockers and having at its end a blank wall desecrated by graffiti and roller-painted over so often it feels to be coming closer by millimeters. (T 3)[30]

Ahmad fears becoming trapped within this debased world and feels betrayed by what he regards as "an imperialist economic system rigged in favor of rich Christian infidels" (T 80). "The world is difficult," he thinks, "because devils are busy in it, confusing things and making the straight crooked" (T 11). Ahmad also attacks what he regards as the false promises of American consumer culture, telling his high school guidance counsellor Jack Levy that the nation "has no God [and] is obsessed with sex and luxury goods" (T 38), and reflecting elsewhere that "all America wants of its citizens ... is for us to buy – to spend money for foolish luxuries and thus to propel the economy forward" (T 72). The "us" here is crucial, particularly in terms of the portrayal of multiculturalism in the novel. The product of an Irish-American mother and an absent Egyptian father, Ahmad is repeatedly identified throughout the novel as an American. He is described as walking "with a native trace of the American lope" (T 281) and tells Levy that, despite his sense of not belonging, he is "not a foreigner" and has never been abroad (T 35).

Nevertheless, despite Levy's attempts to make Ahmad appreciate his position as a member of a "diverse and tolerant society" (T 38), Ahmad himself regards any celebration of multiculturalism as evidence of a disabling lack of conviction on America's part. He repeats the view of his local Yemeni imam that "a relativistic approach trivializes religion, implying that it doesn't matter much. You believe this, I believe that, we all get along – that's the American way" (T 38). Under the guidance of this imam – who, we are told, helped to "make him anew" at the local mosque (T 99) – Ahmad also scorns the idea of high school as a route to college, opting instead to train as a truck driver so as to avoid being exposed to the "corrupting influences" of American secularism (T 37). This decision leads to his becoming embroiled in the terrorist plot that drives the novel's action. Toward the end of the novel, prior to departing on his abortive suicide mission, Ahmad states that he is volunteering for martyrdom for two main reasons: firstly, out of

the "fullness of [his] faith" and secondly, "out of hatred for those who mock and ignore God" (T 270) – a combination of religious zeal and cultural distaste that echoes the Mohamed Atta of "Varieties" and *The Coup*'s Hakim Ellelloû.

Interestingly, the novel's other main character, high school guidance counselor Jack Levy, also echoes many of the main points of Ahmad's critique of America, with Robert Stone noting in his *New York Times* review that their views appear to converge at several points.[31] As a non-observant Jew, having an affair with Ahmad's mother, and married to a mercilessly depicted overweight gentile whose sister works for the Department of Homeland Security, Levy's character is made to carry an extraordinary amount of weight in the novel. Updike positions him in the novel as something of a multipurpose mouthpiece, on account of his first-hand experience of everything from post-9/11 security issues and the promise of multicultural harmony in America, to the emblematic nature of obesity and the uncertainties faced by high school students. For example, he regards America as "a coast-to-coast tarbaby where we are all stuck" in which "even our vaunted freedom is nothing much to be proud of, with the Commies out of the running" (T 27). He almost echoes Ahmad to the word in his diagnosis that in contemporary America, "everything is so relative, and all the economic forces are pushing pleasure and consumption and credit card debt" (T 205). In conversation with his wife, he even suggests a reason behind Ahmad's attraction to radical Islam, a reason that once again centers on the idea of American decline. He says:

> [Kids] like Ahmad need to have something they don't get from society any more. Society doesn't let them be innocent any more. The crazy Arabs are right – hedonism, nihilism, that's all we offer. ... We don't know what to do, we don't have the answers we used to; we just futz along, trying not to think. Nobody accepts responsibility, so the kids, some of the kids, take it on. (T 205-206)

For Levy, an America in which, at one point, "guidance was everywhere" (T 33) has betrayed its earlier promise of opportunity and protection for all – he thinks, "Too many losers, and the winners winning too big" (T 136) – and has left young people like Ahmad foundering in relativism and yearning for the certainty provided by fundamentalist religion.

Multiculturalism and American Self-Criticism

In a 2006 interview, Updike stated that the cultural and theological idea that lies at the heart of *Terrorist* – a religious young man who sees contemporary America as "a devil trying to take away his faith" – was initially intended to form the basis of a story about a young Christian seminarian. He decided to change the protagonist's religion and turned his attention to post-9/11 America because, he said, "I

thought I had something to say from the standpoint of a terrorist." Updike goes on: "I think I felt that I could understand the animosity and hatred which an Islamic believer would have for our system. Nobody's trying to see it from that point of view. I guess I have stuck my neck out in a number of ways, but that's what writers are for, maybe."[32] This, once again, is an extraordinarily arresting statement for an author such as John Updike to make, not only given his self-proclaimed inclination to defend America, but also given the political and cultural climate of post-9/11 America. As Judith Butler has written, "There is no relevant prehistory to the events of September 11, since to begin to tell the story a different way, to ask how things came to this, is already to complicate the question of agency which ... leads to a fear of moral equivocation."[33] Updike's undertaking in *Terrorist,* to imagine the "prehistory" of a planned sequel to 9/11, is in clear contravention of this unspoken prohibition. His exploration of the layers of animosity behind the unspoken "I hate you" of the suicide bomber is even more daring, when this figure is himself an American citizen and the product of a multicultural union. In fact, despite Jack Levy invoking a utopian version of the melting pot ideal as he attempts to dissuade Ahmed from carrying out his plan – "Hey, come on, we're all Americans here. That's the idea.... Irish-Americans, African-Americans, Jewish-Americans; there are even Arab-Americans" (T 301) – Updike's use of perspectives produced by multiculturalism as a means of imagining a terrorist critique of America gestures, perhaps inadvertently, toward the views of American critics of multiculturalism, such as Samuel Huntington and Lawrence Auster, who see it as a fundamentally anti-Western ideology.

This is not to suggest that Updike is himself hostile to multiculturalism. It is, however, apparent that, by constructing viewpoints that develop as a result of multicultural contact, Updike is able to comment critically on the nature of American progress to a degree that would not otherwise be possible. In his 1995 introduction to the collected Everyman edition of the *Rabbit* quartet, he describes the way in which the four novels began to function for him as "a kind of running report" on the changing face of America. He writes: "My impression is that the character of Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom was for me a way in – a ticket to the America all around me. What I saw through Rabbit's eyes was more worth telling than what I saw through my own.... He kept alive my native sense of wonder and hazard."[34] In *Terrorist,* as in "Varieties of Religious Experience," the final three *Rabbit* novels, and *The Coup,* Updike's "native sense of hazard" – in reality a combination of patriotism and nostalgia, expressed as a self-critical belief in America as a place of decline and unfulfilled potential – is further honed and explored through the lens of multiculturalism. With Ahmad's warning to Jack Levy that "the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom" (T 39), *Terrorist* can also be regarded as another of Updike's "running reports" on the state of his nation. It is one of the more remarkable features of Updike's writing in the second half of his career that he has opted to expand considerably upon the scrutinizing premise

of the *Rabbit* novels, and has frequently chosen to examine America through the eyes of characters that are implacably ranged in opposition to its values, characters for whom it represents little more than a "godless democracy." This makes *Terrorist* more than simply Updike's contribution to the ever-increasing list of post-9/11 novels, but rather part of an ongoing project of scrutiny and critique.

Notes

1. John Updike, "Varieties of Religious Experience," *The Atlantic*, November 2002, 93-96, 98-100, 102-104. All quotes are taken from *The Atlantic Online*, 19 May 2004,

2. William H. Pritchard, *Updike: America's Man of Letters* (South Royalton: Steerforth Press, 2000), 3.

3. Updike, "On Not Being a Dove," *Self-Consciousness: Memoirs* (London: Deutsch, 1989), 112.

4. Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (London: Picador, 2007), 83; Martin Amis, "The Last Days of Muhammad Atta," *The Second Plane: September 11, 2001-2007* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), 121, 122.

5. Updike, "Preface," *More Matter: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Knopf, 1999), xxii.

6. Updike, Introduction to *Rabbit Angstrom* (London: Everyman, 1995), xiv.

7. Updike, interview with Ian McEwan, *John Updike: American Storyteller*, Channel 4, London, 31 May 2004.

8. Updike, *Self-Consciousness*, 118.

9. Updike, interview with Melvyn Bragg, *South Bank Show*, ITV, London, 28 October 1990.

10. Gore Vidal, "Rabbit's Own Burrow," rev. of *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, by John Updike, *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 April 1996, 4.

11. Updike, "How Does the State Imagine?" *Odd Jobs: Essays and Criticism* (1991; London: Penguin, 1992), 120.

12. Updike, "Notes to a Poem (For *The New Statesman*)," *Picked-Up Pieces* (1975; London: Deutsch, 1976), 49.

13. D. Quentin Miller, *John Updike and the Cold War: Drawing the Iron Curtain* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 3.

14. Updike, *Rabbit is Rich* (1981; London: Penguin, 1982), 7; Updike *Rabbit at Rest* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1990), 6.

15. Updike, *Rabbit Redux* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1971), 21.

16. Ibid., 201, 205, 52, 47.

17. Updike, "How to Love America and Leave It at the Same Time," *The Early Stories, 1953-1975* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003), 413.

18. Updike, *The Coup* (1978; London: Penguin, 1979), 88, 9.

19. Ibid., 212.

20. Ibid., 99.

21. Updike, *Rich*, 159.

22. Ibid., 327-328.

23. Updike, *Rest*, 68.

24. Ibid., 323-326.

25. Ibid., 194; Updike, "The State of the Union, as of March 1992," *More Matter*, 19.

26. Updike, "Sunshine and Shadows," profile and interview with James Campbell, *Guardian*, Review, 22 May 2004, 23.

27. Justin Cartwright, "Is America Fit for Freedom?" review of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *Independent on Sunday*, 6 August 2006, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/terrorist-by-john-updike-410798.html; Christopher Hitchens, "No Way," review of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *The Atlantic Online*, June 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200606/updike.

28. Updike, "September 13 2001," *September 11, 2001: American Writers Respond*, ed. William Heyen (Silver Springs, MD: Etruscan Press, 2002), 381.

29. Gail Caldwell, "Gods & Monsters," rev. of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *Boston Globe*, 4 June 2006, http://www.boston.com/ae/books/articles/2006/06/04/gods_and_monsters/; Jem Poster, "Paradise Lost," review of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *Guardian*, 5 August 2006, http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/aug/05/shopping.fiction; Matt Thorne, "Late Licence to Thrill for an American Master," review of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *Independent*, 4 August 2006, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/terrorist-by-john-updike-410407.html.

30. References from *Terrorist* by John Updike (New York: Knopf, 2006) are in parenthesis following the quotations and next to the abbreviation "T."

31. Robert Stone, "Updike's Other America," review of *Terrorist* by John Updike, *New York Times*, 18 June 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/18/books/review/18stone.html.

32. Updike, "In *Terrorist*, a Cautious Novelist Takes on a New Fear," interview with Charles McGrath, *New York Times*, 31 May 2006, http://www.ntyimes.com/2006/05/31/books/31updi.html.

33. Judith Butler *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 6.

34. Updike, Intro to *Rabbit Angstrom*, ix.

Multiculturalism in American History Textbooks before and after 9/11

Rachel Hutchins-Viroux

History textbooks for public schools construct and transmit an official version of a nation's past. In the United States, in the absence of a national system of education, these books act as a sort of *de facto* national curriculum. Owing to the power they wield, both real and symbolic, they are highly contested terrain, with many pressure groups from both the right and left trying to influence their content. The teaching of history in the public schools was a primary battleground in the initial rounds of the "culture wars" in the 1980s and 1990s, and it remains at the center of a great many debates to define national identity, debates which have been further intensified in the wake of September 11, 2001. Textbooks embody a compromise. In order to sell, they must be acceptable to parents, teachers, administrators, and, in general, citizens of divergent political leanings. As such, they provide a meaningful representation of a consensual vision of American national identity.

This essay examines the textbooks that were adopted for use in primary education by the state of Texas in 1997 and 2003.[1] Texas constitutes a significant case study, as it exerts unequaled influence over the content of the books it purchases, which are then sold nationwide. The textbooks selected in 1997 were not only the last to be chosen in Texas before the events of September 11, 2001, they were also the first to be published after the conservative backlash against progressive multiculturalism and the initial rounds of the culture wars. These conflicts led to a new vision of American identity and the way in which American history, in both its academic and more popular forms, is written.

In the 1997 books, a conservative form of what we might call "civic multiculturalism" – or what David Hollinger has called "postethnic" national identity – dominated Texas-approved textbooks.[2] That is, the United States is presented as a multiethnic nation, with a core culture composed of shared values and ideals – the political ideals upon which the United States was founded. In these textbooks, the face of America had, indeed, become more diverse. That diversity was presented as a defining trait of American national identity, one of which students should be proud. Reflecting the widespread scholarly shift toward commitment to a more plural vision of the nation, certain elements of recent multiculturalist

historiography, as promoted by such mainstream academic bodies as the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association, had influenced the textbooks. This new approach led to the inclusion of previously ignored or neglected subjects, as we shall see, such as the suffering endured by African-American slaves or the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. However, these progressive tendencies were attenuated, as textbooks avoided the most difficult, polemical questions – those which raise doubts as to the equality of American society today, and those which tarnish the image of national heroes and myths. The books seemed to cater further to right-wing interest groups by emphasizing the traditional patriotic symbols of the nation.

In spite of these practices, the conservative Christian Right[3] groups which intervene in the processes of textbook production and selection, both in Texas and nationwide, felt at the time that textbooks put too much emphasis on discrimination and oppression of minority groups and women in American history, and they continued to protest. In the late 1990s, the already influential right gained an even greater foothold in the Texas political circles that determine what children learn. Throughout the decade, they had gained seats on the Texas State Board of Education, and in 2000, nine individual organizations of the conservative Christian Right banded together to pool their considerable financial and human resources to influence even further the choice and content of Texas textbooks. In addition, publishers continued to practise self-censorship in accordance with the wishes of the Right, with whom they increasingly collaborated behind closed doors in the early stages of textbook development.[4]

Since 9/11, the debate over the representation of American national identity has once again become increasingly urgent and strident. On paper, commentators and activists of different political persuasions seem to agree that children should learn about the rest of the world. However, in both rhetoric and practice they disagree as to what this learning should entail. Progressive multiculturalists, who generally advocate the teaching of multiple points of view, argue that children should be able to understand the attacks in the context of American foreign policy, thereby shedding light on why significant numbers of people oppose and revile the United States.[5] Many conservatives have attacked this position, equating understanding other viewpoints with agreement, indicating that those on the left justify terrorism. Likewise, progressive multiculturalist educators have stressed the need to establish the distinction between fundamentalist terrorists and peaceful Muslim Americans.[6] A number of prominent conservatives consider this approach largely irrelevant, believing that history should be presented in a way that emphasizes patriotism, unity, and the heroes of the more distant past, as well as those of 9/11.[7] More than ever, conservatives want textbooks to celebrate the superiority of American values and society. The only explanation they accept for the attacks of 2001 is that terrorists abhor the ideals of freedom for which America stands. For instance, Chester Finn, who, among other high-profile jobs in the

world of education, served in the US Department of Education under President Reagan, advocates "teaching patriotism, American style." He further explains his viewpoint thus:

> Respect for diversity is a necessary ingredient. But so is love of freedom – and the fact that it has enemies who loathe it. So is the fragility of a free and diverse society, and the central obligation of that society to defend itself against aggressors. So, too, is respect for heroes, including those who froze at Valley Forge, who stormed the beaches of Normandy, and who perished while trying to rescue terrorist victims in lower Manhattan. This more martial strand of patriotism makes some educators nervous. So does the sense of pride in America that accompanies it. They'd rather emphasize our failings and our differences.[8]

The various parties in the debates over history teaching seem to agree that schools should teach "respect for diversity," but in practice, this expression can be interpreted in very different ways. In the view of progressive multiculturalists, respecting diversity requires legitimating minority viewpoints by incorporating them into the official national narrative and teaching students that truth is (at least partially) subjective, and that they should always be aware of other viewpoints. For assimilationists, respecting diversity means recognizing that America is indeed made up of many different ethnic groups, but they prefer not to emphasize conflict, discrimination, and inequality, fearing that to do so would only breed antagonism. Therefore, they continue to advocate teaching a version of American history that omits a great part of minorities' experiences.

This essay will seek to evaluate how textbook publishers, in their quest for widespread public approval, negotiate these opposing sets of demands. In addition, we will examine whether the nature of the patriotism expressed in the books has changed since 9/11. Namely, does cultural diversity remain a keystone of American national pride and of the country's outlook on international affairs, as more liberal educators have recommended? Does a more militaristic version of patriotism emerge, with the doctrine of cultural tolerance becoming (even more) subservient to conservative positions? This essay aims to answer these questions through an analysis of the image of the American people as it is reflected in the textbooks' illustrations; an examination of the presentation of the subjects in American history which most sharply oppose progressive multiculturalists and conservatives, as well as a study of the messages and values conveyed by patriotic iconography and text; and finally, a look at the presentations of the events of September 11, 2001.

Overview: The Face of America

Though they are essentially history books, the social studies textbooks examined here all contain photographs of contemporary Americans, in addition to illustrations showing historical figures. As the charts below show, the percentages of different ethnic groups changed little between 1997 and 2003.[9]

Table 1 Ethnic Group Representations in Illustrations of Historic Events

	Whites only	Blacks only	Latinos only	Asians only	Native Americans	Inter-ethnic groups	Un-determined/mixed	Total
Averages 1997	244.5 (65.7%)	48.5 (13%)	6.25 (1.7%)	5.5 (1.5%)	28 (7.5%)	39.5 (10.6%)	n/a	372.3
Averages 2003	265.3 (64.9%)	37 (9.1%)	9 (2.2%)	6.7 (1.6%)	32 (7.8%)	52.3 (12.8%)	6.33 (1.5%)	408.7

Table 2 Ethnic Group Representations in Illustrations of Contemporary Americans*

	Whites only	Blacks only	Latinos only	Asians only	Native Americans	Inter-ethnic groups	Und-etermined/mixed	Total Images
Average percentage 1997	29.2%	10.8%	5.8%	5.5%	10.8%	31.1%	6.6%	51.5
Average percentage 2003	25.3%	8.7%	10.3%	1.3%	14.7%	25.3%	14.3%	64.3

*Excludes historic events, such as the events of 9/11.

The books clearly remain committed to presenting a multicultural image of America and its history, for which photographs of contemporary Americans are a useful device, as they permit the inclusion of members of ethnic groups that appear less frequently in historical accounts. However, despite multiculturalists' suggestions, most books do not depict Muslim Americans. The McGraw-Hill book is the only one to include such photographs, one of which appears in the context of an exercise teaching about Muslims in the United States. It is interesting to note that this textbook had by far the worst sales in Texas.[10] While its sensitivity to the image of Muslim Americans was surely not the only reason for its poor sales, neither was it much of a selling point. Clearly, the desire of more liberal educa-

tors to make sure students have a positive view of Muslims by portraying them as fully fledged members of the nation has not been widely adopted.

Another aspect of the books' illustrations also indicates the dominance of conservatism: the 2003 textbooks feature considerably fewer women. In 1997, 30.4 percent of illustrations of historical events included women and 85.3 percent included men. In 2003, only 22.1 percent of such illustrations included women, and 92.4 percent included men. The photographs of contemporary Americans, however, still reveal a strong desire to include women in the books, as about 72 percent of such images from both groups of books depict women. Thus, the sharp decrease in historical illustrations showing women appears to be the result not of a total rejection of multiculturalist aims, but of a return to a more conservative approach to presenting history. Women appear primarily in scenes featuring anonymous historical people.

In 1997, illustrations depicting anonymous people made up 50.4 percent of images of people from the past (an average of 187.5 out of 372.3 per book). In 2003, however, their number drops drastically – in both real and proportional terms – to account for only 38.7 percent of images of historical people (an average of 158 out of 408.7 per book). This change reflects the shift away from the elements of social history (favored by multiculturalist scholars and rejected by many conservatives) that had been integrated into the 1997 books, and a move toward a more military and political approach to American history, which conservatives generally prefer. Indeed, within the remaining images of anonymous historical people, a much greater number show battles and legislative bodies, thus further reducing the visibility of women. These changes represent a clear setback for multiculturalist ideals and approaches to history.

Controversial Subjects

As is the case with the textbook illustrations, the 2003 books demonstrate a clear shift toward conservative-approved approaches to delicate subjects, even though certain multiculturalist gains in the presentation of controversial subjects concerning interethnic relations seem to be definitive.

In accordance with multiculturalism and recent historiography, slavery remains a prominent subject in the books and is explicitly described as "cruel." However, in 2003 textbooks the emphasis shifts subtly away from the more disturbing aspects of slavery, focusing instead on slave culture, knowledge and skills, and rebellion. This approach is in keeping with multiculturalist historical research since the 1970s, showing slaves not as helpless victims, but as actors in their own destiny and in that of the United States. This trend had already begun in the 1997 textbooks, but the 2003 books concentrate even more on these aspects. In addition, the 2003 books expand the already significant coverage of the role of slaves and former slaves in fighting in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The books thus

exhibit a multicultural sensitivity to making African-Americans and slavery more visible in US history. However, in areas where multiculturalism and conservatism clash, the books adopt the more conservative views. Right-wing protestors in Texas have fought against what they saw as too much emphasis on oppression of minorities by whites in the 1997 books, especially concerning slavery, and they seem to have been successful. While books have not gone so far as to remove all references to the cruelty of the system of slavery in America, they have removed nearly all details, first-person accounts, and illustrations which made these observations more comprehensible and touching, and less abstract for their readers. In addition, despite multiculturalists' wishes for textbooks to clearly show the extent of slavery's reach in the United States,[11] textbook editors continue to omit the fact that the "Founding Fathers" owned slaves. This omission would seem to be a direct concession to conservatives, who wish to present a mythical, unblemished image of traditional national heroes.[12]

Multiculturalists have had somewhat more success concerning the topic of discrimination in general. It is now possible to discuss discrimination against blacks, Chinese, and Mexicans in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America openly and still receive the approval of conservative groups. However, the two top-selling (and conservative-approved) books of 2003 suggest that discrimination is a thing of the past. Government actions and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s are presented as having been successful in eradicating it. McGraw-Hill, on the other hand, ends its chapter on the Civil Rights Movement with this statement: "Discrimination still exists, but our country has come closer to the ideal of 'liberty and justice for all.' Leaders such as Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King's widow, have carried the legacy of the movement into the new millennium" (583).

