American Multiculturalism in Context

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Views from at Home and Abroad

Edited by

Sämi Ludwig

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[1] For Ishmael Reed's performance, scroll all the way down on the facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1433389346974155/

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Sämi Ludwig

INTRODUCTION

SÄMI LUDWIG

Though I teach in France, I am a Swiss German-speaking Swiss, born and raised in a small country with four official languages and more foreigners than the United States (about 25% non-naturalized inhabitants). When I spent a year as an AFS High School exchange student[1] in the United States (I am a 1978 HS graduate of The Pingry School—a rather posh NJ prep school), I was overwhelmed by the opportunities of English that made it possible for me to talk to and interact with so many exotic people like Jews, Blacks … but ultimately all Americans were strangers and hard to figure out anyway. English also made it possible to talk with all the other exchange students ("Walk together, talk together"), who came from Iceland, Indonesia, South Africa, Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, Denmark, the UK, you name it. Like everybody else, I took for granted that the United States, the territory on which we all had that wonderful experience, was the perfect role model for multiculturalism. My experience of that year is one of the reasons why I became an Americanist.

At the University in Berne this trend continued and we studied minority literature. While they studied Maori and Australians in the English section, the American literature chair Fritz Gysin was an African American specialist. It was clear that the "hot" issues, the interesting debates and texts had to do with minorities. Maybe this is also because for "white" Europeans the so-called literatures in English provide access to many of the postcolonial worlds, to that "other" we all want to know more about. In short, the function of "English" in Europe is very different from the United States. Instead of imposed standardization it means opening doors to other experiences (and I guess this is generally a function of foreign literatures of any kind[2]). It has been my experience at conferences of CAAR, for

[1] See http://www.afs.org/afs-and-intercultural-learning/

[2] This may even apply to temporal foreignness, only that such historical material remains "Other" *tout court* in the sense that its representationalist quality will never be challenged by a living subject…

example (the Collegium for African American Research[3]), that many Black American scholars were nonplussed that there is so much interest in their culture in Europe and to find out that for many European scholars, the American culture worth studying is mainly a matter of minority voices. Whereas these perspectives were struggling for recognition against traditional curricula and syllabi at home, they were relished in Europe.[4]

In the meantime of course minority studies of all kinds have become established and institutionalized in Ethnic Studies departments, Black Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and specialized chairs, journals, and a very particular critical discourse dominated by United States institutions and their specific debates, and by Anglo-American university presses on both sides of the Atlantic and their "high standards" of research. This has developed into a certain kind of hegemonic pressure to see things and approach issues as established by this kind of critical discourse and its high priests, whose terminology has been relentlessly regurgitated—especially in the age of theory. It is only with this perspective in mind that in hindsight I understand Marc Chénetier's remark (the former president of EAAS, the European Americanists[5]) that "fortunately" in France there is a strong tradition to publish the work of *anglicistes* and *américanistes* in French! As a Swiss I had made fun of the provincialism of such a habit.[6] But Marc's point was precisely that the overwhelming influence of Anglo-American publishing needed to be kept in check by some kind of alternative discourse. As Prof. Dourari writes in our collection: "The superpower USA is not restricted to weaponry, but encompasses the intellectual leadership they inspire to other nations."

It is precisely this issue that has inspired our collection. The American discourse about multiculturalism may be very sophisticated and dense, but it is nevertheless domestic, and therefore subject to local habits of standardization. And if the debate on multiculturalism has been intense and dominated by an agenda of American "exceptionalism," there are certainly alternatives to the Anglo kind of multiculturalism and its debates in the age of Brexit and President Trump. Americans should know that most other countries today are multicultural as well, even though they don't make such a fuss about it. When my gay colleague from bourgeois Berne,

[3] See http://caar-web.org/

[4] I remember decades ago when the Detroit jazz festival advertised its cooperation with the Montreux Jazz Festival and the same lineup of musicians...

[5] See http://www.eaas.eu/

[6] Since the community of English scholars in Switzerland is so small and even linguistically divided, all publications are in the target language, English.

Switzerland went to San Francisco with his partner, of course they made a pilgrimage to the Castro. "It's like an outdoor museum," he said when he returned.

The United States is not the only interesting multicultural nation nowadays. I dare you look around at the faces and languages you find at Zurich Hauptbahnhof and compare this to Grand Central station in New York (I am not even considering Los Angeles—not enough trains there). Or look at the Swiss football team and its lineup of *secondos*. When they played Albania at the recent World Cup in France, the *lingua franca* between the two teams was Swiss German. Even brothers played on the different teams… (see Ames).[7] Or look at big business: The CEOs of the Swiss multinationals are mostly foreigners—NOVARTIS's Joe Jimenez (American), ROCHE CEO Severin Schwan (Austrian), NESTLE's Paul Bulke (Belgian). The UBS CEO is Swiss (Sergio Ermotti), but Credit Suisse's Brady Dougan (American) has recently been replaced by Tidjane Thiam (French and Ivorian). Multinational capitalism means lots of expats on the high-income level as well. Though Switzerland may not be the role model when it comes to refugees, there are certainly more refugees per capita in Scandinavia than in North America. And concerning linguistic competence, also consider that the European Union is a complex entity that sports a fantastic crew of translators in its headquarters, an "international" cooperation that struggles with many legal and institutional issues beyond the softer "intercultural" concerns.[8] In view of this perspective, the present collection also offers contributions about other nations' multiculturalism in order to confront the Anglo-American reading community with alternative multiculturalisms existing in other countries.