This portrayal of the past would seem to represent the viewpoint of progressive proponents of civic multiculturalism, placing the ongoing fight against discrimination in the context of continual progress toward the nation's civic ideals. An assignment on Martin Luther King, Jr., however, is more closely aligned with the more radical approach of transformative pedagogy: "Think of a situation in our nation today that seems unfair. Write a paragraph that tells what Dr. King might have done to address the situation" (582). This question, with its emphatic use of the word "unfair" and general goal of making students aware of injustice and methods for fighting it, is the only example in all three 2003 books of an attempt to impart a sense of social justice, which is at the heart of progressive multiculturalism.

Conservatives have also beaten back multiculturalist gains regarding the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. While the main ideas of how to present the internment have not changed greatly, the details have been altered in subtle, but significant, ways. The books continue to show the internment as an error, based on the mistaken fears that Japanese-Americans might help Japan

against the US. The textbooks make it clear that these American citizens were loyal to America, a fact which they stress by mentioning the heroism of the Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Inclusion of the internment represents a victory for multiculturalists, as books in the 1970s and early 1980s did not necessarily discuss this event. However, the 2003 books present the topic in a way that is less likely to satisfy multiculturalists. The majority of these textbooks do not mention the US government's 1988 apology, and none mentions the reparations (symbolic as they were) paid to victims' families. This omission detracts from the seriousness of the injustice done to Japanese-Americans.

Similarly, the 1997 books stress the loss of civil liberties and property, as well as the unpleasant living conditions victims had to endure. The 2003 books omitted details stressing the injustice of the internment, including primary-source accounts of living conditions in the camps and families' emotional suffering. For instance, the 1997 McGraw-Hill textbook explains: "In 1942, the government made more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans leave their homes on the West Coast. Many of their rights were taken away, including freedom of speech and the right to vote. These Americans were also deprived of their homes, businesses, and property ..." (601). The 1997 Harcourt textbook states that the camps were "like prisons. Barbed wire fenced people in. Soldiers with guns guarded the camps to keep people from leaving" (555-556). No such descriptions appear, however, in the more recent textbooks. Students are therefore less likely to identify with the victims, to see the internment as a breach of legal rights and American ideals of freedom and equality, and are more likely to see it as an honest mistake made in a time of war.

This change is particularly significant, as many educators suggested drawing parallels between the internment of Japanese-Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the suspicions directed at Arab-Americans after the attacks of September 11, 2001.[13] Furthermore, the textbooks ignore completely multiculturalist demands that the internment be shown not only as the result of fears concerning national security, but as the continuation of years of discriminatory policies and attitudes toward Asian Americans. Only one book in 1997 made this connection clear, and none of the 2003 books makes any mention of discrimination. Once again, this approach represents a significant setback for multiculturalists, but not a complete reversal of earlier progress.

Similarly, the 2003 textbooks appear to incorporate a multiculturalist approach by occasionally drawing parallels between events in the United States and those abroad, which the 1997 books did not do. For instance, in their discussions of the American Revolution, all the 2003 books feature a mention of the French Revolution and an illustration depicting France. Likewise, the more recent books quote foreign leaders on topics with universal implications, such as the right to free speech. These additions – to textbooks whose mission is to teach American history – are significant, and clearly reflect a desire to help students conceptualize

history beyond national boundaries. However, the 2003 textbooks are less sensitive than their 1997 counterparts to foreign points of view regarding US foreign policy. Notably, certain 1997 books introduced the term "imperialism" to describe American expansionism at the end of the nineteenth century, showing students that these policies were sharply criticized by some American citizens, and discussing Hawaiian opposition to annexation by the United States. In the 2003 books, opposing viewpoints are silenced. Only Hawaii's last monarch, Queen Liliuokalani, is still mentioned as opposing annexation, but she now appears to have acted alone – one might suppose in order to maintain her power – rather than as the head of a legitimate protest movement.

Patriotic Iconography and National Values

As we have now seen, textbooks have adopted more conservative approaches to their telling of American history in general, largely moving away from the elements of social history which had gained a foothold in the 1997 textbooks, and shying away from emphasizing details which reflect negatively on the behavior of European Americans toward minorities. Not surprisingly, patriotic images and messages regarding national values in the textbooks also reflect a shift toward a more conservative stance.

Compared to older books, the 1997 textbooks contain many more patriotic symbols, notably US flags and the Statue of Liberty. This increase was the result of several factors, including improved publication quality. However, the augmentation seems, more significantly, to be the result of the culture wars. Conservatives protested that greater attention paid to conflict and discrimination in the United States' past was a sign of the editors' lack of patriotism, and would have a negative impact on students' feelings toward their country. They had legal grounds for these complaints, as the Texas Education Code (like many other such pieces of legislation in the United States) requires schools to teach patriotism.[14] It is hardly surprising that textbook editors responded by multiplying the number of patriotic images in their books. These symbols often appear alone, as simple demonstrations of patriotism, or serving to acquaint students with the object in question. They can also be associated with other events, objects, or people, thereby conferring upon them a patriotic significance. The flag, in particular, often appears alongside important moments in the nation's history. Notably, the American Revolution, events that led to advances in civil rights and liberties, and the expansion of the national borders and growing power abroad are all marked in this manner as examples of progress in the United States (whether military or toward civic ideals).

These traditional uses of the American flag already appeared in older textbooks, but there are many more examples of them in the books published in 1997. These recent books, however, were innovative in associating patriotic sym-

bols with images and texts celebrating American diversity, which is thereby presented as a characteristic trait of American culture and as a source of national pride. For instance, the Houghton Mifflin book, entitled *Build Our Nation*, features on its front cover a photograph of a multiethnic group of children set against the background of an American flag, and the book contains other similar images. The McGraw-Hill book also includes an abundance of images showing ethnically diverse groups of Americans associated with the US flag or the Statue of Liberty and a text proclaiming something along these lines: "Our country's people come from all over the world, yet we are united in our belief in freedom and equality for all" (6).

While all the 2003 books still feature specific sections highlighting American diversity, this subject no longer holds quite as prominent a role as in 1997. The 1997 books contained at least three illustrations celebrating diversity by associating it with a patriotic symbol. The 2003 books contain on average only one such image. More importantly, whereas these images constituted a plurality of illustrations featuring the American flag or the Statue of Liberty in 1997 books, in 2003 they are greatly overshadowed by the much more abundant images associating patriotic symbols with military exploits. Indeed, whereas the 1997 books contain on average eleven illustrations in which patriotic symbols play a key role, this number climbs to 27.7 in the 2003 books. The flag continues to be associated with defining moments in American history (including such multiculturalist landmarks as the Civil Rights movement or the Emancipation Proclamation, thus reasserting the notion that these events helped move the United States toward its egalitarian ideals), but a great many more of these moments are now military in nature. This is not to say that they would not meet with approval from multiculturalists.

Significantly, several of these illustrations feature African-American soldiers brandishing the American flag in different wars, thus reinforcing the image of African-Americans as patriots and full contributors to American history. However, the definition of patriotism seems to have changed. If in 1997 it was enough to embrace the American ideals of equality and tolerance, in 2003 military defense of the nation has become a significant part of what defines a good citizen. "Loyalty" has replaced "justice" and even "liberty" as the catchphrase for American unity. Scott Foresman ends its chapter on the diversity of the American people with the text of the Pledge of Allegiance and an explanation of how it reinforces unity. Similarly, Harcourt includes two photographs of multiethnic groups of children against the background of an American flag with their hands over their hearts, saying the Pledge of Allegiance, which is printed beside the photo. (Harcourt includes the text of the Pledge not once, but three times, each time accompanied by an American flag.) An excerpt from McGraw-Hill's 2003 edition is typical of the change. In a chapter entitled "The American People," this textbook

features a two-page spread of the Statue of Liberty juxtaposed with photos of diverse American families, and includes this text:

> The United States has been described as a nation of immigrants. In fact, most Americans have someone in their family background who was an immigrant. Over the years, immigrants from all over the world have made contributions to the United States. Their differences have brought a great deal of cultural diversity to our country. Diversity is variety.
>
> This diversity can be seen in the many religions, languages, values, and traditions that are found in our nation. Values are the beliefs that guide the way people live. One important value is patriotism, or love for and loyal support of one's country. (18)

These themes of patriotism and loyalty are further tied together in the textbooks' presentations of the events of September 11, 2001.

The Rightward Shift after 9/11

Two of the three 2003 books adhere perfectly to conservatives' wishes regarding the representation of the events of 9/11, emphasizing the heroism and patriotism of the American people, but not discussing the terrorists' reasons for the attacks (Harcourt gives no indication whatsoever as to who perpetrated the attacks). Scott Foresman (the top-selling book by a wide margin) vaguely presents the attacks as being "on the basic democratic values in which we all believe," which is in line with conservatives' view of terrorists as enemies of freedom. Instead of seeking to explain the attacks, this book focuses on the heroic actions of the New York City firefighters and completes the chapter with sheet music of the patriotic song "You're a Grand Old Flag," accompanied by a full-page photograph of a very large flag at the center of a parade. All three books feature the same photograph of firefighters raising an American flag over the ruins of the World Trade Center. While multiculturalists would certainly not object to this type of patriotic presentation, they might regret the lack of information explaining the attacks. McGraw-Hill (again, the most multiculturalist 2003 textbook, the only one to show Muslim Americans, and by far the poorest selling book in Texas) is the only one to offer a hint of an explanation of the reasons behind the attacks. The text refers to "a network of terrorists based in the Middle East who opposed American policies, culture, and influence" (601).

The fact that the McGraw-Hill textbook was adopted by Texas indicates that its slightly more multiculturalist tendencies are still within the norm of what the conservative-dominated State Board of Education is willing to accept. It is, however, far from radical. This textbook, with its move away from social history, its reduction of details showing the cruelty toward slaves and the injustice of the

internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War, and its pre-dominance of militaristic themes in its abundant patriotic images, is more similar to the other 2003 textbooks, with their decidedly conservative slant, than it is to the somewhat more liberal 1997 books.

It would be an overstatement to attribute this rightward shift entirely to the attacks of 9/11, as the Christian Right was mobilizing even before 2000 in ways that indicated it might gain strength, and publishers were already practising self-censorship as they sought to gain the approval of influential conservative groups. Whatever the cause, the 2003 textbooks adhered so closely to conservative wishes that it is clear that the right was ahead in the culture wars.

Nationalism is often exacerbated when the nation is perceived as being in danger, and these books are no exception. A perceived threat to national unity led to the abundance of patriotic symbols and rhetoric in the 1997 textbooks, and a more imminent threat has now led to a more conservative conception of a nation still proud of its diverse heritage, but primarily concerned with unity and loyalty. Nevertheless, while the more liberal goals of multiculturalism have suffered a significant setback, the movement has succeeded in changing Americans' collective consciousness. The face of America is resolutely multicultural. While the details may vary, once taboo subjects such as the cruelty of slavery or the unjustified internment of Japanese-Americans are now assured of their place in the history books.

Notes

1.   The textbooks analyzed are: James A. Banks, et al, *Our Nation* (New York: Macmillan McGraw-Hill, 2003); Banks, et al, *United States*. Adventures in Time and Place (New York: Macmillan McGraw-Hill, 1997); Sarah Bednarz, et al, *Build Our Nation*. We the People (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Michael J. Berson, et al, *Harcourt Horizons*. United States History (Orlando: Harcourt, 2003); Richard G. Boehm, et al, *America's Story*. Stories in Time (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1997); Candy Dawson Boyd, et al, *The United States*. Social Studies (Glenview: Scott Foresman, 2003); Juan R. Garcia, et al, *Our United States*. Social Studies (Parsippany: Silver Burdett Ginn, 1997).

2.   David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (1995; New York: Basic Books, 2000).

3.   These groups include the Texas-based Mel Gablers' Educational Research Analysts, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and the Eagle Forum.

4.   Nate Blakeslee, "McGraw-Hill Sees the Light," *The Texas Observer*, 30 April 1999, http://www.texasobserver.org/showArticle.asp?ArticleID=1051 (accessed 21 March 2005). An author of one of the books included in this study, who has requested to remain anonymous, has confirmed that the financial success which followed McGraw-Hill's secretive collaboration with representatives of the Christian Right in 1996 led other publishers to consider conservative viewpoints more closely. E-mail to the author, 21 March 2005.

5. "History and September 11," Special Issue, *Journal of American History* 89, no. 2 (September 2002); Alan Singer, "Now Is the Time to Teach Democracy," *OAH Newsletter* 30, no. 1 (February 2002), http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2002feb/singer.html (accessed 4 April 2006). Valerie Strauss, "Sept. 11 Prompts Lesson Review: Educators Rethink Multiculturalism," *The Washington Post*, 1 October 2001, B01, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ (accessed May 17, 2006).

6. "Aftermath: America's educators reflect on the impact of September 11," *NEA Today*, 1 November 2001, http://www.nea/org/neatoday/0111/cover.html?mode=print (accessed 28 March 2006).

7. Lynne Cheney, "Mrs. Cheney's Remarks at the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture," Office of Lynne Cheney, 5 October 2001, http://www.whitehouse.gov/mrscheney/news/20011005.html (accessed 4 April 2006); Chester Finn, "From Checker's Desk: Teaching Patriotism in a Time of Tragedy," *The Education Gadfly* 1, no.18 (21 September 2001), http://www.edexcellence.net/ (accessed 28 March 2006); Diane Ravitch, "Now is the Time to Teach Democracy," *Education Week*, 17 October 2001, http://www.brookings.edu/ (accessed 4 April 2006).

8. Finn, "From Checker's Desk: Patriotism Revisited," *The Education Gadfly* 1, no. 20 (4 October 2001), http://www.edexcellence.net/ (accessed 28 March 2006).

9. The apparent decrease in images of African-Americans is in fact largely balanced out by the increase in illustrations depicting interethnic groups, which often include African-Americans.

10. The 2003 textbooks each account for the following percentages of sales in Texas: McGraw-Hill: 6.9 percent; Harcourt: 34.6 percent; Scott Foresman: 58.5 percent. "Interim Statement of Textbook Charges by MLC," 23 May 2006, http://www.tea.state.tx.us/emat/sdinv_mlc.rtf (accessed 24 May 2006).

11. Jordan Ervin L., Jr. and Clifford T. Bennett, "George Washington: A Hero for American Students?" *Social Studies* 88, no. 4 (July/Augustus 1997): 154-156.

12. Mel and Norma Gabler and James C. Hefley, *What Are They Teaching Our Children?* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 47; 49; 54; Educational Research Analysts, *1997 Elementary Social Studies Information* (Longview, TX: Educational Research Analysts, 1997).

13. For example: Elaine Akagi, "A Time for Reason and Respect," *NEA Today*, 1 November 2001, http://www.nea/org/ (accessed 28 March 2006).

14. The Texas Education Code states: "A primary purpose of the public school curriculum is to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism and can function productively in a free enterprise society with appreciation for the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage." Texas Education Code §28.002 (h), 1995, http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/ed/ed002800.html#ed002.28.002 (accessed 20 December 2000).

Transatlantic Dialogues

A Kinder, Gentler Europe? Islam, Christianity, and the Divergent Multiculturalisms of the New West

Patrick Hyder Patterson

Multiculturalism is a many-splintered thing. With multiple, transitory, and contested meanings, the concept resists straightforward definition. In both its interpretation and its effects, it frustrates even as it seeks to pacify. To complicate matters, America's multiculturalism is not Europe's multiculturalism. The histories are not the same, the origins and intentions are not the same, the present practices are not the same, and the futures may not be the same, either. Like certain other great "isms" of the modern period, most notably "liberalism" and "nationalism," the concept has had a meaning for Americans very different from that commonly held by Europeans. Key distinctions have surfaced in the varying responses to the perceived "problems" that multiculturalism as a deliberate, interventionist, programmatic "ism" is intended to address concerns ranging from the delivery of more effective social services to the improved integration of immigrant and other minorities, to the management of multiple, sometimes competing identities and the cultivation of a sense of civic cohesion.

    All these differences have come into play powerfully and vividly in the encounter with Islam. After the events of September 11, 2001 – but also, critically, well before that date – European policymakers, policy advocates, and reformers have pursued a multiculturalist path that has veered away from the course taken in the United States.[1] The split proves especially noticeable when, as in the discussion that follows, the primary object of concern is not the often far-reaching visions of academics, progressive activists, and political theorists, but rather the more conventional conceptions that have won out at the level of official rhetoric, state practice, and common public discourse. Both Europe and the United States have seen the emergence of what might fairly be called "mainstream multiculturalisms" – accommodationist stances that, as middle courses, have frequently managed to frustrate multiple constituencies: insufficiently multiculturalist for the vanguard, too multiculturalist for many in the society at large. Yet these European and American mainstreams have led to remarkably different ends, and nowhere

has the divergence between the two multiculturalist tendencies been more apparent than in the reception of Islam and its followers.

To the extent that multiculturalism is liberally inflected, as the dominant versions are in varying degrees, certain Muslim interpretations of Islam promise to violate the express or implied multicultural contract. In turn, advocates of liberal pluralism find themselves wondering just how great a departure from liberal ideals their pluralist commitments require them to tolerate. The European and the American traditions have, in the main, resolved that question very differently.

For Europeans, pressures from American paradigms and the more concrete demands of US security policy as it confronts Muslims as potential terrorists, are perhaps inescapable. But given the prevailing assumptions of America's overweening political and cultural influence on Europe (and on practically every other part of the world), what seems most remarkable is that Europeans have continually seen themselves as called upon – and able – to articulate their own distinctive approaches, responses they understand to be decidedly *European* in both their functional dynamics and their historical-cultural provenance. Europeans borrow from the United States, and they often recognize it as a source of the multiculturalist impulse. In the main, however, they have thought that the best solutions come not from America, but rather from Europe's own traditions. And they continue to do so.

A careful demarcation of the American experience is therefore in order. This proves difficult, as the powerful emotional charge of 9/11 threatens to overwhelm practically any discussion of the meaning of Islam in the contemporary world, making it seem all of one piece. Yet 9/11 and its aftermath have thus far narrowed the gap between European and American multiculturalism only slightly. Notwithstanding a few reconsiderations and retreats, the logic and practice of conventional European multiculturalism remain largely intact.

The discussion that follows seeks to elucidate the fundamental distinctions between these two prevailing conceptions. There are country-specific variations, to be sure, and they are important. The purpose here is to offer a comparative, synthetic account, one that will underscore the importance of those basic distinctions for the elaboration and application of multiculturalist thought in the United States and Europe, especially as regards Islam. Despite the differences between the two paradigms, the American experience has been understood, for better or for worse, as a primary source of European experimentation with multiculturalism, and critics and supporters alike have doubted that the US model is fully valid for Europe. Concerning Islam specifically, the internal logic of America's version of multiculturalism has resulted in a hands-off approach to domestic Islam, and this classically American response has persisted even after 9/11. In Europe, however, the specifically religious dimension of the Muslim encounter has induced multiculturalists to be even more hands-on, and the European church-state regimes have offered policymakers additional reasons and avenues for intervention. Per-

haps paradoxically, the rough-and-tumble ideological market of American religion has, notwithstanding the vitriol poured on Islam there, continued to yield greater inter-confessional peace, at least thus far. It remains unclear which understanding of multiculturalism is most likely to create a more fair and decent society. But recent developments in the response to Islam may hold the potential to reconfigure the traditional European relationship between government and religion, though at present there is little real threat to the extant paradigm.

"Europe Is Not America": Group Rights, Immigrant Communities, and the Denial of the Melting Pot

America's mainstream multiculturalism has been one that celebrates the maintenance and expression of more superficial, "symbolic" indicia of differences that are, critically, not considered to separate members of minority cultural groups from the broader American culture.[2] For much of what really matters as regards full inclusion in and acceptance of the fundamental, nation-constituting political community – and thus, in other words, for much of what really matters as regards "American-ness" – the prevailing understandings of multiculturalism in the United States presuppose that race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, and even immigrant status will not pose obstacles to acceptance, either on the part of minority groups or on the part of the broader society. The American civic compact spills over directly into American multiculturalist principles and, as Nathan Glazer puts it, reaffirms the importance of

> one underlying rock-bottom belief, held broadly by Americans, regardless of their political orientation: it is better to be an American, and anyone who legitimately can should become an American citizen. That "anyone" used to be limited, in law or consciousness, to whites, or Protestants, or Christians. But it now does truly include anyone. ... Multiculturalism, whatever the degree of its acceptance in one or another formulation, and it is widely accepted in schools and colleges, does not mean the new Americans should be different from the others who preceded them in loyalty, in language, in commitment to the common Constitution and the laws.[3]

The mainstream view assumes, as Glazer recognizes, that "there will be no foreign enclaves in the United States, if the laws and common opinion can help it."[4] No matter what else it does, multiculturalism should not present any barrier to membership in the larger American society.

Along these lines, Will Kymlicka has identified "an emerging consensus, or at least a dominant paradigm" of American thought, one that insists that multiculturalism must be consonant with classically American individualism by recognizing the mutability of groups and group boundaries, with free and voluntary af-

filiation, and the possibility of overlapping, non-exclusive group identity.[5] In other words, America's version of multiculturalism proceeds from a basic understanding of the way identity works that sees nothing unnatural or contradictory in the assumption by immigrants of a new "American" identity and the simultaneous retention of their prior self-conceptions. This multiculturalism thus allows American-ness to be *chosen*, as indeed the American civic compact asserts it can and should be.

All the above is, admittedly, a crystallized summation of the multiculturalist principles that have emerged in the context of American ideology and mythic self-representation. Moreover, it represents an understanding of the American "nation" that revisionist scholars have argued to be of very recent origin.[6] In practice, of course, things have not been so pretty. Yet they have not been so messy and ugly that the generalization must be scrapped. Multiculturalism in the United States is, at its root, about finding ways to offer American-ness to everyone, or as some critics from the left would say, to impose it.

Europe's multiculturalism, by contrast, has been reluctant to insist on the assimilation of newcomers, and often has not offered much real prospect of it. European concepts and practices of multiculturalism have therefore mainly advanced the idea that respect for immigrants and their descendants should mean allowing them to import and maintain, within comparatively insular communities, their fundamental cultural and ethical norms, whether or not those native norms can be fully reconciled with those of the broader society. European multiculturalists thus tend to believe that justice means extending to immigrant communities the freedom to live *alongside* their neighbors rather than the opportunity to *join* the dominant community. This has perpetuated a relationship of hosts and guests – some more welcome, some less. Muslims are therefore often conceptualized not as citizens in the fullest sense, but as residents who are entitled in the name of multiculturalist respect to remain culturally alien, and who are not true participants in "European-ness". Much has been made in both academic and policy circles about the expansion of citizenship as a possible remedy for some of Europe's troubles with its immigrants, but even where reforms have eased the path to citizenship, the resultant legal equality has not guaranteed social integration. It is far from clear, for example, that those of Turkish descent who obtain citizenship under Germany's recently relaxed rules will, in fact, be considered "Germans." In Germany and elsewhere, the longstanding distinction between *Volk* (nation, especially in an ethnic sense) and *Staatsangehörigheit* (formal state citizenship) seems, for the moment at least, quite invulnerable.

In its preference for the recognition and maintenance of bounded social-cultural groups rather than the universalizing assimilation of citizenship, European multiculturalism adopts a stance that is, as it happens, familiar enough to Muslims accustomed to the structure of societies organized under Islamic principles, where historically the basic divisions have tended to be conceptualized as

religious rather than ethnic or "national." Philip Jenkins goes so far as to suggest that Europe's brand of multiculturalism may, in extreme formulations, verge on something not unlike the old *millet* system of administration in the Ottoman Empire, whereby minority religious communities such as the Jews, Armenian Christians, various Eastern Orthodox populations, and others were allowed substantial autonomy and legal authority with regard to their own intra-group affairs.[7] (The difference, of course, is that the Ottoman system presupposed a natural and divinely mandated Muslim primacy, whereas both European and American multiculturalism shy away from the suggestion of the superiority of any one group.)

The French case poses some special problems. The dominant ideologies of French governance, and indeed of French identity, display a great discomfort with any notion of distinct social groups that may be officially recognized and handled as such. Along these lines, Gérard Wormser argues that America's multiculturalist visions are less universalist and more relativist than the prevailing ideals of France. From the French perspective, a demand for strict adherence to the homogenizing public culture associated with *laïcité* functions as "the foundation of inter-community coexistence" and not as insistence on cultural particularism, as French practice would likely be criticized from the American point of view. "The difference," Wormser observes, "is that of the *indifference* that may be demanded in the USA in the name of constitutionally-guaranteed personal liberties of the First Amendment, whereas the French Revolutionary past leads the collectivity to demand 'signs of belonging'."[8]

The record of recent history, however, leads me to conclude that despite these very real differences between the French and American conceptualizations, when French institutions have implemented multiculturalism "on the ground" vis-à-vis Islam and its followers, its forms and methods have looked more like those followed in the rest of Europe than the indifferent attitude of the United States. The concept indeed has been put into practice in a variety of ways, notwithstanding the theoretical neutrality and group-blindness of the French state.

Elsewhere in Europe, the specifically *religious* basis for the encounter with Muslim immigrants amplifies the European multiculturalist tendency to respond in terms of group rights, stable communities, and persistent outsider identities. Similarly, the existence of a specifically religious dimension moves French society away from the more strict neutrality, or insensitivity if you will, shown toward social groups constituted on the basis of race and ethnicity. Religion gives the French state a familiar target and the prospect of reliable institutional brokers with whom deals can be made (though, given the diffuse structure of Muslim practice, that hope may prove illusory). The secularist imperatives of the Revolutionary tradition are, in this case, checked by étatist remnants of the Napoleonic urge to bureaucratize and control religious institutions. As Frank Peter observes, a perceived need to quell potential Muslim violence has led to a "drastic reorientation of French politics since the late 1980s toward a religious policy favoring the

incorporation of Islam into national structures and the creation of authority structures."[9] French policy has thus shifted toward a variety of institutional arrangements that evidence what Peter calls a "disregard for the principle of *laïcité*" so as to promote integration, build relationships with acceptable Muslim interlocutors, and bring Islamic groups under more effective surveillance and control.[10] At least as regards the specifically *religious* multiculturalism directed toward Islam, France, too, proves decidedly European.

It is critical to recognize just how far apart the prevailing European and American conceptions may be. At the beginning of the new millennium, German cultural traditionalists triggered a fierce controversy by advancing the idea that immigrants and their children should accept and practice a *Leitkultur*, a German-European "leading culture." In the words of one of its leading proponents, Friedrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union, the *Leitkultur* embodied "the rules of coexistence in Germany," rules rooted, he said, in the "generally applicable standards of our values" [*allgemein gültige Wertmaßstäbe*].[11] Merz's original defense of the concept centered on issues such as women's equality, constitutionally enshrined values such as democracy, human dignity, individual rights and freedoms, the universal mastery of the German language, and a market economy tempered by a social-welfare state. The term was widely taken to imply something more chauvinistic and sinister, and Merz himself warned that "we cannot and may not tolerate the emergence of parallel societies."[12] In the context of recent German history, the campaign for *Leitkultur* proved explosive.

Yet it is much the same sort of assimilationist practice that the American model has insisted on in the past and chiefly continues to insist on today. Anti-multiculturalist forces in the United States certainly have no qualms about doing so, pressing the case for the superiority of Western civilization and the preservation of a Western cultural canon. Even the prevailing notions of multiculturalism practised in the United States presuppose the acceptance of what is really a political-pluralist *Leitkultur*: mainstream American multiculturalism still shows a distinct unease with anything like a *Parallelgesellschaft*, and the minority cultures that it celebrates and seeks to preserve among various "hyphenated" citizens (Italian-Americans, Indian-Americans, Iranian-Americans, etc.) are clearly understood to remain the basis of only subordinate identities.

Each such culture-of-origin is, at most, expected to serve as what I would term (if an outsider may be permitted such an intervention into the German lexicon) a *Begleitkultur*: a necessarily limited expression of shared values, customs, experiences, and attitudes that will continue to accompany (*begleiten*) immigrant communities and their descendants as they integrate into, and accept the values of, the broader majority culture. America thus fairly comfortably and without great rancor embraces this practice of *Leitkultur* and *Begleitkultur*, though over time it has opted for a civic compact that derives American-ness from shared political values, and no longer clings to the constrictive Anglo-Protestant specificity that theorists

like Samuel Huntington and critics like Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., have asserted as one of the foundations of American culture and identity.[13]

Although the American understanding of multiculturalism is unusual and distinctive, it is linked in a causative, genealogical sense with the versions cultivated in European societies. Many analysts of the cultural and political debates in question, and indeed the participants themselves, corroborate this view. Among European skeptics of both the left and right, multiculturalism still carries the decidedly American taint of "political correctness," and many detect the origin of the concept in America's long and reluctant reckoning with the self-imposed demands of multiethnic and multiconfessional pluralism. British conservative commentator Melanie Phillips thus has placed a large part of the blame for what she diagnoses as Europe's multicultural malaise on specifically American notions of progressive pluralist politics, arguing that the United States has exported a "multicultural victim culture" that almost invariably treats the West as abusive and exploitative.[14] From a rather different political perspective, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant have likewise viewed multiculturalism as an obvious importation, and one with serious implications well beyond its country of origin:

> North American 'multiculturalism' [or more specifically, in the French original, simply *"le 'multiculturalisme' américain"*] is neither a concept nor a theory, nor a social or political movement – even though it claims to be all those things at the same time. It is a screen discourse, whose intellectual status is the product of a gigantic effect of national and international allodoxia, which deceives both those who are party to it and those who are not. It is also a North American [*américain*] discourse, even though it thinks of itself and presents itself as a universal discourse.[15]

The idea of multiculturalism, in this interpretation, seeks to mask characteristically American failures to ensure real economic and social equality through a form of what Bourdieu and Wacquant call "neoliberal Newspeak." Such allegations of American hypocrisy are echoed, albeit to quite different ends, in the complaints of Serbian sociologist Boris Jašović that America "is persisting in its call for the simulation of multiculturalism in Kosovo," a stance that Jašović has found particularly hard to swallow given what he believes to be the dominant role of "the white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant majority" in setting the terms of American multiculturalism.[16] European critics thus may fault US society for both a suffocating political correctness (often thought to be born of a guilty conscience from the history of race relations) and, at the same time, for a discreditable and discrediting mismatch between the vaunted American ideals and the lived American realities.

It Can't Happen Here: European Rejection of the American Multiculturalist Solution

If they are none too happy about the importation of multiculturalism to Europe, many critics appear just as convinced that it will not work – that the American experience will not translate to the European context because the fundamental social dynamics and demographic realities are just too different. It is in this vein, for example, that Danish author Poul Vinther Jensen, a contributor to the anti-immigration movement *Den Danske Forening* (The Danish Association), took issue with a piece in the prominent Christian newspaper *Kristeligt Dagblad* that had seemed to endorse Americans' welcoming attitudes toward their approximately 1800 religious groups, and had suggested that learning about, and from, other religions would be essential for understanding and coexistence in a globalizing world. Jensen would have none of it. Contrasting America's historical plurality with the European cultural milieu, he insisted that "Europe is not the USA, by any means." From this perspective, the distinctions between the two environments in which multiculturalism was deployed were so stark as to be decisive: "Here, until some three decades ago," Jensen argued, "we have had *a firmly anchored, unified culture* [*en forankret enhedskultur*] in which Christianity and the secular constitutions have served as the framework for Europe's free populations. It should be that way in the future." As for the supposed value of diversity and knowledge of other faiths, Jensen concluded that Islam was a "super-totalitarian religion" that "cannot teach the West anything whatsoever."[17]

Much the same rejection of the American model and the pro-diversity assumptions that underlie it appears in the work of Italy's (in)famous celebrity journalist Oriana Fallaci, who before her death in 2006 spent several years immersed in a high-profile cultural war against Muslim immigrants and their religion. Fallaci saw the culture, history, and values of Europe and her home country as indelibly stamped by the Christian tradition and the worldview it had produced. A relationship with Christianity, she maintained, therefore proved inescapable even for zealous atheists and secularists like herself. Even in a remarkably latitudinarian Italy, in a remarkably secularized Europe, *cristianità* inevitably remained at the heart of *identità*:

> You cannot fail to consider the religion called Christianity and the church called the Catholic Church ... *I am telling you that we Italians are not in the same situation as the Americans*, who are a mosaic of ethnic and religious groups, a hodgepodge of a thousand cultures, simultaneously open to every invasion and capable of repulsing it. I am telling you that, precisely because it has been defined by many centuries and is very precise, our cultural identity cannot withstand a migratory wave of people who, in one way or another, want to change our manner of living. Our values.[18]

Fallaci further insisted that because Italian society was so rooted in a specific and consistent cultural and religious tradition – because it was, in other words, so unlike fantastically splintered America – it was clear that Muslims and their values and culture could never fit:

> I am telling you that here among us there is no place for the muezzins, for the minarets, for the fake abstainers, for their fucking Middle Ages [il *loro fottuto Medioevo*], for their fucking chador. And if there were, I would not give it to them. Because it would be the equivalent of throwing into the trash Dante Alighieri, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, the Renaissance, the Risorgimento, the freedom that we have, for better or worse, won for ourselves, our *Patria*. It would mean giving them Italy as a present. And I will not give them Italy.[19]

As the result of her diatribes against Islam, Fallaci faced prosecution under an Italian statute criminalizing the "vilification" of "a religion admitted by the state."[20] Here again, the contrast with America is sharp: the existence of such a penal law, and indeed the codification of the idea that a religion may (or may not) be "admitted" by the state, underscores one of the dramatic discontinuities between, on the one hand, the dominant tendencies in the European theory and practice of church-state relations and, on the other, the more *laissez faire* privatization that characterizes the American resolution of these questions.

To some vocal European critics of American practice, the characteristic openness and tolerance of the United States represent, especially after 9/11, an outmoded weakness and naïveté bordering on the suicidal. Along these lines, for example, one of the more extreme Serbian opponents of Islam, political scientist and publicist Miroljub Jevtić, has opined that American secularists and multiculturalists are fooling themselves with the comforting beliefs that "their" Muslim population is somehow different from those found across Europe, and that the presently more peaceable relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States will remain so indefinitely because of the common ground supposedly provided by the separation of church and state and by the American model of assimilative integration. Islam, in Jevtić's view, cannot be assimilated even in a country of immigration that has long stressed assimilation, and it cannot be assimilated because Muslims refuse to be assimilated. Worse yet, to the extent that Muslims seem to have assimilated, that appearance is merely a deception. Rather, Jevtić suggested, the followers of Islam are simply playing a strategy of stealth, waiting to destroy the American model once they have sufficient numbers to do so. "It is impossible," he argued, "to expect that the Muslim community in the United States will accept as a lasting fact the existence of the US in the way that it now is."[21] Ultimately, Muslims would demand an Islamic state in America, too.

That is, mildly put, an attention-getting prediction, and in one version or another something like it has electrified conservative media outlets and websites across Europe and America, most notably in the form of the increasingly attractive rhetoric of "Eurabia" and "dhimmitude," which foretells the coming subjection of European populations to the imposition of *shari'a* and Islamic rule, with the attendant relegation of non-Muslim Europeans to second-class status.[22] Yet while many rightist analysts have faulted the United States as a wellspring of multiculturalist victimology, others have seen America as better equipped to resist Islamicization as the result of its enduring Christian religiosity, something that Europe has largely discarded (lamentably, in the view of the critics). That widespread religious commitment has indeed been another determinative and distinctive factor in the American multiculturalist engagement with Islam.

A Meaner, Tougher America? Religious Politics before and after 9/11

The attacks of September 11 have changed the United States dramatically in many ways, but they have not altered one fundamental dynamic at work here: although American governance remains (for the time being at least) remarkably more secula*rist* in comparison to Europe, America continues to relate to Islam differently because its people are remarkably less seculari*zed*. Understanding the significance of this fact requires attention to how the specifically *religious* dimensions of intergroup accommodation have shaped the mainstream multiculturalisms under consideration. For all its military might and all its pressure on its neighbors and allies, the American state must still be understood in world-historical, comparative terms as a remarkably weak state in two critical respects: the control of expression, and the regulation, surveillance, and affirmative protection of religion.[23] Unlike European states, the government of the United States is also greatly constrained by a historical societal preference for individualism, by popular free-speech traditions, and by the corresponding absence of a strong communitarian culture favoring social harmony. All this is something distinctively American, and it makes religious politics in the United States, and thus American multiculturalism, quite unlike their counterparts in Western and Eastern Europe.

Europeans generally, and multiculturalists and practitioners of political Christianity more specifically, have wanted and expected much more of their states in terms of the regulation, management, and control of religion and religious expression in the European public sphere. And historically, European states have delivered. They show an enduring willingness to supervise religious activity and to rein in, and even punish criminally, speech that they view as harmful to what they perceive to be agreed-upon social ends. In contrast, under the First Amendment to the US Constitution, American practice regarding religion is decidedly hands-off, as is the American approach to free expression. Where the two factors

coincide and the expression at issue is specifically religious in nature, the American preference for non-intervention has been profound.

The fact that Muslim minorities are religious minorities therefore makes American law and American state practice – but not American society – more *distanced*. Conversely, the same fact makes European law and European state practice – but not European society – more *engaged*. Under the present regime, as the influential British theorist and advocate Tariq Modood has noted approvingly, "[t]he key point is that British and European multiculturalism cannot be indifferent to religion in the manner of North American multiculturalism."[24] Barring a major reconfiguration of the prevailing European church-state models, this pattern is likely to persist.

Yet there may be a wide gap between state and society, between governmental-legal approaches and popular responses. When it comes to the "Muslim question," there are some unsettling paradoxes in the US experience of religious pluralism. While non-Muslims' relations with the Muslim communities in the United States have been comparatively peaceful, American religious politics is potentially much more vitriolic in its anti-Islamic rhetoric than its European counterparts. Examples are legion, but along these lines, witness the comments of Baptist minister Jerry Vines, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, who in June 2002 told that group that Islam is a religion "established by a demon-possessed pedophile who had 12 wives, and his last one was a nine-year-old girl." The remark provoked some controversy, but significantly, nothing even resembling the violent uproar that surrounded the publication of the "Muhammad cartoons" in Denmark's *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in 2005. Elaborating on his comment that "Allah is not Jehovah," Vines explained that "Jehovah is not going to turn you into a terrorist that will bomb people."[25] Lest it appear that this line of thinking is confined to some lunatic fringe of American religion, it is worth noting that Jack Graham, then the incoming president of the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination with approximately 16 million members, confirmed that such comments were "accurate," doing little if anything to distance himself or his followers from the polemical sentiments Vines had expressed.[26] The prominent conservative evangelical leader Jerry Falwell expressed his support for these views to a national television audience, on the popular CNN public affairs show *Crossfire*, using language that was hardly less inflammatory.[27]

Invective of this sort finds echoes in the messages of other American commentators who are, if not strictly speaking representatives of the Religious Right, closely allied with it. The same tone surfaces, for example, in the work of the reliably incendiary journalist Ann Coulter, who just after 9/11 issued a call for the United States to deal with the Muslim societies that had sheltered terrorists in a most straightforward way: "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."[28] The United States is famously tolerant of

extreme expression, and it is quite obvious that for these guardians of an America "under God," extremism in the defense of Christianity is no vice.

In the Huntingtonian analysis of world history, so popular among traditionalist critics of multiculturalism in both Europe and America, religion is taken to be the dividing line *between* clash-bound civilizations. A closer look at the religious politics of Europe and the United States suggests that the application of religious belief to questions of multicultural ideology and practice is, again, quite divergent. If the West does constitute a civilization, as the Huntingtonian line insists, there is evidence of an important internal rift here. For, generally speaking, Europe's explicitly Christian politics offers little to match the potentially much more fiery and exclusivist language of either American political religion or Europe's secular (but not necessarily secularist) xenophobes and populists. Much more consistently, the rhetoric of important Christian politicians and politically engaged Christian institutions in Europe tends to seek some semblance of religious comity, either by embracing European notions of multiculturalism or, failing that, by walking a fine line between tolerance and rejection, multiculture and uniculture, charity and fear. Even the latter approach to Islam is comparatively distanced and nuanced: it is skeptical and suspicious, certainly, but ultimately hedged and moderated. In either mode, Europe's political Christians seek to reconstitute their faith as vital once more to inter-confessional peace and harmony, and therefore as central to the new cultural and political order. First, they hold themselves out as a compassionate *buffer* against the uglier manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment, and because they are people of faith, as uniquely credible advocates of tolerance. Second, they claim to act as indispensable *negotiating partners* and *honest brokers* between Islam and Europe's secular, secularized, and secularist society, representing the Christian tradition as the inextricable essence of the "true" Europe.

A Kinder, Gentler Europe? Questioning the Past and Future of Multiculturalism

The American and European approaches to multiculturalism function on different principles and have produced different results. European multiculturalists believe their version to be more respectful and accommodating of difference, and Europe's politically engaged Christian communities, in line with the dominant assumptions of European multiculturalism, have generally offered more muted criticisms of Islam than their American counterparts, seeking to cultivate moderate, "acceptable" Muslim partners who might help promote social stability and, not coincidentally, serve as allies against secularism.

Yet Europe remains divided. The reasons for the difference are still being hotly debated, but American society, even after 9/11, is less unsettled by the presence of its own substantial Muslim population, and American Muslims are by most ac-

counts far less troubled by the conditions of life in the West than their fellow believers in Europe. The comparative quiescence of America's Muslims has fast become the subject of considerable analysis and commentary, and Europe's greater difficulties on this score have most notably been attributed to economic and class distinctions among the diverse "sending" populations in the Muslim world, to variations in the religiosity and in the specific Islamic theological roots of the immigrant groups, and last but not least, to simple differences in the sheer size of the Muslim communities in the respective locales. Whatever the reasons for the divergence, it is clear that with regard to Islam, the spectacular variety, contention, and lack of restraint characterizing American public life have not produced domestic cleavages and enmities perceived as major challenges to the integrity of the broader society, as have emerged in Europe. It remains conceivable that Europe's Muslim communities might with time be assimilated into French, British, Dutch, and other national identities, and with that to European-ness, but as Philip Jenkins observes, "such an 'American' outcome seems a distant dream."[29]

All good intentions notwithstanding, these problems of social and cultural cohesion are compounded by the heavy engagement of the European state in matters concerning Islam, a result that flows naturally from both the generally heightened competencies of the European state and from the particular resolution of church-state questions in most of the countries under consideration. Virtually every public controversy over religion in Europe has the potential to become a specifically governmental controversy, a complex and protracted multi-party entanglement in which citizens on all sides of the dispute look to the state for action, and stand ready to blame its leaders for failure. This was the fate, for example, of the hapless Danish government as the result of its response – or lack of response – to the notorious Muhammad cartoons. The furor over Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988-89 elicited many of the same claims on the British government and judiciary. Faced with a similar situation, American leaders could do little else than try to make good use of the bully pulpit. They lack the legal power to do much more than talk about religion, and even that can get them into hot water.

But citizens in European societies can demand that the state *do something*. In the Muhammad cartoons case, for example, aggrieved Muslims unsuccessfully urged the government to prosecute the publishers of the cartoons on the basis of Danish law, which resembles a number of European statutes that prohibit giving offense or inciting hatred on religious grounds. As regards the regulation of religion and the regulation of expression, what we see in such responses is a European legalism *par excellence*, and a reflex that is still almost entirely unthinkable in the context of American jurisprudence. (With the proliferation of hate-speech codes on American campuses and hate-crimes laws in a variety of state jurisdictions, it has become a bit more thinkable in recent years.)

The American model of multiculturalism, and in particular its distinctive handling of religious pluralism in the context of church-state separation, has thus far not proven especially appealing to Europeans. France permits far less latitude for the personal expression of religiosity in the public sphere, while the rest of Europe, and with it even France to a great extent, generally seeks to engage, sponsor, and control religion, and to protect religious sensibilities and social order through a variety of criminal enactments such as blasphemy laws and their latter-day hate speech analogues.[30] For a long time, this system seemed to offer a suitable framework, one in keeping with Europe's communitarian traditions. Consequently, there has been great resistance in Europe to the idea of an "Americanization" of religion, which would place all believers on an equal footing and eliminate the time-honored institutional ties.[31]

The governing logic of European multiculturalism suggests that this is just how things should remain. Along these lines, the prospect of any move toward the American model seems distinctly unappealing to Tariq Modood, one of the leading proponents of European multiculturalist thought in its characteristic, anti-assimilationist mode. Suggesting that Muslims have, especially after 9/11, faced the unfair treatment inherent in a "panicky retreat to a liberal public-private distinction" that had previously appealed mainly to "radical secularists," Modood offers prescriptions that run in precisely the opposite direction: "We should recognise Muslims as a legitimate social partner and include them in the institutional compromises of church and state, religion and politics, that characterise the evolving, moderate secularism of mainstream Western Europe."[32] Europeans should, he says, spurn "the wayward, radical example of France" – and with it as well the American "wall of separation," which he likewise rejects.[33]

For the time being at least, the established European pattern seems safe enough. The privatization of religion is far, far off. Yet the very fact that some are considering the possible benefits of disengaging the state from religion suggests that the US model may be becoming more attractive than ever before. That American arrangement is the product of a diversity Europe lacked in the past (or did not recognize it had). Now, however, Europe undeniably exhibits much the same sort of plurality. Citizens in most European states can no longer tell themselves that theirs are not "countries of immigration." (Even East Europeans are facing that truth, or soon will.) The new religious make-up wrought by Islam takes them well beyond the old, familiar pattern in which large, recognized churches with reliable, stable, and formally recognized institutional representation could engage with the state, accommodating its demands and enjoying its patronage. In a number of ways, the theological diversity and the diffuse, fragmented structure of Muslim religious communities bring to Europe something like the religious plurality that has resulted from the wild proliferation of Protestant denominations and "new religions" in America. Until very recently, the state financing of religion and the provision of denominational schooling have not usually required Europeans

to sponsor communities that they find radically alien, or even hostile. Regardless of what fairness and neutrality might seem to require, Europeans may well prove reluctant to extend state support to all the varieties of Islam now emerging around them. Islam has brought changes to the religious landscape that may, with time, lead to some reconsideration of the prevailing church-state arrangements.

Defending the status quo that had evolved in US constitutional jurisprudence by the late twentieth century, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in 2005 argued that pluralism and freedom are best served by the American model, which had, she said, "kept religion a matter for the individual conscience, not for the prosecutor or bureaucrat." This non-interventionist approach to religion had, in O'Connor's view, shielded Americans from the difficulties of sectarian conflict "[a]t a time when we see around the world the violent consequences of the assumption of religious authority by government." Skeptical about a retreat from existing law that would permit new extensions of state sponsorship, she articulated a position that would, she believed, preserve the characteristically American successes of the past. "Those who would renegotiate the boundaries between church and state must therefore answer a difficult question," O'Connor wrote. "Why would we trade a system that has served us so well for one that has served others so poorly?"[34]

Despite some concerns about "panicky retreats" to privatization, the events of 9/11 in the United States and the fear of Islamic terrorism in Europe itself have not brought about any thoroughgoing rethinking of Europe's religious multiculturalism. Yet there is evidence that new ideas along these lines have begun to bubble to the surface. Paraphrasing Justice O'Connor's reservations, at least a few Europeans have begun to ask, "Should we trade a system that may serve us poorly in the future for one that has served others so well?" America's multiculturalist principles have managed, in modified form, to bridge the Atlantic, but for a long time, many Europeans assumed that theirs was a vastly different social and cultural context, that these American "others" were just too unlike them, and that the US experience could therefore offer only limited lessons. In the realm of contemporary religious politics, where Americans have persisted in their more competitive, fractious, often harsher style, Europeans have generally made their way toward a softer, more moderated, and genuinely communitarian approach. Now, however, the once-important distinctions may be fading, and the history of American pluralism may be becoming more relevant to a kinder, gentler Europe.

Notes

1. Though a concept of recent vintage, multiculturalism has stimulated the production of a scholarly literature that is already far too vast to permit more than a few select citations here. On the differences between the European and American approaches, see,

e.g. John Rex, "Multiculturalism in Europe and America," *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 2 (1995): 243-259; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christian Joppke, "Multicultural Citizenship: A Critique," *European Journal of Sociology* 42 (2001): 431-447; Joppke, "The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy," *The British Journal of Sociology* 55, no. 2 (June 2004): 237-257; Adrian Favell, "Comments on Glazer, Schain, and Fassin: How Can We Be European?" in *Multicultural Questions*, ed. Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 242-257. While acknowledging certain differences between the American and European conceptions, Asifa Hussain and William Miller argue the existence of a distinctive British multiculturalism in *Multicultural Nationalism: Islamophobia, Anglophobia, and Devolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27-34.

2. See the classic analysis by Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1979): 1-20.

3. Nathan Glazer, "Multiculturalism and American Exceptionalism," in *Multicultural Questions*, ed. Joppke and Lukes, 183-198, at 196.

4. Ibid.

5. Will Kymlicka, "American Multiculturalism in the International Arena," *Dissent* 45, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 73-79, at 73. The two other elements of Kymlicka's paradigm are a shared judgment that in contemporary society multiculturalism has become inevitable (rendering further debate not a question of *whether* but of *how*) and a recognition that the main obstacle to American multiculturalism continues to be "the ascriptive, stigmatizing, and segregating elements of 'black' identity." Ibid. Kymlicka notes that even the US has departed from its assimilationist "common citizenship" model in the case of autochthonous populations such as Native Americans, native Hawaiians, Alaskan Eskimos, and Puerto Ricans, offering them some self-government. Kymlicka, "Multicultural Citizenship," in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 167-188, at 175-176.

6. On the move away from an Anglocentric understanding of American-ness, see Eric Kaufmann, "Ethnic or Civic Nation?: Theorizing the American Case," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 27, nos. 1-2 (2000): 133-54. Kaufmann takes issue with prevailing views of American distinctiveness, arguing that "the conversion of the mass of the American polity to the 'civic' national view likely did not occur until the great liberalizing value changes of the 1965-73 period," and that in this shift, the US resembles other Western polities. Ibid.

7. Philip Jenkins, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 251-252; see generally 182-191, 246-252.

8. Gérard Wormser, "Le 11 Septembre 2001: un 'Fait Social Total'," *Sens Public* 6 March 2005, http://www.sens-public.org/ (last accessed 5 December 2007) (emphasis added). Unless otherwise noted, all translations from foreign languages are my own.

9. Frank Peter, "Leading the Community of the Middle Way: A Study of the Muslim Field in France," *The Muslim World* 96, no. 4 (October 2006): 707-736, at 713.

10. Ibid., 713-714.

11. Friedrich Merz, "Einwanderung und Identität," *Die Welt*, 25 October 2000, online at http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article540438/Einwanderung_und_Identitaet.html (last

accessed 30 November 2007). Signaling a discomfort with Islam, Merz insisted that "hard-fought" women's equality "must also be accepted by those who, for religious reasons, overwhelmingly tend to come with a completely different understanding." Ibid. For the origins of the term *Leitkultur* – with an authorial gloss that places the term closer to the traditions of American-style multiculturalism – see Bassam Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität: Die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1998).

12. Merz, "Einwanderung und Identität."

13. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York: Norton, 1992).

14. Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), xxi-xxii.

15. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "Neoliberal Newspeak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 105 (January-February 2001): 2-5; online as "New-LiberalSpeak," http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/ The rendering "North American" in the quoted passage seems to indicate primarily, if not exclusively, the US. The French original makes no reference to Canada and appears as part of a suite devoted to US problematics; it appears as "La Nouvelle Vulgate Planétaire," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 554 (May 2000): 6-7, http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/05/BOURDIEU/13727 (last accessed 9 December 2007).

16. Boris Jašović, "Simulanti simulacije," *Politika*, 24 March 2007, http://www.politika.co .yu/ (last accessed 10 December 2007).

17. References are to Poul Vinther Jensen, "Europa, er ikke USA," 24 August 2007, website of Den Danske Forening, http://www.dendanskeforening.dk/ [last accessed 17 October 2007] (emphasis added). The object of Jensen's critique was an article by Sune Nielsen, "Religion er nøglen til forståelse," *Kristeligt Dagblad*, 23 August 2007, http://www.religion.dk/artikel/259721:Globalt-nyt – Religion-er-noeglen-til-forstaaelse (last accessed 7 December 2007).

18. Oriana Fallaci, "La Rabbia e l'Orgoglio," *Corriere della Sera*, 29 September 2001, reprinted beginning at http://www.corriere.it/Primo_Piano/Cronache/2006/09_Settembre/15/ rabbia1.shtml, and on successive linked web pages, 15 September 2006 (last accessed 16 July 2007) (emphasis added). See also Fallaci, *The Rage and the Pride* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002). Fallaci expands on her arguments in *The Force of Reason* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006).

19. Ibid.

20. Recent changes to the law under which Fallaci was charged move away from both the special recognition of Catholicism and the idea of the state's "admission" of religious groups. But the general European pattern remains intact. See Italy's *Codice Penale*, Articles 402-405, as modified by the Law of 24 February 2006, no. 85 ("Modifiche al codice penale in materia di reati di opinione"), published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, no. 60, 13 March 2006, and at http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/06085l.htm.

21. "Islam je potrebno poznavati," *Sveti Knez Lazar: □asopis eparhije Raškoprizrenske* 12, no. 3 (47) (2004): 97-110, at 110.

22. See for example, Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005).

23. Compare William J. Novak, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," *American Historical Review* 113 (June 2008): 752–772, June 2008. Significantly, Novak's vigorous and persuasive challenge to the classic notion of the American state's powerlessness devotes almost no attention to the regulation of religion and expression. In these two fields the United States remains, I conclude, quite weak.

24. Tariq Modood, Citizenship and the Recognition of Cultural Diversity: The Canadian Experience: Response to Jenson and Papillon Backgrounder, commentary for Canadian Policy Research Networks, May 2000, www.cprn.org/ (last accessed 7 December 2007).

25. Quoted in John Dart, "SBC Leaders Rap Islam, Gays – News – Southern Baptist Convention," *Christian Century*, 19 June 2002, findarticles.com/ (last accessed 27 November 2007).

26. Ibid.

27. CNN Crossfire, transcript of the telecast of 12 June 2002, www-cgi.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0206/12/cf.00.html (last accessed 27 November 2007).

28. Ann Coulter, "This Is War," *National Review Online*, 13 September 2001, http://www.nationalreview.com/coulter/coulter.shtml (last accessed 27 November 2007).

29. Jenkins, *God's Continent*, 24.

30. French criminal law formed the basis of an unsuccessful prosecution brought against the weekly satire journal *Charlie-Hebdo* for its publication of the Muhammad cartoons, alleged by Muslim organizations to constitute defamation against a religious group. See Agnès Callamard, "Debate: Can We Say What We Want?," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English edition, April 2007, http://mondediplo.com/2007/04/16freedom. The statute invoked was Article 33 of the French Law on the Freedom of the Press (Law of 29 July 1881, as amended); a violation of the law would have subjected the journalists to a possible six months in prison and a fine of 22,500 Euros. See http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/texteconsolide/PCEAA.htm.

31. See Claus Leggewie, "Clash of Civilizations? Cultural Differences Between Europe and America Are, in Essence, Religious in Nature," in *Does Euroland Have a Culture? An American-European Exchange*, ed. Paul Michael Lützeler [Helen and Harry Gray Humanities Program vol. 10, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies] (2001): 43-54, at 47.

32. Tariq Modood, "Muslims and the Politics of Difference," in *The Politics of Migration: Managing Opportunity, Conflict, and Change*, ed. Sarah Spencer (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 100-115, at 110, 114.

33. Ibid. See the similar rejection of French- and American-style secularism in Tariq Modood and Riva Kastoryano, "Secularism and the Accommodation of Muslims in Europe," in Tariq Modood, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ricard Zapata-Barrero, ed., *Multiculturalism, Muslims And Citizenship: A European Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), 162-178.

34. References are to *McCreary County, Kentucky, et al. v. American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky et al.*, 545 U.S. 844, 125 S. Ct. 2722 at 2746 (2005) (O'Connor, J., concurring).

Slavery, Memory, and Citizenship in Transatlantic Perspective

Johanna C. Kardux

One point of contention in which debates about multiculturalism have taken shape in the United States and the Netherlands is the public memory of slavery. Since the early 1990s, numerous people of African descent in these and other former slave-holding and slave-trading nations have mobilized around commemorations of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The two memorial projects I will discuss in this essay – the African Burial Ground in New York and the Netherlands National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam – and the public debates they have sparked provide insight into the ways in which multiculturalism functions in these two nations. The call for the remembrance of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic has not only brought to light painful and shameful national histories, but has also laid bare some of the complex conflicts connected with the social and cultural integration of minority groups in these two societies – conflicts which have only intensified since 9/11.

   The two slavery memorial projects I will discuss are part of what French historian Pierre Nora has critically called a "tidal wave of memory." According to Nora, we live in an "era of commemoration": we indiscriminately "stockpile" traces of the past in archives, libraries, and museums, and fulfill our self-imposed "duty to remember" by celebrating anniversaries, building monuments, and organizing commemorations. Whereas in the past, collectively remembered values bound diverse groups and competing ideologies together as a nation, we now feel compelled self-consciously and artificially to construct *lieux de mémoire* to buttress group identities no longer securely grounded in the idea of the nation.[1] It is no coincidence, however, that Nora's collaborative, multivolume history of French national memory, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992), was itself conceived and produced in a time in which traditional constructions of national unity, history, and identity were increasingly challenged by mass migration and globalization. In fact, as the metaphorical title of his 2001 essay suggests, Nora sees a causative link between the "tidal wave of memory" and the massive influx of immigrants in Western Europe that threatened to render national borders and traditional definitions of the nation-state obsolete in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Postcolonial migrants, Nora suggests, formed the vanguard of the modern cul-

ture of commemoration, followed by other newly emancipated minorities. Because they never had access to public memory and were marginalized in traditional historical discourse, ethnic and other minorities stake their right to recognition and inclusion, and their collective identities, in a "rehabilitati[on] of the past."[2]

While Nora is critical of what he calls the "explosion of minority memories" in the past few decades, I will suggest a more positive and constructive way of looking at the modern memorial culture Nora laments.[3] On the one hand, the public debates surrounding slavery memorials show that the public memory of slavery is one of the most contentious issues in the integration and multiculturalism debates in both the United States and the Netherlands. I will argue, however, that the call for slavery memorials in these two nations also represents vital, if necessarily conflicted and contested, attempts to renegotiate national and cultural identities, and to redefine citizenship in a postcolonial and globalizing age. Seeking recognition and redress for centuries of willful amnesia, the slavery memorial projects in the United States and the Netherlands attempt to re-imagine national, transnational, and multicultural communities that are more responsive to the needs of citizens in our multi-ethnic societies today.

The African Burial Ground Project in New York

That slavery was not just the US South's "peculiar institution" but an integral part of the entire nation's history, painfully entered the public consciousness in 1991 when, during the excavations for a new federal building near Foley Square in lower Manhattan, an eighteenth-century African burial ground was discovered. Preliminary archeological investigations had indicated the presence of a "Negros Burial Ground," as the site was marked on historic maps, but the discovery of human remains was completely unexpected. Covering about 6.6 acres, the burial ground was originally located in a desolate area outside the city's boundaries because people of African descent were not allowed to bury their dead in the church graveyards. Used from about 1710 on, the cemetery had to make way for city expansion in the 1790s. When excavation of the construction site started in the fall of 1991, it was assumed that any human remains would have been scattered or destroyed during two centuries of urban construction and development.[4] The presence of the burial ground, which may have held the remains of an estimated 10,000-20,000 people of African descent, testified to the fact that by 1750, New York City had the second largest free black and slave population after Charleston, South Carolina; the first Africans arrived in New Amsterdam in 1626, only one year after the founding of the Dutch colony.[5]

The discovery of the human remains initially seemed to be only of archaeological and cultural interest. Although part of the burial ground had also served as a potter's field and as a graveyard for Americans during the Revolutionary War,

David N. Dinkins, New York City's first African-American mayor, was one of the first to point out its special significance for the city's black population. "Two centuries ago," Dinkins told reporter David W. Dunlap, "not only could African-Americans not hope to govern New York City, they could not even hope to be buried within its boundaries."[6] On a surface level, Dinkins, whose own career testified to the gains made by the Civil Rights Movement, seems to interpret the site's symbolic meaning here as a narrative of progression from segregation to integration. Significantly, however, the triple negatives in his statement also call attention to African-Americans' history of exclusion. The multi-layered meaning of the black mayor's early statement about the ancient burial ground showed him, at this point in his career at least, to be a master of multicultural politics, being able to appeal to the various ethnic groups in his constituency. Partly as a result of Dinkins' astute publicizing efforts, the historic find could initially count on broad and multi-ethnic community interest.

Soon, however, the burial ground became a site of contestation and identity politics. The General Services Administration (GSA), the federal agency in charge of the construction, repeatedly assured community groups that the remains would be treated with "the utmost respect and dignity."[7] Therefore, when a few months after the discovery it became known that construction workers had disturbed a number of graves, African-American citizens and officials were outraged. Community activists protested against disrespectful treatment and storage of the remains, complaining that the discrimination these people had suffered during their lives continued after their death.[8] Petitions were written and vigils held. Sensitive to his black constituency's complaints about continuing racial injustice, Mayor Dinkins called for a suspension of the excavations, insisting that GSA come up with a proper research plan for the exhumed remains.

It was only after a public hearing before a US Congressional subcommittee, convened by African-American Congressman Gus Savage in the summer of 1992, during which Mayor Dinkins and members of the Black Caucus gave testimony, that GSA finally gave in and agreed to seek an appropriate solution for the site.[9] Congress allocated three million dollars for the scientific study of the excavated human remains and artifacts, and for the construction of a memorial and interpretive center at the site. While the construction of a thirty-four-storey federal building was to go forward as planned, building plans for the adjacent lot were abandoned. This space was preserved for a future memorial. In response to demands from the black community for more African-American involvement in the research project, the more than four hundred human remains that had by then been excavated were transported to Howard University, the leading African-American research university in Washington, DC, to be studied by a research team led by Dr. Michael Blakey, an African-American biological anthropologist.[10] Early in 1993, the burial site was officially designated a national historic landmark. Moved to tears by the event, Councilwoman Mary Pinkett of Brooklyn said to the *New York*

Times that the "efforts to preserve and commemorate the burial ground amounted to a declaration by the city's black residents[:]'This is enough. … You can't walk over the bodies of our ancestors anymore.'"[11]

Although the African Burial Ground's designation as a national historic landmark helped increase federal funding to almost twenty-five million dollars, the memorial project continued to be contested terrain. The federal building on 290 Broadway was completed in 1994, and a space was created in the hallway for a small exhibit and artworks that memorialized the African Burial Ground. The adjacent lot remained empty for almost a decade, however, as community groups, scientists, and government institutions wrangled about control and funding of the research project and the memorial site. Growing impatient about the disputes and delays, by 2001 black community advocates began to increase pressure on government agencies to finally reinter the human remains and artifacts, though the Howard scientists claimed that they needed more time and money to study them.

The dispute about the re-interment scheme revealed the underlying ideological conflicts. One community group, the Committee of Descendants of the Afrikan Ancestral Burial Ground, apparently unilaterally set August 17, 2001, as the date for the reburial ceremony. Both the unorthodox spelling of its name, and the choice of the anniversary of back-to-Africa activist Marcus Garvey's birth date for the ceremony, indicate this advocacy group's black-nationalist agenda. When asked by a local reporter why the re-interment had not taken place, the GSA spokesperson claimed that it was scheduled for the end of 2001, adding that the ceremony would be "for the larger New York and world community, not any particular group" and ridiculing the group's "special claim to the 'descendant' label." While to African-American advocacy groups the ceremony obviously was intended to undergird a collective black identity, the government spokesperson insisted that the re-interment was to be a multi-ethnic and even international event.[12]

Less than three weeks later, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, gave an unexpected twist to the controversy over the memorial project. Among the casualties of 9/11 were the African Burial Ground Project's library and New York laboratory, which were housed in the basement of 6 World Trade Center. Black community activists were quick to blame GSA for the deemed loss of the artifacts from the burial ground that had been stored there: "All those artifacts and the remains would have been buried by now," a spokesperson of the descendant group said, referring to GSA's putative failure to keep to the August 17 re-interment date.[13] Although most of the artifacts, documents, and other materials of the African Burial Ground Project were eventually recovered from the rubble, the dispute about the re-interment only intensified after 9/11, turning more and more on the politics of race. Comparing the African Burial Ground somewhat illogically to Ground Zero, the radical black civil rights activist Al Sharpton accused the gov-

ernment of "doing to us what they did to my ancestors"; by stalling plans for the reburial, "[t]hey're trying to make us invisible in lower Manhattan."[14] To Howard scientist Blakey and the team of researchers studying the human remains, it was also clear that race was the real issue behind all the delays and quarrels. Complaining that GSA officials sabotaged the research project by deliberately underfunding it, Blakey accused the federal agency of providing only "what is often called in black college circles 'a colored grant.'" Moreover, he argued that his research team was put on an unrealistic time schedule. "What GSA is insisting on is for us to fail," Blakey told the *Washington Post* in August 2002. "I think racism plays a special part, as well as arrogance. GSA has demonstrated from the beginning a pattern of disrespect and disregard for the expertise of black people."[15]

GSA and the scientists eventually negotiated a compromise in the fall of 2002 and on October 4, 2003, the 419 human remains that had been salvaged from the burial ground were finally returned to New York City from the Cobb laboratory at Howard, where they had been studied for a decade. After being placed in small mahogany coffins hand-crafted in Ghana, the human remains were ceremonially re-interred in the African Burial Ground.[16] The re-interment site was subsequently covered by grass and landscaped in the shape of seven mounds that resemble waves, symbolizing the enslaved Africans' ocean crossing to America.

The *New York Times*' prediction that the reburial would bring "a symbolic close to an especially tumultuous chapter in the city's racial history" was not fulfilled, however.[17] During the re-interment ceremony, several speakers called for reparations for slavery. Painfully recalling the US government's failure to give the former slaves "forty acres and a mule" in compensation for slavery in the post-Civil War era, the demand for reparations became a major public issue around the turn of the twenty-first century, culminating early in 2002 with the filing of a class-action suit against a number of major private corporations, whose predecessor companies had profited from slavery.[18] In the wake of 9/11, the revitalized issue of reparations began to take a prominent place in the rhetoric surrounding the African Burial Ground controversy. "They owe us," one of the presiding clergymen said to a cheering crowd during the re-interment ceremony. "It's time to pay up." "You want to honor us?" Councilman Charles Barron asked, "Pay us our reparations."[19]

The memorial project continued to cause controversy as a segment of the African-American community mobilized against plans to construct a monument on the site, next to the re-interment grove. When the memorial design winner was announced in April 2005, protesters denounced the design that had won the competition as being "too big and intrusive." Rather than the design itself, what seems to have been at stake was the politics of ownership and identity. As one opponent put it, "They disrespected our ancestors when they excavated *our* bones, they disrespected us when they took them out of the ground, and now they're

disrespecting us by turning *our* grave site into some kind of a museum" (my italics).[20] The chair of the Committee of Descendants told a reporter from a local black weekly: "[E]ven if we have to lay down in front of bulldozers to stop this, that's exactly what we are going to do."[21]

On February 27, 2006, the more than a decade-long struggle for a proper memorial entered a new phase when President George W. Bush proclaimed the African Burial Ground a national monument. It was surely no coincidence that the presidential memorandum that preceded the proclamation was issued in October 2005, barely a month after media images of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina had shown the world that the face of poverty in the United States is predominantly black. Though it is difficult to prove, the designation of the African Burial Ground as a national monument may well have been part of the White House's strategy to counter accusations of racism, as the Bush administration came under serious attack for its hopelessly inadequate response to the disaster in New Orleans.

The proclamation of the site as a national monument enabled the allocation of federal funds for the memorial, designed by African-American architect Rodney Leon, and an educational visitor's center under the authority of the National Park Service. On October 4, 2007, the African Burial Ground National Monument was finally dedicated. It was the nation's first official national monument to enslaved and free Africans and their descendants.[22] The African Burial Ground memorial consists of two black granite walls that enclose an "ancestral chamber" and lead the visitor to a sunken circular "Libation court." Architect Leon describes the function of the court as a gathering place for slave descendants and others to commemorate and reflect upon the lives and experiences of enslaved Africans.[23]

In fact, the African Burial Ground memorial project itself has served as a gathering place despite – or, rather, *because* of – its history of contention. Opposition against the federal agency in charge of the excavations and subsequent management of the site, as well as a new black self-consciousness, empowered many African-American New Yorkers to identify themselves as a community held together by a common ancestral past. Their protests voiced a legitimate concern about community involvement in the memorial project, and African-American participation in the study and interpretation of the site's history. Often-heard claims that the project "belongs ... to people of African descent" are not simply about ownership; they also articulate a sense of belonging, a stake in the community, its history as well as its future.[24]

The National Slavery Monument Project in the Netherlands

Americans are not the only ones who have had to confront a history of slavery and racial injustice in recent years. The Dutch have disavowed their nation's slavery past perhaps even more radically. Traditionally, Dutch national identity is largely

based on the collective memory of the Netherlands' freedom struggle and rise to imperial greatness in the seventeenth century. This inflated public memory of this small nation's greatness could be maintained only by a collective forgetfulness of a history of slave-trading and colonial exploitation. As the nineteenth-century French historian Ernest Renan observed, "The essence of a nation is that its people have much in common but also that they have forgotten a lot of things."[25] What has long been erased from public memory is that Dutch slave traders transported more than half a million Africans to the Americas, constituting about five per cent of the total international slave trade. Three hundred thousand of these enslaved Africans were taken to the Dutch Caribbean colonies in the Antilles and Suriname.[26] Dutch history textbooks rarely dwelled on this chapter of the nation's history, but the immigration to the Netherlands since the mid-1970s of almost half a million people from the former colonies in the Dutch West Indies, including 300,000 descendants of slaves, made it increasingly difficult to uphold the national myths and silence the past.[27]

The anger over the selective amnesia regarding slavery that had been smoldering in the Afro-Dutch community for many years was translated into organized protest in 1993, as people of African descent were making preparations for the commemoration of the 130th anniversary of emancipation in the Dutch West Indies. Centennials and other anniversaries are important occasions for national and other communities to consolidate or redefine collective identities and construct collective memories. For descendants of slaves, these occasions carry special importance, because exclusion from official history and public memory was a central feature of their ancestors' state of bondage. Slavery, Orlando Patterson has famously said, was a form of "social death." Unlike other human beings, slaves "were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory."[28] The dispossession of a social and cultural ancestral heritage continues to have a profound impact on slave descendants, constituting perhaps a collective or cultural trauma.[29] Both the African Burial Ground Project and the call for the commemoration of the Netherlands' "forgotten" history of slavery can be seen in the context of a transatlantic, grassroots movement among slave descendants, seeking to build diasporic communities of memory.

In the spring of 1993, a group of Afro-Surinamese people in Amsterdam founded the *Nationaal 30 juni/1 juli Comité* (National June 30/July 1 Committee) to raise public awareness of the slavery past. The committee proclaimed June 30 as an annual day of reflection and July 1 as Emancipation Day, the "Day of Broken Chains," as it is called in Suriname, where July 1 is a national holiday. The name of the committee was a barely veiled reference to the *Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 Mei* (National Committee May 4 and 5), which organizes the annual national commemoration of Jewish and other Dutch World War II victims on May 4, and the

celebration of the nation's liberation from Nazi occupation on May 5. The Afro-Dutch organization's message was clear: slavery is as much part of Dutch history as is World War II. There was another, more provocative message implied as well, however: slavery was also a holocaust, one in which the Dutch were not victims, but perpetrators. As one slave descendant later put it, "[o]ur holocaust lasted 350 years."[30]

From the annual gatherings the National June30/July 1 Committee organized in Amsterdam from 1993 on, gradually a plan emerged for a national monument to commemorate the Dutch slavery past. The idea of a national monument entered Dutch public discourse in the spring of 1998, while preparations were underway to celebrate the 135th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Dutch West Indies. By that time, it had become clear that what began in Amsterdam as a local, grassroots effort to call attention to a history of slavery was actually part of a much larger international, even transnational movement. In April 1998, President Bill Clinton, during a tour of Africa, declared that America's profiting from slavery had been wrong, though he stopped short of issuing an apology.[31] In December of the same year, Christiane Taubira, a black Representative from French Guiana, introduced a bill in the French legislature to declare the slave trade and slavery a crime against humanity, which was later passed.[32] In July 1998, a group of Afro-Dutch women offered a petition to the Dutch parliament, requesting the government's acknowledgment of the slavery past and active involvement in efforts to commemorate it. Their initiative could not have been better timed. By late 1998, postcolonial immigrants of African descent had succeeded in putting public recognition of the historical injustice of slavery and its legacies on the national political agenda in both France and the Netherlands.

In June 1999, the proposal for a Dutch national slavery monument was officially endorsed by the newly appointed Minister of Urban and Integration Policy, Roger van Boxtel. Van Boxtel's endorsement speech, delivered in the presence of the queen's husband, Prince Claus, had great symbolic significance. For the first time, the Dutch government publicly acknowledged responsibility for the nation's history of slave-trading and slave-holding. To realize the plans for a national slavery monument, the government started negotiations with a newly founded umbrella organization of slave descendants, named the National Platform for the Remembrance of the Netherlands Slavery Past, in which various Afro-Dutch groups were represented. The Dutch government's support nationalized and politicized the slavery memorial movement. The National Platform's decision to accept the government's funding of the monument meant that the descendant community was no longer fully in control of the project, and to some extent became dependent on the government. Although governmental participation in the project gave it momentum and prestige, it also became the source of contention, sparking a heated public debate about the symbolic meaning, the design, and the location of the slavery monument. Intended to commemorate a common past in

the spirit of reconciliation, the Dutch national slavery memorial project, like the African Burial Ground project in New York, became an arena for the politics of memory and identity.

Initially, the government's main aim in supporting the memorial project was to acknowledge moral responsibility for and call public attention to the nation's forgotten slavery history. The purpose of a slavery monument, Minister Van Boxtel said in his endorsement speech, is "to restore slavery to its rightful place in Dutch history."[33] Van Boxtel's support of the project became increasingly linked to his integration policies. As a result, the memorial project became enmeshed in an intense public debate about multiculturalism. That Van Boxtel's multicultural vision was as much about national identity as about integration policy is symbolized by the memorial project's official motto: *verbonden door vrijheid* – "bound by freedom." The motto expanded the monument's meaning by including ethnic minorities who do *not* share the Netherlands' slavery history, most notably the Muslim immigrant population, who were the main target of the government's integration policy and the focus of the multiculturalism debate, particularly after 9/11. The motto was controversial among members of the National Platform of slave descendants because it was felt to deflect attention away from the monument's commemorative function. Protesting against the government's "takeover," the National June 30/July 1 Committee demanded reparation payments for slavery as well as an apology from the Dutch queen.[34]

The multiculturalism debate came to a climax in the fall of 2001, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, with the meteoric rise of the populist political leader Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn started his own political party on an anti-immigration platform, which forced other political parties to make immigration, coupled with security, the main issue in the national election campaign of 2002. With his flamboyant personality and his strategic appeal to nativist sentiment and social grievances, Fortuyn gained enormous popularity with a large segment of the Dutch population. Though his post-9/11 anti-immigration policy was directed mainly against Islamic immigrants, in his campaign book Fortuyn specifically targeted the issue of slavery monuments, which he saw as the multiculturalists' pet project. Ridiculing the idea of reparations, he wrote that "those who still suffer from their ancestors' enslavement" should seek psychiatric treatment rather than financial compensation.[35] Fortuyn's assassination by a radical environmentalist in May 2002 prompted a massive outpouring of grief and anger among his followers, and led to a landslide victory of his party in the national elections that took place less than two weeks after the murder. The three political parties in the incumbent center-left government coalition, including Van Boxtel's social-liberal party D66, lost dramatically during the 2002 elections, while Fortuyn's three-month-old party (LPF) became the second-largest party in the country, receiving seventeen percent of the vote.

The multiculturalism debate and the political ascendancy and subsequent murder of Fortuyn are crucial contexts for the Dutch national slavery monument project. It was during the political crisis following Fortuyn's assassination and the national elections that the unveiling of the national slavery monument took place, in Amsterdam's Oosterpark on July 1, 2002. The chosen site of the monument was highly controversial in the Afro-Dutch community. Most people favored a more prestigious and central location, preferably Dam Square, where the National World War II Monument is located. Because of the highly volatile political climate and the presence of the queen, the incumbent prime minister, and international dignitaries, security surrounding the unveiling ceremony was tight. Fences covered with black plastic prevented access to the memorial site itself and kept it from view. Though the security measures were not unreasonable under the circumstances, the general public had not been informed, and most came expecting to witness the proceedings directly. Therefore, to many it came as an unpleasant surprise that they would have to watch the ceremony on a large video screen in a different part of the park. While Minister Van Boxtel offered a formal apology for the Dutch slavery past, a riot broke out as a small group of people assembled at the guarded entrance to the memorial site, expressing their outrage and demanding admission to the ceremony. The outburst of anger that these security measures triggered within the crowd was a painful illustration of the explosiveness of the memory of slavery among Dutch slave descendants. Intended as a symbolic gesture of inclusion, the inauguration of the national slavery monument came to symbolize to many people in the Afro-Dutch community their continued exclusion from Dutch society.

When, immediately after the unveiling of the monument and the departure of the invited guests, the public were allowed to enter the memorial site, the event took the form of a re-appropriation ritual. During a quiet dedication ritual six weeks after the unveiling, a group of Afro-Surinamese women symbolically took repossession of the monument, a large figurative statue representing the journey from bondage to freedom. A year later, on July 1, 2003, the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NinSee) was inaugurated. Conceived of as the "dynamic" part of the national slavery memorial and located in the near vicinity of the monument, the institute's aim is to help shape a nuanced and realistic view of the Netherlands' slavery past in order to remember, commemorate, and work through this history and its legacies for the benefit of future generations.[36]

Since 2001, the slavery memorial movement has dramatically increased public awareness of the Netherlands' slavery past. History textbooks used in schools have been revised to incorporate this long-neglected chapter in the nation's history. Slavery even literally received canonical status when it was included in the so-called Canon of Dutch Cultural History: it is one of the fifty themes that a national committee of scholars and teachers, appointed by the Minister of Educa-

tion, has deemed central to an understanding of Dutch national history.[37] That slavery is still a sensitive issue, however, is suggested by the fact that of all the fifty themes, it received the largest number of reactions on the Canon's internet forum. Moreover, it remains potentially divisive. On various occasions since the monument's unveiling in 2002, the annual national commemoration of slavery has been disrupted by demonstrations, most notably in 2005, when the conservative Minister of Immigration Rita Verdonk was delegated to represent the government at the commemoration. Verdonk was prevented from giving her speech by a multi-ethnic group of demonstrators who loudly protested against her restrictive immigration policy. Seen by her followers as a successor to Pim Fortuyn, Verdonk started her own political movement, tellingly named "Proud of the Netherlands," in the spring of 2008 with an inaugural speech in which she denounced her opponents as people who want to place slavery monuments all over the Netherlands "to make us look bad."[38]

Verdonk's "us-versus-them" rhetoric reflects the neo-nationalist turn Dutch politics has taken since the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by an Islamic fundamentalist in November 2004.[39] The political rise of the far-right parliamentarian Geert Wilders, whose extremist anti-Islam and anti-immigration agenda is supported by an alarmingly large segment of the Dutch electorate, has put at severe risk the tradition of tolerance that has long been a source of national pride and identity. As a key symbol of multiculturalism, to both advocates and opponents of the idea that the Netherlands is a multicultural nation, the national slavery monument was at the center of a Dutch cartoon controversy in 2008. Among a series of anti-immigrant and racist cartoons published on the internet by a far-right Dutch cartoonist was one that depicted a racialized, overgrown baby burdening the back of a native-born working-class man. The text on the cartoon read: "What we need now is a slavery monument for the white Dutch-born taxpayer."[40] The cartoonist's message is obvious: white taxpayers are the true slaves, bearing the financial burden of unemployed immigrants. The unnamed cartoonist's arrest on suspicion of racism and his subsequent release on the grounds of freedom of speech received wide publicity in the Dutch media. Both his arrest and his release led to public protests, exposing the ideological fault lines in Dutch society. That six years after its unveiling the slavery monument played a central role in this Dutch cartoon incident indicates that multiculturalism continues to be highly controversial in the Netherlands, but also that it is a force the political right still needs to contend with.

Collecting Memories

Both in the United States and in the Netherlands, the confrontation with the national history of slavery has led to controversy and contention. Precisely because it has led to broad public debates, however, the slavery past has become living his-

tory. That the public debates about the monuments often turn on the politics of racial and national identity and memory is perhaps an inevitable stage in the process of reconciliation with, and atonement for, a painful and shameful past too long repressed. In fact, the public debates have themselves been a form of modern memorial activism. What James Young has said about Holocaust memorials also applies to the slavery memorial projects: "The never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end" is itself a memorial to slavery. Breaking down the concept of collective memory, in which Pierre Nora grounds a sense of national unity and identity, this dialectical model for modern memory-work proposes the alternative concept of what Young appropriately calls "collected memory."[41]

The African Burial Ground National Monument in New York and the Netherlands National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam are places where members of diverse communities can gather to "collect" memories. An example of such a gathering was the 1995 visit by a delegation of Ghanese leaders to the African Burial Ground in New York, to publicly take responsibility and ceremonially ask forgiveness for their ancestors' participation in the slave trade.[42] The concept of "collected" memory accommodates the diversity of today's multi-ethnic societies without relinquishing the ideal of social integration, based on racial and ethnic equality, which is the black Civil Rights Movement's enduring legacy. For the many groups, individuals, and even government officials active in the two memorial projects, participation in the memorialization of a history of enslavement, exploitation, and racial injustice constituted a new form of historically conscious and socially engaged democratic citizenship. Moreover, the public debates and the annual commemorations at the two national monuments have created a forum in which, as citizens of national and transnational communities, we too are challenged to address – and redress – slavery's continuing legacies.

Although the public debates surrounding the two memorials became increasingly contentious after 9/11, the African-American and Afro-Dutch communities' long but eventually successful struggle for a national slavery memorial shows that multiculturalism continues to be a vital, if often vehemently contested ideology and social and cultural practice in the post-9/11 era. The projects may have caused bitter divisions and exposed racial fissures in the social fabric of the multi-ethnic and multicultural societies of both the United States and the Netherlands, but controversy also created a public sphere and space in which coalitions had to be formed and power shared. Again and again, during the long and difficult process of realizing the two national slavery monuments, grassroots initiatives were accompanied and reinforced by political action, while conversely political interventions were legitimated by community involvement. By claiming control and public recognition of their past, African-American and Afro-Dutch community activists built diasporic communities of memory. Together with the other groups and individuals involved in the two memorial projects, they fostered a multicultural con-

sciousness and produced new forms of historically informed civic and political engagement.

Notes

1. Pierre Nora, "The Tidal Wave of Memory," *Newsletter Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen* 72 (2001), 26-27, http://www.iwm.at/publ/nl; Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 3, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 609-637; and Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (1989): 13.
2. Nora, "Tidal Wave," 26.
3. Ibid.
4. For a history of the incorporation of the African Burial Ground into the city and the area's gradual development over two centuries into the present-day City Hall Park district, see Michele H. Bogart, "Public Space and Public Memory in New York's City Hall Park," *Journal of Urban History* 25, no. 2 (January 1999): 226-57.
5. See James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and the Making of America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34. In 2005, the New York Historical Society organized a landmark exhibition on "Slavery in New York" to commemorate New York's forgotten history of slavery.
6. David W. Dunlap, "Dig Unearths Early Black Burial Ground," *New York Times*, 9 October 1991.
7. Dunlap, "Dig Unearths."
8. David W. Dunlap, "Excavation Stirs Debate on Cemetery," *New York Times*, 6 December 1991.
9. Alan Finder, "U.S. Suspends Digging at Site Of Cemetery," *New York Times*, 30 July 1992.
10. Warren R. Perry, "Archaeology as Community Service: The African Burial Ground Project in New York City," http://www.stpt.usf.edu/~jsokolov/burialgr.htm.
11. David W. Dunlap, "African Burial Ground Made Historic Site," *New York Times*, 23 February 1993, B3.
12. Michael O. Allen, "Reburial Plan Almost Set, FED Say, But Black Group Assails Delays," *Daily News*, 23 August 2001, 4.
13. Michael O. Allen, "African Burial Ground Project is Casualty of Sept. 11 Attack," *Daily News*, 18 November 2001.
14. Peter Noel, "Ground Hog," *Village Voice*, 9 October 2001.
15. Marcia Slacum Greene, "No Rest For African Burial Ground," *Washington Post*, 27 August 2002. It should be noted that the parties in the controversy did not simply follow racial lines. Greene cites, for example, a white scientist on Blakey's team, who emotionally corroborated Blakey's view that the team was the victim of racial prejudice. At the same time, GSA is obviously not an exclusively white government agency. Greene points out, for example, that a former GSA chief of staff who rejected racial accusations against the agency was black.

16. Michael Luo, "In Manhattan, Another Burial For 400 Colonial-Era Blacks," *New York Times*, 2 October 2003; Randy Kennedy, "Gray Skies Match the Mood at Reburial," *New York Times*, 5 October 2003.

17. Luo, "Another Burial."

18. In 2000, for example, US insurance company Aetna offered a public apology for selling insurance policies on slaves to antebellum slave holders. Aetna's apology prompted the Hartford *Courant* to apologize for having published advertisements for the sale of slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a historical overview of public debates about slavery reparations, see Johanna C. Kardux, "Reparations for Slavery and Colonialism," in Richard Juang and Noelle Morrissette, ed., *Africa and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, vol. 3 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 932-38.

19. Michael Luo, "City's Role In Slavery Is Recalled At Rites," *New York Times*, 4 October 2003. See also Alton H. Maddox, "Reparations and the African Burial Ground," *New York Amsterdam News*, 18-24 October 2007, 12, 31.

20. Nicholas Confessore, "Design Is Picked for African Burial Ground Memorial, and Heckling Begins," *New York Times*, 30 April 2005.

21. Karen Juanita Carrillo, "Architect for ABG Memorial Picked; Activists Prefer Somber Design," *New York Amsterdam News*, 5 May-11 May 2005, 4.

22. In the presidential proclamation that designated the African Burial Ground as a national monument, the purpose of the monument is defined as educational, aimed at teaching the public about the contributions of people of African descent to the nation; from the US government's perspective, then, it is about black heritage rather than slavery (see http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060227-6.html). The African Burial Ground Monument itself, however, clearly foregrounds the memory of slavery, as the dedication on the Wall of Remembrance indicates: "For all those who were lost / For all those who were stolen / For all those who were left behind / For all those who were not forgotten."

23. Rodney Leon, AARRIS Architects, "The Ancestral Libation Chamber: Memorial on the African Burial Ground National Monument" (no date). Design plan provided by the African Burial Ground National Monument Visitor Center.

24. The quote comes from an interview with Ayo Harrington, chair of the Friends of the African Burial Ground. Daisy Hernandéz, "Have Something to Say About African Burial Ground? Do It Now," *New York Times*, 27 July 2003.

25. Cited in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), 199.

26. Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven, ed., *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

27. Gert Oostindie, ed., *Het Verleden Onder Ogen: Herdenking van de Slavernij* (The Hague: Arena/Prins Claus Fonds, 1999), 11.

28. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

29. See, for example, Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

30. The quote is from an interview with Barryl Biekman, chair of the National Platform of slave descendants. Mark Duursma, "Onze holocaust duurde 350 jaar," *NRC Handelsblad*, 11 June 11 2002, 7.

31. John F. Harris, "White House Hails Dismissal, Africa Trip," *Washington Post*, 3 April 1998, A01.

32. This bill was enacted in 2001. See Louis Sala-Molins, "Devoir de Réparation? La France ne Veut Rien Savoir," in a special issue on "L'Esclavage: Un Tabou Français Enfin Levé," *Historia Thématique*, 80 (November-December 2002), 68-74.

33. A copy of this unpublished speech is in the author's possession.

34. Mark Duursma, "De Discussie over het Nederlands Slavernijmonument," *NRC Handelsblad*, 28 July 2000, 19; Marcus van Engelen, "Het Wordt Geen Monument voor de Surinamers Zelf," *Het Parool*, 1 July 2002.

35. Pim Fortuyn, *De Puinhopen van Acht Jaar Paars* (Uithoorn: Karakter, 2002), 158.

36. Home page NinSee website: http://www.ninsee.nl

37. See the website of the Canon: http://entoen.nu. For the slavery item, see http://entoen.nu/venster.aspx?id=23 The idea for a canon of national history itself seems to have been an initiative aimed at meeting post-9/11, post-Fortuyn demands for encouraging a sense of national unity, while at the same time recognizing the nation's cultural and ethnic diversity. See also Gert Oostindie, "Slavernij, Canon en Trauma: Debatten en Dilemma's," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 121, no. 1 (2008): 4-21.

38. Marcel Wiegman, "Nieuwe Koningin: Rita," *Het Parool*, 4 April 2008, 2.

39. For a discussion of the intensification of the multiculturalism debate in the Netherlands after the murder of Van Gogh, see Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

40. The slavery monument cartoon was printed in several Dutch newspapers after the cartoonist was arrested. See for example *de Volkskrant*, 21 May 2008.

41. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 81, xi.

42. G. Thomas Goodnight, "Messrs. Dinkins, Rangel, and Savage on the African Burial Ground: A Companion Reading," *Western Journal of Communication* 63, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 521. In fact, there are many transatlantic links between the various slavery memorial movements that emerged in the 1990s. For example, in 1999 a Middle Passage Monument was ceremonially lowered to the bottom of the Atlantic exactly 427 miles outside New York harbor to honor the human remains found in the African Burial Ground, then believed to be 427 in number. Moreover, the person who took the initiative for the Middle Passage Monument, Wayne James, a native of the US Virgin Islands, visited the Netherlands in 1999 to meet with the chairperson of the National Platform of Dutch slave descendants. For a discussion of the Middle Passage Monument project and its link with the Dutch project, see Johanna C. Kardux, "Monuments of the Black Atlantic: Slavery Memorials in the United States and the Netherlands," in *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence*, ed. Heike Raphael (New York: Routledge, 2003), 89-91.

Are We All Americans? 9/11 and Discourses of Multiculturalism in the Netherlands

Jaap Kooijman

The "multicultural drama" has become the catchphrase in the Dutch political discourse on multiculturalism and the alleged failure of ethnic integration policy. The term was coined by the Dutch leftwing publicist Paul Scheffer in an influential essay of the same name, published in January 2000.[1] Scheffer argues that the Dutch policy of multiculturalism has resulted in ethnic segregation and the exclusion of ethnic minorities from a collective Dutch history and identity. Although written before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the events of 9/11 reinforced the essay's political urgency. Moreover, the assassinations of the popular rightwing politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and the controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004 emphasized the seriousness of the multicultural drama. Fortuyn, running on an anti-Islam platform, was murdered by a white Dutch animal rights activist just nine days before the national elections; Van Gogh was murdered by the Moroccan-Dutch Muslim extremist Mohammed Bouyeri. Together, the two murders seemed horrifying symptoms of Dutch multiculturalism in crisis, prompting conspiracy theorists to point out that Van Gogh was murdered exactly 911 days after Fortuyn. Scheffer also made an explicit connection between 9/11, the two assassinations, and the multicultural drama. "Once you accept that multicultural argument against teaching them *our* history, you are excluding them from collective memory, from an enormous chance for renewal," Scheffer stated in a 2006 interview, adding that "September 11th gave many of them their narrative."[2]

By making a rigid distinction between "us" (the Dutch national collective) and "them" (the Muslim ethnic minorities), Scheffer implies that "our" culture can be reduced to an identity predominantly formed by a collective national history. Moreover, his statement ignores the fact that 9/11 and the assassinations of Fortuyn and Van Gogh not only gave "many of them their narrative" but also "us" a range of narratives, including some that polarize the debate, as well as others that instead challenge the rigid "us" versus "them" dichotomy. In my book *Fabricating the Absolute Fake*, I have analyzed the way 9/11 and the assassinations of Fortuyn and Van Gogh have been used in popular culture as part of a larger political dis-

course, ranging from pop songs and commercial rap songs to magazines and commercial "feel good" cinema, specifically addressing questions of national identity and multiculturalism in Dutch society.[3] In this essay, I will focus on art rather than popular culture, discussing how 9/11 has provided Dutch artists with a narrative to reflect upon a changing world. I do so not to make a rigid distinction between art and popular culture, but rather to show how art, politics, and popular culture are often intertwined. As in Dutch pop-cultural objects, 9/11 has functioned in Dutch art as a political reference point and a cultural symbol for "America." American popular culture is omnipresent in Dutch society, which is reflected in the realms of both art and popular culture.

First, I will address how 9/11 and the murders of Fortuyn and Van Gogh have been used in a larger discourse about national identity and multiculturalism. I will pay specific attention to the identification with "America," both politically as well as culturally. Subsequently, I will discuss two Dutch art films that explicitly refer to 9/11: *The American I Never Was* (2004) by Chris Keulemans, and *New York is Eating Me & The Cactus Dance* (2005) by Jeroen Kooijmans. Both films illustrate how 9/11 gave Dutch artists (rather than potentially radical Muslim youth) their narrative, each questioning in their own way notions of belonging to a particular cultural or national identity in relation to America.

We Are All Americans

As Dana Heller has pointed out in the introduction to *The Selling of 9/11*, in the United States the term "9/11" attained "the cultural function of a trademark, one that symbolizes a new kind of national identification – or national branding awareness."[4] Although Heller speaks explicitly about the United States, 9/11 might have functioned in a similar way in other countries, namely as a marker in discussions about national identity and multiculturalism. In the Netherlands, politicians as well as journalists and political commentators have interpreted 9/11, together with the assassinations of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, as marking a drastic change in the political climate, shifting from the celebrated principle of multicultural tolerance toward a renewed patriotism and a more restrictive view on Dutch national identity. As in the post-9/11 debates in the United States, both rightwing and leftwing politicians have called for a return to the history of the nation-state as the foundation of a collective national identity, in line with the multicultural drama argument that Scheffer introduced. However, as the Dutch political scientist Maarten Vink suggests, the paradigmatic shift ascribed to 9/11 and the murders of Fortuyn and Van Gogh is in fact the result of a longer historical process, as "Fortuyn and others did not so much start a new debate in the wake of September 11th, but rather radicalized a discourse of 'new realism' that had been developing for over a decade."[5] In other words, 9/11 merely functioned

as a rhetorically powerful symbol, adding a sense of political urgency to an already evolving political debate.

This perspective is confirmed by other recent writings on the Dutch political situation after the murders of Fortuyn and Van Gogh. Although recognizing that "the world had indeed changed since 9/11, and that world had caught up with Amsterdam," the Anglo-Dutch publicist and academic Ian Buruma hardly mentions September 11 in his book about Van Gogh's assassination. As Buruma suggests, even if the motive of Van Gogh's murderer Mohammed B. "might also have been affected by 9/11, ... this event appears to have confused him more than anything else."[6] In his article "Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh, and the Politics of Tolerance in the Netherlands," Peter van der Veer mentions 9/11 only once and, like Vink, he emphasizes how the event helped to reinforce existing political sentiments rather than prompting them: "The attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, seemed further to confirm Fortuyn's message that the world had changed and that fearsome Muslim terrorists were ready to attack Western civilization. To respond to these new challenges, one needed new leaders, and Fortuyn seemed to fit the bill."[7] Moreover, Van der Veer argues that the political debate says more about a changing Dutch culture than about Islam, even if most discussions are limited to the issues of terrorism and Muslim fundamentalism. The assassinations of Fortuyn and Van Gogh, more than 9/11, made evident that pre-existing notions of Dutchness – and its politics of tolerance in particular – were being challenged.

Does this mean then that 9/11 plays no significant role in the discussions on Dutch national identity, other than providing a rhetorical backdrop? In the United States, 9/11 has been used as a critical point in time to rethink American identity, not only in the political debate but also within academia and the art world. Essay collections such as *Dissent from the Homeland*, *The Selling of 9/11*, and *Terror, Culture, Politics: 9/11 Reconsidered* are telling examples of how, in American academic circles, 9/11 has been perceived as a crucial juncture of renewed national identification, politically as well as culturally and ethically.[8] In similar fashion, American artists as well as museums and galleries have taken 9/11 as a point of reference for reflecting upon American identity, with exhibitions such as *Here is New York: A Democracy of Photographs* (MoMA) in 2002, *The American Effect* (Whitney Museum of American Art) in 2003, and *The Art of 9/11* (apexart) in 2005. Although these examples do not share one "American" perspective – quite the contrary, each tries to broaden the views on 9/11, thereby often critically challenging the unequivocal patriotism of the Bush administration – they all can be perceived as American attempts at a renewed self identification, as a self-reflective questioning of what it means to be American. Even when European intellectuals (most notably Jean Baudrillard, Jürgen Habermas, and Slavoj Žižek) entered the debate immediately after 9/11, the emphasis tended to concentrate on redefining American self-identity.[9]

The question of how 9/11 has played a role in renewed discussions about national identity and multiculturalism in the Netherlands (and other Western countries outside of the United States) is complicated by the "us" versus "them" divide that seems to dominate the post-9/11 political discourse. When after 9/11 the French newspaper *Le Monde* famously declared, "We are all Americans," this declaration of transatlantic solidarity could immediately be incorporated into a political discourse framed by Samuel Huntington's thesis of a clash of civilizations. "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," President Bush declared nine days after 9/11.[10] If "we" in the Western world are indeed "all" supposed to be "Americans," how does that place "us" within the discourses of both a renewed self-identification as well as international politics? On the political level, this transatlantic solidarity between Europe and the United States seemed short-lived, as soon it was challenged by the unilateral stance of the American Bush administration – its War on Terror and the subsequent war in Iraq – resulting in a revival of European anti-Americanism. As *Le Monde*'s editor-in-chief Jean-Marie Colombani wrote in May 2004: "In the wake of September 11, we all felt ourselves to be Americans. [Bush's Secretary of Defense] Donald Rumsfeld would make us all un-American."[11] On a political level, then, the notion that "we are all Americans" was easily challenged; on a cultural level, however, this proves to be much more difficult.

This difficulty is apparent in the first Dutch academic essay collection on 9/11, *Stof en as* ("Dust and Ashes"), edited by Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik, which was published in 2006. *Stof en as* contains essays by Dutch and Belgian academics discussing the role of 9/11 in art and popular culture. As the editors explain in the introduction, 9/11 is not only a political but also a cultural event, one that helps to shape collective memory. Both highbrow art and lowbrow pop culture are instrumental in how "we" make sense of the tragedy. Plate and Smelik perceive 9/11 as a form of trauma that needs a process of collective healing, for Americans as well as for Europeans. "Even though it happened on the other side of the ocean, 9/11 was also a traumatic event for us in Europe."[12] From such a perspective, "we" in Europe are indeed "Americans," becoming part of a therapeutic reshaping of "our" collective cultural identity through American culture. This American dominance is reinforced by the art and pop-cultural objects that form the case studies of the collection. With the exception of an essay about 9/11 in French literature, the contributions focus predominantly on how 9/11 has been addressed in American art and popular culture. In other words, the editors suggest that these objects not only shape an American collective memory, but a European one as well. Thus, even if the notion that "we are all Americans" no longer holds up when transatlantic solidarity is challenged by the political actions of the American nation-state, culturally "our" identification with "America" remains strong, helping to shape "our" collective memory.

That, particularly after 9/11, such a personal investment in American culture can clash with a more critical view on the political actions of the American nation-state has been addressed by art exhibitions in the Netherlands. On September 11, 2005, the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam organized the video viewing *After 9/11*, featuring work by contemporary Dutch artists. In the six-minute short film *Afterhours* (2005) by Marc Bijl, the camera roams through the empty streets of Manhattan at night, presenting New York City as a ghost town rather than as the busy metropolis we know from the cinema screen. Herman Helle recreates the 9/11 event with the four-minute animation film *History of the World: Part Eleven* (2004), using orange-juice and chocolate-milk cartons as the city's skyline and David Bowie's "Heroes" as soundtrack. In the 37-minute short film *New York Is Eating Me & The Cactus Dance* (2005), which I will discuss more extensively later on in the essay, Jeroen Kooijmans takes 9/11 as a traumatic event to reflect upon his self-image, suggesting that not only the world, but also he has drastically changed.[13] All these artworks use elements of American popular culture to reflect upon – and at times criticize – the way in which politics and popular culture are intertwined.

In 2006, the Centraal Museum Utrecht organized the art exhibition *This is America: Visions on the American Dream*. The exhibition took as its starting point that "we all carry the American dream within us, yet, similar to this dreamed America, we also cannot break loose from the America that we despise."[14] Both *After 9/11* and *This is America* brought to the foreground the ambivalent position the claim "we are all Americans" produces, suggesting that a distinction needs to be made between the United States as a nation-state operating in the arena of global politics, and an imagined "America" made up of the images provided by pop culture through Hollywood film, television, pop music, and advertising. This ambivalent position is effectively captured by the concept of "The American I Never Was," coined by Chris Keulemans. Unlike the collective memory as suggested by Plate and Smelik, which is based on the idea that the European experience is directly shaped by American art and popular culture, the concept by Keulemans leaves room for more ambiguity. Dutch people have grown up with American culture, incorporating "America" within their everyday lives, histories, and memories, with the result that the boundaries between what is considered American and what is considered Dutch have become blurred.[15] As will be discussed below, both the project by Keulemans and the short film by Kooijmans show how 9/11 brings this ambiguous transatlantic composition of national identity to the foreground, suggesting that the Dutch indeed can be perceived as the Americans they never were.

Americans We Never Were

The American I Never Was (2004) is a multi-media project by Chris Keulemans, consisting of a website, a novel, a radio documentary, and a "road movie in still images" released on DVD.[16] The project can be seen as an autobiographical archive of images, memories, and stories about how American culture has shaped the life of someone living outside of the United States. Although born in the Netherlands, Keulemans grew up in different countries, including Tunisia, Iraq, and Indonesia, and most importantly, attended international American elementary schools where he was taught to be "a little American patriot, ready for junior high." However, instead of "returning" to New Jersey, the American state which had become his imagined home (based on his favorite comic book; he never actually had been there), Keulemans returned to the Netherlands where, eventually, he became more critical of the United States: "I was raised with the stereotypical, unabashed, happy and heroic image that the US could export of itself with impunity until 1968. After that I learned, like my whole generation, the darker sides of America: from Irangate to the Gulf War, from the permanent segregation to the omnipresent commercialization. Still, I never completely lost touch with that little boy's paradise."[17] The ambiguity that Keulemans describes is similar to the main premise of the *This is America* exhibition, which explored the same tension of being caught between a critical stance toward the politics of the American nation-state and a personal investment in American culture.

The film follows Keulemans on his trip "home" to New Jersey, which proves to be an ambivalent experience. Consisting of still images photographed by Rob Smits, the film features a voiceover by Keulemans, both in Dutch and English.[18] 9/11 plays a significant role early on in the film, when Keulemans attends a 9/11 memorial service at the Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken, New Jersey. Providing a clear view of the Manhattan skyline, the place is significant, connoting the American dream, as the young Sinatra used to stand at that exact spot dreaming about making it in New York City. Moreover, as Keulemans explains, the Twin Towers, erected in the early 1970s, were clearly visible from that spot in the park. "There was no need to dream any higher than the Twin Towers. And then, they smashed the planes into them. Suddenly the skyline was no longer a dream but a nightmare."

The film shows us how now, after 9/11, the Frank Sinatra Park is no longer a place of dreams but one of remembrance, filled with mourning people dressed in patriotic T-shirts and holding American flags, while the names of the fifty-seven dead Hoboken citizens are read out loud. One picture shows Keulemans, standing in the middle of the crowd, wearing the headphones of his audio-recording device, and facing in a different direction than the mourners, including one wearing a T-shirt reading: "Lest we forget our Fallen Brothers." Keulemans clearly does not fit in; he is an outsider. As his voiceover states: "What do I feel when

they raise the American flag, when I hear 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' the only national anthem I ever recognized as mine? I walk away.... Of this patriotism I'm no part. My sympathy remains that of the visitor. I'm only a patriot of my own comic book past." Here the ambivalence of his position becomes apparent. On the one hand, Keulemans recognizes "home" from all the pop-cultural images embedded in his memory, yet, on the other, the confrontation with the 9/11 patriotism of the "real" New Jersey makes him realize he is not an American after all.

Comparing Keulemans' *The American I Never Was* to *New York Is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* by the Dutch artist Jeroen Kooijmans produces a fascinating contrast. In 2001, Kooijmans was living in New York City, shooting a documentary about moustaches. Although not explicitly visible in the documentary, its promotional material reveals that Kooijmans watched the attacks on the Twin Towers from his New York apartment, an experience which the documentary claimed to explore: "The disaster had a profound personal impact on Kooijmans – his American dream suddenly became a nightmare." Just like in *The American I Never Was*, the metaphor of the dream turning into a nightmare is used. However, whereas Keulemans observes the "nightmare" of the patriotic Americans in Hoboken, Kooijmans' nightmare is more personal; it is "his American dream" which abruptly comes to an end with the event of 9/11.

In spite of the omnipresence of 9/11 throughout the film (at times implicit while at others explicit), *New York Is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* is still a documentary about moustaches. Kooijmans, sporting an impressive moustache himself, interviews a wide range of men from different cultural backgrounds who talk about their moustaches, while the camera zooms in on their mouths and facial hair. Early on in the film, Kooijmans himself is interviewed. He too can be perceived as the American he never was, as he explains that he knows the American culture of New York from the movies, revealing that American culture has always been a presence in his life. "You know everything even if you have never been here before," he says in Dutch. "Sometimes I even have the feeling that I play a part in a very absurd movie when I'm here."[19] Then 9/11 happens, although the event is not directly shown from his apartment window but through the "breaking news" television images of CNN. Not all the scenes that follow, however, were shot after 9/11. The moustache documentary continues, focusing on both the machismo and the homoeroticism of facial hair, often connected to the masculine uniforms of the New York police and the New York fire department. The documentary is edited in an anachronistic manner, alternating between scenes shot before and after 9/11, which chronology often is left unclear. Moreover, the interviews continuously shift from the triviality of moustaches to the seriousness of 9/11, and back again, suggesting that the topics overlap. At one moment, Kooijmans is shown standing on a ferry, dressed in a police uniform, with the New York skyline – including the Twin Towers – in the background. Although the scene ob-

viously is shot before 9/11, the connotation with the terrorist attacks is clear. Not only are the Twin Towers a strong visible marker, reminding the viewer they are no longer there, but also the police uniform recalls the rhetoric of hero worship and courage that the policemen and firefighters came to embody in post-9/11 American culture. That Kooijmans is wearing the uniform of the New York police now suggests a personal identification with both the victims and the heroes of 9/11, emphasizing the event's emotional impact on the Dutch filmmaker.

As a documentary about shooting a documentary about moustaches, *New York is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* is a film dealing with finding one's identity within a hectic multicultural city, a search for identity not only by the subjects interviewed, but also by the filmmaker himself. The events of 9/11 both confirm as well as interrupt this search for identity; 9/11 is clearly presented as a traumatic life-changing event, yet simultaneously, the search for identity is continued rather than terminally interrupted by 9/11, a notion which is reinforced by the film's anachronism, as the scenes shot before and after 9/11 alternate. This ambiguous function of 9/11 is visualized in one scene of the film, which has also been released separately under the title "Cargo."[20] A cargo boat is moving from the left side of the screen to the right, with as a backdrop the Manhattan skyline, including the Twin Towers. Once the boat has reached the right side of the screen, after blocking the view of the towers momentarily, the Twin Towers suddenly disappear. The scene's serenity presents a strong contrast with the violent images of the 9/11 terrorist attacks as endlessly repeated on television. Presented this way, 9/11 is stripped of its televisual sensationalism, while its suddenness remains emphasized.

A close look at *The American I Never Was* and *New York is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* shows that both Dutch filmmakers can be seen as "Americans they never were" whose cultural identities (including their national ones) are questioned by the impact and the aftermath of 9/11. However, whereas Keulemans distances himself from the American patriotism that permeates post-9/11 American culture, Kooijmans identifies with the personal impact that 9/11 had on American citizens (and those of New York in particular). In this way, the films exemplify the two sides of the ambiguous position of a critical stance on the politics of the American nation-state, combined with a personal investment in American culture.

Connecting 9/11 to Dutch Multiculturalism

The films I have discussed by Chris Keulemans and Jeroen Kooijmans are obviously just two examples of a wider range of Dutch artworks that have used 9/11 to comment on issues of cultural identity in a post-9/11 world. Unlike *The American I Never Was* and *New York Is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance*, some of these other works explicitly connect 9/11 to discussions of Dutch multiculturalism. For example, the solo exhibition *We the Dutch First Party* (Galerie Fons Welters, 2005) by Sara van der Heide includes the painting *On* & *On*, which shows the serene interior of a New

York apartment, with flowers on the wallpaper and two birds pictured on the television. Looming over this peaceful scenery is the reflection of the burning North Tower, with the second plane about to crash into the World Trade Center. As its promotional material suggests, the exhibition "alludes to the tensions that have slowly but surely come to dominate our society over the past few years. The religious and social polarization that followed in the wake of the murder of Theo van Gogh was one of [Van der Heide's] main points of departure for the series."[21] *On & On* is the exhibition's only painting that explicitly refers to 9/11, as the others are inspired by the Amsterdam multiethnic neighborhood Bos & Lommer. As the inclusion of the painting suggests, here 9/11 functions as just one of the images and events – albeit a prominent one – that have shaped the contemporary discourse on Dutch multiculturalism.

Even though *The American I Never Was* and *New York Is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* do not explicitly comment on Dutch multiculturalism, they do so implicitly by challenging the Dutch "us" identity in the rigid "us" versus "them" divide that is implied by the multicultural drama argument. They show that 9/11 provides a narrative not only to "them" (the potentially radical Muslim youth, as identified by Paul Scheffer), but also to "us" (the Dutch national collective), thereby revealing that the Dutch "us" identity is not clear-cut but ambiguous, and cannot be easily captured in a discourse of a collective national history. The films also show the ambiguity of the assertion that "we are all Americans," thereby adding complexity to the claim by Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik that the responses to 9/11 in American art and popular culture shape "our" European collective memory in the same fashion as they do the American one. 9/11 has provided these two Dutch filmmakers with a narrative, enabling each of them to present different perspectives on the notion of a Dutch national identity, including our position as the Americans we never were.

Notes

1. Paul Scheffer, "Het multiculturele drama," *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January 2000, http://www.nrc.nl/W2/Lab/Multicultureel/scheffer.html. Seven years later, Scheffer published *Het Land van Aankomst* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2007) in which he elaborates on his essay.

2. As quoted in Jane Kramer, "The Dutch Model: Multiculturalism and Muslim Immigrants," *The New Yorker*, 3 April 2006, 60-67, quotation on p. 64, emphasis in original.

3. Jaap Kooijman, *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), chapter 5, 119-140.

4. Dana Heller, "Introduction: Consuming 9/11," in *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, ed. Dana Heller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1-26, quotation on p. 3.

5. Maarten P. Vink, "Dutch 'Multiculturalism' Beyond the Pillarisation Myth," *Political Studies Review* 5 (September 2007): 337-350, quotation on p. 339.

6. Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 17, 207.

7. Peter van der Veer, "Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh, and the Politics of Tolerance in the Netherlands," *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 111-124, quotation on p. 117.

8. Stanley Hauerwas and Frank Lentricchia, ed., *Dissent from the Homeland: Essays after September 11* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003); Heller, ed., The Selling of 9/11; Daniel J. Sherman and Terry Nardin, ed., *Terror, Culture, Politics: 9/11 Reconsidered* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 2006.

9. The essays by Jean Baudrillard, Jürgen Habermas, and Slavoj Žižek are included in Hauerwas and Lentricchia, ed., *Dissent from the Homeland*. The title of the collection is significant, as it includes the critical responses of these European intellectuals within the "dissent from the homeland," meaning the United States.

10. George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," 20 September 2001, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

11. As quoted in Rob Kroes, "European Anti-Americanism: What's New?," *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 2 (September 2006): 417-431, quotation on p. 431.

12. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik, "11 september in kunst en populaire cultuur," introduction to *Stof en as: De neerslag van 11 september in kunst en populaire cultuur*, ed. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik (Amsterdam: Van Gennep/De Balie, 2006), 7-19, quotation on p. 16, my translation.

13. *Afterhours* (2005) by Marc Bijl can be viewed online at http://www.exposurerotterdam.nl/marcbijl/main.html; *New York Is Eating Me* & *The Cactus Dance* (2005) by Jeroen Kooijmans has been released on DVD by Artimo.

14. Text printed on the back of the exhibition's catalogue, Meta Knol and Pauline Terreehorst, eds., *This is America: Visies op de Amerikaanse droom* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2006), translation mine.

15. Kooijman, *Fabricating the Absolute Fake*, chapter 4, 93-117.

16. Website: http://www.deamerikaan.nl (Dutch) or http://www.theamericanineverwas.net (English); Novel: Chris Keulemans, *De Amerikaan die ik nooit geweest ben* (Amsterdam: August 2004); The documentary *The American I Never Was* (2004) has been released on DVD by Submarine.

17. Quotations on http://www.deamerikaan.nl/amerikaan/html/chris.jsp.

18. The DVD provides five soundtrack options. Chris Keuleman has provided two different voiceovers, which are both available in either Dutch or English: "The story of a man coming home where he never lived" and "The story of a third-culture kid." The fifth option is without voiceover, merely featuring the musical soundtrack by the band Meek. In the essay, I quote from the first English voiceover: "The story of a man coming home to where he has never lived."

19. English translation taken from the DVD subtitles.

20. *Cargo* by Jeroen Kooijmans, as a separate artwork, was published on 12 September 2006 on the website of the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*, http://extra.volkskrant.nl/oog/client/index.php?artworkId=114.

21. Press release We the Dutch First Party (2005): http://www.saravanderheide.nl/texts/pressreleases/2005%20We%20The%20Dutch%20.pdf.

"How could this have happened in Holland?" American Perceptions of Dutch Multiculturalism after 9/11

Jaap Verheul

"Something sad and terrible is happening to the Netherlands, long one of Europe's most tolerant, decent and multicultural societies." With these ominous words, the editorial of the *New York Times* started its analysis of the "deadly hatreds" that had seemingly engulfed the Netherlands after two political assassinations in 2002 and 2004.[1] What had happened in the Netherlands was, without a doubt, dramatic enough to justify an epic narrative. On May 6, 2002, Pim Fortuyn, the leader of a Dutch anti-immigrant party, was fatally shot just days before a national election in which he was predicted to score a massive victory. Fortuyn had become a controversial populist by attacking the established political consensus, and had especially targeted multicultural relativism toward Muslim immigrants. Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who, like Fortuyn, enjoyed being provocative and in the limelight, had similarly caused controversy by deriding political correctness and radical Islam in his films and newspaper columns. He was murdered in 2004 by a Dutch radical Muslim enraged by the short video Van Gogh had made for the ex-refugee Member of Parliament Ayaan Hirsi Ali, one of the most outspoken critics of Islam in the Netherlands. Her short video, entitled "Submission, Part One," in which she criticized the oppression of women under Islam, was severely criticized within the Islamic community. Both political assassinations and the ensuing political turmoil radically ended the utopian tone that had marked the Dutch debate about integration for so many years.[2]

It was no surprise that these disruptive political murders drew international attention to the Dutch debate about integration. Yet the almost elegiac wording of the *New York Times* article is remarkable. The newspaper was not just reporting on tragic events in a small, far-away country. It was giving meaning to fundamental developments considered highly significant for its American readers. The dramatic narrative American commentators offered to describe and analyze the astounding developments in the Netherlands offers valuable insight into the transatlantic perspective on multiculturalism after 9/11.

Framing Fortuyn

It is easy to understand why Pim Fortuyn both puzzled and intrigued American observers. With his shaved head, dandyish way of dress, and openly gay lifestyle, he was flamboyant, somewhat volatile and highly unconventional. At the same time, he was socially conservative, and ostentatiously displayed his wealth, with his butler and his trademark chauffeur-driven Bentley. His political views were just as complicated. He began his career as a professor in Marxist sociology, publishing thorough studies on social-economic policy. In the 1990s, however, he began writing popular books and newspaper columns in which he attacked the technocrat "Purple" government coalition of the "red" Dutch Labor party and the "blue" right-wing free-market liberals. He became one of the most vocal critics of the failings of the Dutch government's approach to health care, education, social security, and law and order, suggesting a series of radical reforms, some along an American model. Most conspicuously, Fortuyn had strongly warned since the late 1990s that cultural relativism within a multicultural society would inevitably lead to the "Islamicization" of Dutch culture. He accused the political elite of failing to defend essential modern values, such as personal freedom and individual responsibility, against the imperialist claims of Islamic fundamentalism.[3]

In the summer of 2001, a few months before 9/11, Fortuyn decided to enter politics. At first he became party leader of Leefbaar Nederland (Livable Netherlands), a national party which had evolved out of a number of local grass-roots parties in large cities that protested the aloofness, arrogance, and elitist mentality of local governments. When this party ousted him because he had openly called Islam a "backward culture," declared that Holland was "full up" and suggested to remove the ban on discrimination from the Dutch constitution, he started his own Lijst Pim Fortuyn party (LPF), taking most of the voters with him. Fortuyn managed a stunning victory in early March at the local elections in Rotterdam, where he pocketed thirty-five percent of the vote, leaving all the traditional parties far behind. As a colorful outsider, he suddenly dominated the national media and publicly embarrassed the leaders of the traditional parties with the joyfully aggressive and picaresque way he raised issues about integration; issues they politely preferred to keep under the table.

Until his murder, Fortuyn attracted only marginal and largely hostile attention from the American media. Leading newspapers routinely described him as yet another example of a turn to the right throughout Europe and, much to his chagrin, associated him with more familiar extreme right-wing politicians such as Jorg Haider in Austria, Philip de Winter in Belgium, and Jean-Marie le Pen in France.[4] Although Fortuyn might very well be said to have shared some characteristics of the American populist tradition, American media framed him against the growing transatlantic divide. Internet magazine *Slate* sarcastically argued that the Dutch populist demonstrated how 9/11 had not so much led to the xenophobia

and nativism of ugly Americans that many had predicted, but had rather created an "Ugly Europeanism" of prejudice and separatism. British historian Tony Judt of NYU similarly argued in the *New York Times* that the Fortuyn phenomenon grimly illustrated how Europeans were formulating answers to their obsessions of "crime, immigration and the loss of 'national identity'" that seriously threatened transatlantic cooperation, because they intentionally diverged from the American model. If nothing else, Fortuyn was seen as a symptom of growing anti-Americanism in Europe.[5]

Fortuyn's dramatic assassination on May 6, 2002, changed this view instantly. Most major US newspapers reported on the slaying of what was now called a "Key Dutch Rigthist." One of the dominant themes in their reporting was that of a paradise lost. This was a compelling storyline, which exploited the pastoral and pre-modern image of a Holland with windmills, tulips, and wooden shoes so thoroughly embedded in American popular culture.[6] Readers were persistently reminded that the Netherlands traditionally had been one of the most civil and tolerant countries in the world. It was, as one commentator found, "[a] bourgeois and orderly country that prides itself on tolerance."[7] Because it had mostly welcomed and accommodated foreigners, Holland had been a case study of utopian multiculturalism. As American readers now learned, however, dark forces had been lurking in this paradise. The sudden success of Fortuyn's party had shown that even this "Dutch tradition of tolerance" had already reached its limits. In fact, for many years, the integration of immigrants had led to problems that had been largely ignored by the political elites, both right and left. It was Pim Fortuyn who challenged this political consensus by addressing these manifest but ignored problems in the multicultural society.[8] He opened European eyes to those problems Americans had already been forced to acknowledge as consequence of the attacks of 9/11.

Two of Fortuyn's ideological positions in particular enthralled the American conservative commentators: his stance against multiculturalism, and his open attack on the European elites. Fortuyn was celebrated by neoconservatives as a monoculturalist, a liberal nationalist, a patriotic modernist, and a libertarian populist who attacked what he called "Europe's multicultural establishment." The *National Review*, the archetypal conservative magazine founded by William F. Buckley, in particular embraced Fortuyn as "a martyr in the war on political correctness." Rod Dreher of the *National Review* portrayed him as "an unapologetic libertine who stood firmly behind Dutch beliefs in a liberal, tolerant society" and who had dared to attack the collectivism supported by the ruling elite. Dreher especially applauded Fortuyn's attacks on "an increasingly ossified statist government overseen by [an] elitist political class which ... a growing number of voters see as unresponsive to its desires."[9]

It is ironic that the American neoconservative commentators suddenly embraced an openly gay politician who supported abortion rights, euthanasia, and a

modern lifestyle.[10] The neoconservative political magazine *The Weekly Standard* was slightly bemused by this paradox, and called the fact that Fortuyn was both a nationalist and a libertarian "the great contradiction of enlightened opinion." For Fortuyn, after all, to be tolerant meant stopping multiculturalism and stemming the tide of orthodox Islamic immigrants. This, according to The *Weekly Standard*, explains the silence in the liberal media, who could not see anyone else but "a far-right bogeyman."[11]

The Dutch Multicultural Debate

The sudden introduction to the paradoxical ambitions of Pim Fortuyn offered American readers a first glimpse into the growing debate surrounding multiculturalism in the Netherlands. This may have come as a surprise, since most American publications hardly associated the country of Hans Brinker with the problems of diversity and integration. When in 1995 Samuel Barber published his influential book about the global battle between Jihad and McWorld, for example, he added a nostalgic footnote, in which he explained that the Netherlands was one of the few countries left that were truly homogenous.[12] Barber's assessment utterly missed the reality that about seventeen percent of the Dutch population was either foreign-born or had one or two foreign-born parents. Although these numbers were comparable to those of the United States, the Netherlands was never recognized as a pluralist nation, because it lacked a national narrative that incorporated immigration as part of its self-image, mythology, and popular culture.[13]

Moreover, Americans may have failed to notice the multicultural realities of the Netherlands because the official "minority policy" of the Dutch government was a far cry from American-style multiculturalism. If the formal governmental position suggested a "cultural relativism" of mutual acceptance, policymakers left no doubt about the dominance of Dutch cultural values. In spite of the multicultural tone in terminology, their model of Dutch plurality foremost recalled the well-established principles of "pillarization," the system of segregation along religious and social fault lines that had dominated Dutch society until the 1960s. Ironically, it was as if the Dutch government had revived that largely obsolete arrangement of cultural segregation by placing immigrant minorities in a "pillar," assuming they would be able to emancipate themselves from their own station, just as other minorities had done in the past century.[14]

A new discourse about Dutch identity and the multicultural society promoting national core values and the need for assimilation had emerged rather suddenly, however, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The most prominent indication of a paradigm shift was the now-famous 2000 newspaper article by Labor Party member and sociologist Paul Scheffer. By defining the Dutch immigrant experience as "A Multicultural Tragedy," Scheffer sparked a heated national dis-

cussion which led to the demise of the ideal of Dutch multiculturalism. He compared the failed integration of immigrants into Dutch society unfavorably to the successful social emancipation of the working classes at the end of the nineteenth century. He also argued that the Dutch elites, who had energetically invested in that earlier social emancipation, had failed to recognize the urgency of the immigrant question because they were blinded by a "lazy multiculturalism." The resulting levels of unemployment, poverty, crime, and truancy among immigrant groups had effectively created an ethnic underclass, Scheffer warned, which formed the single most dangerous threat to civil order in the Netherlands.

When Scheffer tried to formulate a solution for the impending ethnic crisis, he firmly rejected multiculturalism as a meaningful way to deal with the Dutch immigrant experience, but instead cited Norman Podhoretz, the neoconservative commentator and former editor of the conservative magazine *Commentary*. The son of Polish immigrants, he had successfully climbed the American educational and social ladder. Podhoretz had famously described the painful but necessary step of severing his ties with his immigrant roots as a means of clearing the path to assimilation, as "a brutal bargain." It was this combination of ethnic disconnection and high-cultural inclusion that Scheffer now prescribed to the Dutch immigrant population, especially those who hailed from Muslim countries such as Morocco and Turkey. As Podhoretz had done, these immigrants should discard those ethnic values and practices incompatible with Dutch society and embrace the culture of their newly adopted mother country. Scheffer seemed to agree with Fortuyn that the Dutch elites should facilitate the assimilation of newcomers into Western civilization by strongly affirming a shared Dutch national culture.[15]

The Dutch public discussion about diversity intensified after the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. As the United States responded to the Muslim fundamentalists with a War on Terror and a reaffirmation of national pride and identity, the comparatively recent debate in the Netherlands about integration of non-Western minorities also acquired new relevance and urgency as it focused more than ever before on Muslim minorities. In that sense, the sudden rise and subsequent assassination of Fortuyn – who embodied the Dutch anti-immigrant sentiment – can be seen as one of the transatlantic consequences of 9/11. But it was the murder of Theo van Gogh that made these repercussions more clearly visible to American observers, and prompted some to engage in a reassessment of transatlantic differences.[16]

A Dutch 9/11?

When filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a radical Muslim on November 2, 2004, the fate of multiculturalism in Dutch society again became the subject of heated debate in the United States. American commentators and journalists revisited what had become common ground when they deplored the loss of

Dutch innocence, and described the political ineptitude and apparent limitations of multiculturalism and tolerance in the Netherlands. As the *New York Times* eloquently put it: "The attacks have scratched the patina of tolerance on which the Dutch have long prided themselves, particularly here, in a city where the scent of hashish trails in the air, prostitutes beckon from red-lighted storefront brothels and Hell's Angels live side by side with Hare Krishnas."[17]

There were many differences between the motives behind the two political murders. While Van Gogh shared Fortuyn's penchant for provocation and media attention, and had supported Fortuyn on several occasions, he was not a professional politician with even a remotely consistent program. If anything, his agenda was to insult and provoke Dutch bourgeois society. He ardently posed as a committed smoker on his weblog, which was published under the playful title *The Healthy Smoker*. He insulted Jewish sensibilities by publicly making a distasteful joke about the Holocaust, and was subsequently successfully sued for anti-Semitism. Unsurprisingly, he was also offensive toward radical Islam, both in his columns and his movies. In one instance, he notoriously used a neologism for fundamentalist Muslims insinuating sexual intercourse with goats.

First and foremost, though, he was a filmmaker. A distant relative of the famous Dutch impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh, he achieved moderate acclaim for the low-budget movies he had been making since the early 1980s, although none were commercially successful. However, he became instantly famous when he directed the short television film "Submission, Part One" for which Ayaan Hirsi Ali had written the script. The short movie was primarily a moralizing video statement, criticizing the treatment of women under Islam. It showed a woman addressing Allah and relating how, fully sanctioned by Islam, she was systematically abused by her husband and other men. The movie was especially provocative because it contained suggestive images of Koranic verses written on the nude skin of women, and the main actress was visibly nude beneath see-through veils. "Submission, Part One" was consequently banned in the Muslim world and sparked a heated public discussion in the Netherlands and abroad.[18] The November 22 issue of *Newsweek*, which carried the story under the title "Clash of Civilizations," was banned in Pakistan and other Muslim countries because it was considered "blasphemous and highly provocative."[19] Both Van Gogh and Hirsi Ali were threatened by enraged Dutch Muslims. Hirsi Ali has lived under 24-hour police protection ever since, but Van Gogh refused bodyguards because he was convinced that nobody would bother to hurt a "village idiot."

Ironically, Van Gogh was about to finish a movie about the murder of Pim Fortuyn when he was shot and stabbed to death by a Muslim radical, in broad daylight, on a busy street in the city center of Amsterdam. His killer, Mohammed Bouyeri, left a note threatening the lives of Hirsi Ali and other Dutch politicians, and menacingly predicting that the United States, Europe, and the Netherlands were doomed. As soon became clear, Bouyeri was in fact a fully assimilated and

well-educated Muslim, who was born in Amsterdam and carried dual Moroccan-Dutch citizenship. Disillusioned by personal and employment setbacks, he started to meet with fundamentalist Muslims who had become active in the Netherlands after 9/11, posted radical messages on websites, and joined a terrorist cell as a Jihadist.[20]

After Van Gogh's murder, conservative US media were quick to send film crews and reporters to the Netherlands to visit inner cities and immigrant neighborhoods, and interview Dutch pundits, commentators and academics. Not surprisingly, these reporters were warmly received by members of the Edmund Burke Foundation, a Dutch conservative think tank, and found their way to conservative Dutch statesmen such as Frits Bolkestein, who for many years had warned about the lack of integration of immigrant minorities in the Netherlands. They also found a new hero in rebel Member of Parliament Geert Wilders, who broke away from the right-wing liberal party VVD because of his stubbornly hostile position toward immigration. Wilders was praised for "asking the right questions, something that few in Holland have been brave enough to do."[21] The conservative press was particularly enamoured of Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Christopher Caldwell, for instance, hailed Hirsi Ali, who had become a vocal critic of Islam from within the conservative VVD party, as "a daughter of the Enlightenment" who "has been dealt a full house of the royal virtues: courage, intelligence and compassion."[22]

These conservative commentators churned out a series of articles, many of which were later collected in what became a true industry of alarmist books with titles such as *The West's Last Chance*, *While Europe Slept*, and *Surrender*.[23] Inspired by Samuel Huntington's thesis of a "Clash of Civilizations," they described how Europe was being infiltrated by radical Islam because the political elites, blinded by their faith in multiculturalism, were simply failing to respond to the impeding danger. Many of these commentators also described the murder of Van Gogh as a significant turning point in the European attitude toward radical Islam because, just like 9/11 had done in the United States, it opened the eyes of the public to the realities political and intellectual leaders had tried to ignore. Their account of the Netherlands accordingly emphasized the two related storylines of a "Dutch 9/11" and the demise of Holland's disastrous "multiculturalist experiment." Both obviously connect the dramatic event in the Netherlands to the recent discussions in the United States. The theme of "Dutch September 11th"[24] was especially appealing to the conservative commentators seeking to affirm that the United States was justified in its war against radical Islam. They now hastened to explain how finally the Dutch had lost their innocence and had awoken from their "cultural naiveté."[25] More importantly, they argued that this rude awakening opened the possibility of Europe finally joining in their War on Terror. Christopher Caldwell of the *Weekly Standard* found that Van Gogh's murder, exactly 911 days after that of Pim Fortuyn, "[was] described by people in Holland as having had the same effect on their country as the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 in the World Trade Center

Towers." The Dutch, he explained, used to have "a generous, no-questions-asked welfare state" but were having second thoughts, now that they had discovered that many Muslims in their country sympathized with the 9/11 terrorists, that Van Gogh's assassin was a member of an extensive terrorist network, and that a series of "American-style shootouts" had taken place in schools attended by immigrant children. With undisguised empathy, Caldwell observed that the Dutch Minister of Justice Piet Hein Donner was planning "something like the Patriot Act in the Netherlands."[26] In some conservative descriptions, the "retaliation" against the murder of Van Gogh, which was reported to include violent attacks on "at least fourteen Muslim buildings and schools," was blown way out of proportion.[27] In emphasizing that this was a turning point from victimhood to resistance, neoconservatives suggested that the two political murders had brought the Netherlands closer to the United States both in its experience with, and responses to, radical Islam.

"This Christmastime," conservative commentator Tony Blankley cheered in The *Washington Times*, "would be the moment when Western Europe finally joins our war on terrorism." Although he was convinced that the population of Europe had long been eager to do so, Blankley pointed out that the European elites had been in full denial about who the true enemy was. But now, he reported, the murder of Van Gogh and the subsequent violence in the Netherlands, "have forced high European leaders and news outlets to begin to publicly face up to the implications of September 11, 2001 and the migration of Muslims in large numbers into the heart of Europe." Blankley, too, elaborated on his thesis that the Van Gogh murder woke Europe from the nightmare of Muslim-dominated "Eurabia" in a book, The *West's Last Chance.* This book, which bore the alarming subtitle "Will We Win the Clash of Civilizations?" and received accolades from prominent Republicans such as Henry Kissinger, Rush Limbaugh, Bob Dole, and Tom Ridge, argued that "the cultural arrogance of radical European Muslims" posed a greater threat to the United States than did Nazi Germany during World War II. Although he believes that the public anger after the assassination of Van Gogh "is evidence that the European instinct for survival has not yet been fully extinguished," Blankley gloomily warns that this survival instinct is threatened by "multiculturalism and political correctness that has been advocated in media and academe and institutionalized in national and European Union laws and regulations for half a century."[28] Blankley's dire warning is a perfect summary of conservative irritations over European governments and intellectuals who failed to share the American perspective on the War on Terror.

Yet the notion of a "Dutch 9/11" was also an expression of American hope – that the growing transatlantic disenchantment might make way for a new alliance against a common enemy. The emphasis on shared experience was symbolized by the way the ominous numerical date notation of "9/11" was echoed in similar, Europeanized nomenclature for later terrorist attacks in Europe. Van Gogh had

used the title "06/05" for his movie about the murder of Pim Fortuyn on May 6, the Madrid train bombings of March 11, 2004 became known as "11-M," and the London public transport bombings of July 7, 2005 were immediately identified as "7/7" to emphasize the similarity with the attacks on the United States. The two Dutch murders stand out in comparison to these later terrorist attacks: Fortuyn was murdered by a lone animal-rights activist (as his followers would say: "the bullet came from the left") and the motives of Van Gogh's attacker were complex and largely owing to personal grievances. This makes it all the more significant that conservative commentators in the United States interpreted the political murders in the Netherlands as an indication that the European public now shared the pain of Islamic terrorism.

Attacking Multiculturalism and European Elites

American conservative journalists also hastened to conclude from the Fortuyn and Van Gogh murders that the European approach to multiculturalism was a dangerous failure. Although the Dutch people had long been aware of its failings, these journalists argued, they were kept from openly expressing their opinion by the "multicultural elites from The Hague and Brussels."[29] By stressing this connection between the lenient attitude toward Islamic immigrants and the ideological bias of bureaucratic elites, the neoconservatives opened a two-pronged attack on the multicultural ideal and on European leaders. Andrew Stuttaford of the *National Review* squarely blamed the "social pathologies" that led to Van Gogh's murder on "official Holland's embrace of multiculturalism, a dogma that made integration impossible and alienation a certainty."[30] He and other conservative commentators repeatedly argued that the specific Dutch form of multiculturalism, which conceived of immigrant communities as an autonomous "pillar" in society, prevented the assimilation of non-Western immigrants. The only sensible response to immigration, they insisted, seemingly oblivious of the academic and political debate raging in the United States over the past century, was "the ideal of the melting pot of assimilation, which nurtured the American dream for more than two centuries."[31]

It is remarkable that almost all of these conservative critics described multiculturalism as an experiment, a dogma, a mantra, a utopian dream, or "Holland's failed and feckless experiment in multiculturalism."[32] In their eyes, multiculturalism was forced upon an unwilling population by a hard-headed, haughty, and undemocratic elite. Ordinary Dutch people, they argued, had already recognized radical Islam as the true enemy and were opposed to such "social experiments." However, the multicultural rhetoric which "artificially undermined" Dutch identity was upheld by "official Holland," the technocrats, the "Euro-establishment," or – to conflate all the parties – "the multicultural elites of The Hague and Brussels."[33]

These American commentators were mostly well-informed about the heated political and academic debates about immigration and integration in the Netherlands. Yet the context in which they discussed the growing doubts about multiculturalism in the Netherlands also testifies to their concern about national identity in the United States and the growing dissent within the Western alliance. When they described how Fortuyn, Van Gogh, and Hirsi Ali had heroically attacked the "intolerant left-wing hegemony of political correctness," they almost seemed to be discussing the United States. A play on words in the title of an article in the *National Review* illustrates how the two struggles were intertwined. Just as the founding father of neoconservatism Irving Kristol had famously defined a neoconservative as "a liberal mugged by reality," so Theodore Dalrymple of the *National Review* now neatly summed up its neoconservative perspective on Holland in the header: "The Dutch, mugged by reality, toughen up on radical Islam."[34] As the left-leaning newspaper The *Village Voice* wryly observed, "American neocons, smugly gleeful at the so-called war on terror's decisive entrenchment on European soil, are clamoring to install Van Gogh as a martyr."[35]

Given their ideological mindset, conservative media in the United States found it much easier to read meaning into the Dutch struggle over multiculturalism than their liberal or left-leaning counterparts. The *Village Voice*, for instance, cautiously distanced itself from Van Gogh's movie "Submission, Part One" by deriding its "laziness as both art and protest." It was as if the alternative weekly found it difficult to fully associate itself with the Dutch filmmaker and the conflict over integration he had come to symbolize. Progressive voices in the United States have been markedly silent about the turmoil over multiculturalism in Europe. Typically, the liberal magazine The *New Yorker* left it to Dutch author Ian Buruma to make sense of the turbulence over Fortuyn, Van Gogh, and Hirsi Ali. He later turned his elegant analysis into the book *Murder in Amsterdam*, which is still the most well-informed and sensitive source in the English language on the background of Van Gogh and his murderer. The *New York Times*, too, leaned heavily on its Dutch correspondent Marlise Simons in its reporting.[36] The *New Yorker* was one of the few exceptions, with a long article by senior reporter Jane Kramer on the sad fate of the "Dutch Model."[37] Other bastions of progressive thinking such as The *New York Review of Books*, The *New Republic*, and *Tikkun* have chosen not to comment on the issue at all. Perhaps these periodicals had invested too much in a cosmopolitan affinity with European diversity to be able to take part in what amounted to a European "civil war" over multiculturalism.

By contrast, American conservatives proved eager to support what they perceived as the main victims of radical Islam in Europe. In 2005, *Time* magazine named Hirsi Ali as one of the hundred most influential people in the world, because she knew "the risks of standing up for one's beliefs."[38] When Hirsi Ali felt forced to leave the Dutch Parliament in May 2006, she was instantly recruited by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, an influential neo-

conservative think tank which had formed a policy platform for conservative sup-
porters of the Bush government, such as Newt Gingrich, Paul Wolfowitz, John
Bolton, and Lynne Cheney. Ironically, Hirsi Ali had become a victim of tougher
anti-immigration rules in the Netherlands when the Minister of Immigration and
Integration, who was from her own party, accused her of having provided false
information on her naturalization application. Her new American colleagues,
such as the staunch neoconservative Richard Perle, were quick to chide the Dutch
government for not acting fast enough to reinstate her citizenship, which had
been revoked because of the alleged lie, and for refusing to pay for her personal
security detail outside the Netherlands.[39] With Fortuyn and Van Gogh both "mar-
tyred," Hirsi Ali and right-wing party leader Geert Wilders were the only remain-
ing counterpoints to illustrate the weaknesses of the Dutch political establish-
ment in fighting radical Islam.

Othering Europe

The American debate about Dutch multiculturalism was affected by the rhetoric
of antagonism and distinction which flourished after 9/11. When Edward Said
evaluated the significance of his seminal book on *Orientalism* in the wake of 9/11,
he argued that the confrontational tone of US foreign policy underlined the en-
durance of essentialist stereotypes of opposition that he had analyzed in his work.
He sadly concluded that these stereotypes were eagerly supported by journalists,
scholars, and intellectuals such as Samuel Huntington, who constructed the no-
tion of an inevitable and enduring "clash of civilizations." Said emphasized that
the role of these polemical intellectuals illustrated the difference between "knowl-
edge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, com-
passion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand
knowledge ... that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency
and outright war."[40] He thus presented the American "War on Terror" as the
latest expression of a demeaning process of "othering," the strengthening of
identity by constructing opposition.

If American "communities of interpretation" had adopted an Orientalism that
found its origin in Europe, as Said argued, then they were merely continuing a
mechanism of othering used to construct similar opponents in other parts of the
world. Paradoxically, however, the main cultural contestant of the United States
had been Europe itself. It is within this complicated transatlantic opposition that
the American reading of Dutch multiculturalism can best be understood.

American academics and commentators from a wide range of political persua-
sions discussed and analyzed the debate that erupted in the Netherlands after the
murder of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh. It was the conservatives and neocon-
servatives who were most vocal and comfortable with drawing lessons from the
events.[41] By posthumously embracing the controversial political outsiders Fortuyn

and Van Gogh, and supporting kindred Dutch critics of Islam such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Geert Wilders as libertarians, proponents of free speech, and martyrs in their battle against multiculturalism and political correctness, these conservative Americans applauded their opposition to the political establishment and the multiculturalist ideology it supported.

In celebrating "The Demise of Dutch Multiculturalism," American commentators added a new dystopian chapter to a long history of American constructions of the Netherlands.[42] Remarkably, most of these constructions of Dutch identity – whether utopian or dystopian – were informed by conservative agendas, although perceptions of the Netherlands were incorporated in the national identity-building narrative in contradictory ways.[43] Starting with the disappointed assessments of the Federalists at the end of the eighteenth century, and the derisive stories by satirical writers such as Washington Irving, the perception of Dutch heritage in the United States changed into a utopian narrative of the Brahmin intellectuals during the mid-nineteenth century, and then turned into an almost hysterical Holland Mania of American pictorial fantasy and ethnic kinship at the end of the century. Although this premodern pastoral of windmills and tulips has remained firmly anchored in American popular culture up to the present day, another, dystopian image came into being during the 1960s, when the Netherlands became a byword for a welfare state gone awry and permissiveness gone too far. The term "Hollanditis" was suddenly coined for the contagious disease of pacifism and anti-Americanism that threatened to infect Europe and could sour the long-standing transatlantic relationship.[44] For centuries, the Dutch "other" has been used by Americans to legitimize their own geopolitical ambitions or facilitate domestic debates about the relationship between government and citizen, the moral and ethical fabric of American society, and integration and diversity. In this sense, "Dutchism" could be added to more familiar essentialist concepts such as Orientalism and Occidentalism. Differently put, the Holland of these discourses was an imagined community, not to itself, but to others.[45]

The fate of what was dubbed the "Dutch Model" of patience and tolerance was followed with particular interest in the United States, since it offered yet another example of the European struggle with integration and assimilation. By looking at the Netherlands, Americans were trying to find answers to those questions about their own society which had became especially vexing and pertinent after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. These debates revolved around the perennial questions of national unity versus cultural diversity, and state power versus personal liberty, but also brought about a reevaluation of America's place in the world.

In embarking upon a "War on Terror," the United States also recalibrated its relationship with Europe, which in many respects still served as a touchstone of American identity. Europe feared that the US government was jeopardizing civil liberties at home and international law abroad. Americans who supported the confrontational policy of President George W. Bush in turn blamed the European

allies for their unwillingness to support the urgent war against militant Islam, and for coddling potentially dangerous Islamic minorities at home. The case of multiculturalism in the Netherlands became a usable example in their American narrative about transatlantic contrasts. American anti-European nationalism has been a persistent undercurrent in American thought, used to legitimize both domestic cultural nationalism and global foreign policy. By constructing a distance from the European "other," conservative Americans have emphasized their own social identity and created an illusion of unified citizenship.

Notes

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3. See Pim Fortuyn, *Tegen De Islamisering Van Onze Cultuur: Nederlandse Identiteit Als Fundament* (Utrecht: A.W. Bruna, 1997); after 9/11 revised as *De Islamisering Van Onze Cultuur: Nederlandse Identiteit Als Fundament, Het Woord Als Wapen* (Uithoorn: Karakter, 2002).
4. Steven Erlanger, "A Jumpy, Anti-Immigrant Europe Is Creeping Rightward," *New York Times*, 30 January 2002.
5. Tony Judt, "America's Restive Partners," *New York Times*, 28 April; Chris Suellentop, "The Ugly Europeans," *Slate Magazine*, 26 April 2002.
6. See also Bruce Bawer, "Paradise Lost in the Netherlands," *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 May 2006.
7. Rod Dreher, "Murder in Holland: Pim Fortuyn, Martyr," *National Review Online*, 7 May 2002.
8. See for instance Keith B. Richburg, "Key Dutch Rightist Is Shot Dead: Anti-Immigrant Stance Was Attracting Support," *Washington Post*, 7 May 2002.
9. Dreher, "Murder in Holland."
10. Michelangelo Signorile, "Canonizing Pim Fortuyn," *New York Press*, 20 May 2002.
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12. Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad Vs. Mcworld* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 9, n12.
13. Han Entzinger, "The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism: The Case of the Netherlands," in *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States*, ed. Cristian Joppke and Ewa Morawaska (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Han Entzinger, "Changing the Rules While the Game Is On: From Multiculturalism to Assimilation in the Netherlands," in *Migration, Citizenship, Ethnos*, ed. Y. Michael Bodemann and Gökçe Yurdakul (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
14. Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, "Hoofdstuk 9. Naar Een Multi-Etnische Samenleving," in *Sociaal En Cultureel Rapport: 25 Jaar Verandering* (Rijswijk: SCP, 1998); Fleur Sleegers, *In Debat over Nederland: Veranderingen in Het Discours over De Multiculturele Samenleving En Nationale Identiteit* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

15. Norman Podhoretz, "Making It: The Brutal Bargain," *Harper's*, December 1967; Paul Scheffer, "Het Multiculturele Drama [the Multicultural Tragedy]," *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January 2000.

16. See for a longer discussion of the transatlantic dialogue about multiculturalism Jaap Verheul, "The Dutch 9/11: A Transatlantic Debate About Diversity and National Identity," in *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations, 1609-2009*, ed. Hans Krabbendam, Kees van Minnen, and Giles Scott Smith (New York: SUNY Press, 2009).

17. Craig S. Smith, "In Mourning Slain Filmmaker, Dutch Confront Limitations of Their Tolerance," *New York Times*, 11 November 2004.

18. "Submission," *de Volkskrant*, 30 October 2004.

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20. For the background of Van Gogh, Bouyeri and Hirsi Ali see Ian Buruma, "Final Cut: After a Filmmaker's Murder, the Dutch Creed of Tolerance Has Come under Siege," *The New Yorker*, 3 January 2005; Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

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22. Christopher Caldwell, "Daughter of the Enlightenment," *New York Times*, 3 April 2005.

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24. Dan Dilanian, "Death Highlights Segregation of Dutch Muslims: Theo Van Gogh's Slaying Sparked More Ethnic Violence," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 22 November 2004.

25. William Pfaff, "Europe Pays the Price for Cultural Naivete," *International Herald Tribune*, 11 November 2004.

26. Christopher Caldwell, "Holland Daze: The Dutch Rethink Multiculturalism," *Weekly Standard*, 27 December 2004. See also Caldwell, *Reflections*.

27. Blankley, *The West's Last Chance*, 76. By an equal coincidence, Theo van Gogh was murdered on November 2, which is "11/2" in American notation, the European equivalent to the US emergency number 911.

28. Tony Blankley, "Europe to the Barricades," *Washington Times*, 24 November 2004, 25-26; Blankley, *The West's Last Chance*. See for a similar line of argument Robert S. Leiken, "Fair Game," *New Republic*, 26 April 2004; Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2005).

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30. Andrew Stuttaford, "How Enlightenment Dies," *National Review*, 12 November 2004.

31. Suzanne Fields, "The Menace of Multiculturalism: Amnesia Renders the West Unable to Defend Itself," *Washington Times*, 15 September 2005.

32. Stuttaford, "Yelling Stop."

33. John O'Sullivan, "The Islamic Republic of Holland: How One Nation Deals with a Revolutionary Problem," *National Review*, 18 July.

34. Theodore Dalrymple, "A Wiser Holland: The Dutch, Mugged by Reality, Toughen up on Radical Islam," *National Review*, 30 January 2006.

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37. Jane Kramer, "The Dutch Model," *New Yorker*, 3 April 2006.

38. Irshad Manji, "Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Paying a Price for Her Views," *Time Magazine* (2005), http://www.time.com/time/subscriber/2005/time100/leaders/100ali.html.

39. Tom-Jan Meeus, "Amerikanen Lezen Nederland De Les in Zaak-Hirsi Ali," 24 May 2006. See also Douglas Murray, "After Ayaan Hirsi Ali's Departure from the Netherlands, Douglas Murray Asks, What Is Still Dutch About Holland?," *The Social Affairs Unit* (2006), http://www.socialaffairsunit.org.uk/blog/archives/000935.php; Sam Harris and Salman Rushdi, "Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Abandoned to Fanatics," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 October 2007; Christopher Hitchens, "The Price of Freedom: If the Dutch Government Abandons Ayaan Hirsi Ali, America Should Welcome Her," *Slate*, 8 October 2007.

40. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; reprint, London: Penguin, 2003), xiv.

41. Ibid., 338.

42. Robert Carle, "Demise of Dutch Multiculturalism," *Society*, March/April 2006.

43. Jaap Verheul, "Through Foreign Eyes," in *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands*, ed. Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

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45. See for instance Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (New York: Verso, 1991); Joseph Theodoor Leerssen, *National Identity: Symbol and Representations* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991).

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