Good and bad examples of intense multiculturalism abound in the whole world—just as in the United States. Thus when I teach *interculturalité* in American literature, we often read captivity narratives ranging from Captain Smith (Pocahontas) to John Walker Lindh and Jessica Lynch (Afghanistan and Iraq), of course slave narratives, and much other minority literature in order to learn what interethnic relations should *not* be. My

[7] Here are the names of the eleven players of the team before the last World Cup: Djourou, Xhaka, Rodriguez, Behrami, Seferovic, Sommer, Inler, Lichtsteiner, van Bergen, Mehmedi, Shaqiri… There are very few French, Italian, and German names. Another interesting source of information on Swiss ethnicity is the page with the birth announcements of my local hospital. Again, search for the "traditional" Swiss names:
https://www.so-h.ch/kantonsspital-olten/aktuell/babygalerie.html

[8] Also note the many interesting intercultural learning materials published by the Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/EducInter_en.asp

point is simply that American multiculturalism is one among many multiculturalisms. Here in Alsace I once had to teach intercultural skills to a small class of students consisting of Algerians, of which some were actually Berber and/or French citizens (like the only girl with a head scarf) or Christians (from Algeria); in the same group I had a Russian, an Afghani woman, a Chinese student, a stunningly bilingual German girl, and some "white" French (but no Alsatian speakers). Of course they had more to teach me than the other way round. All I could do is make them aware of their own skills that had gotten them to university in the first place and encourage them to learn from each other. I made these students write papers on "critical incidents" that have to do with their intercultural experience—and the material I received is simply marvelous. I hope to publish it in a little book some time.[9]

Whereas some students wrote on exotic cultural differences between faraway places, others found incidents within their own culture at home, between generations. One Muslim girl described how a Lebanese boy at the French student dorm closed the door after inviting her in, and how much she had been afraid of this gesture—until she learned that Lebanese Muslims are more casual about such things. Another critical incident (which I don't have on file, unfortunately) describes the attitude towards dogs and how a French girl's grandparents, used to farm dogs on chains, were scandalized when they found dogs indoors and even sleeping on the family sofas in the apartment of their children and grandchildren.

I conclude from this that cultural variety exists on all levels along the axis from the private to the public. Which reminds me of T.S. Eliot's line "That is not what I meant at all" in "Prufrock." If we look at Eliot as the quintessential monoculturalist Anglo (he has very much been made into that), we notice that even within his supposedly so culturally uniform universe, difference is a crucial issue. The frustration of not understanding the other is simply universal. Being a scholar, this means that I have to express myself with as much precision as possible and be clear what I'm talking about. As a human being it means that I expect not to be understood immediately but hope that there are, sometimes, these lucky moments when we get through to the other person anyway…

A further dimension of multiculturalism I want to mention here is technology. I remember how I wanted to share *Ernstfall in Havanna*, a Swiss screwball comedy about international diplomacy,[10] with an American friend of Cuban origin. Sadly, he couldn't watch my present because

[9] See https://www.e-formation.uha.fr/moodle/mod/folder/view.php?id=81634
[10] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l3eIdY5wZQ

his American DVD player (Code 1) could not read the European film (Code 2)… Though Americans are proud of their own domestic variety, they are simply deaf when the message comes from outside of their habitat. On Swiss railroad trains, in contrast, we find not only Swiss power sockets but also European ones (well, continental Western European) to accommodate foreign passengers, or appliances that our own people bought abroad. Ditto for the public Swiss phone booths which accept foreign Euro coins, or money machines at the bank. In Europe (and in my case in Switzerland) these technical challenges are intense and we try to meet them.

A related example is the anecdote of my former California neighbor, a painter, whom I once showed a Swiss ten-franc bill. He looked at it with a specialist's eye, turned it around, felt it, and concluded that this was very beautiful graphic work. He was impressed and asked: "It is real money? Can I really buy things with it?" I conclude from this that the ultimate bottom line when it comes to value seems to be the greenback. Whatever varieties Americans find among themselves, they all rely on the same kind of money, banking, phone system, legal rights, technological standardization (which Silicon Valley is imposing on the rest of the world, including NSA surveillance), homologized university syllabi, MLA standards,[11] etc. Working in American minority studies, one sometimes gets the impression that Americans are in a state of Freudian denial about all the things they have in common…

Let me propose that one of the main conceptual differences between Europe and the United States when it comes to defining difference is the issue of race vs. language. To simplify the contrast provocatively, in Europe the people are "white" but speak different languages, whereas in the US they are of different "races" but speak the same language. We are mainly multicultural—you are primarily multiracial. Immigration lore has made Americans fetishize all kinds of differences at the expense of admitting how much they have in common (including their domestic quarrels)—an aspect much more obvious to foreigners. But there is a more important point here. The racialist approach on the American side of the Atlantic, which has its origins in colonialism and slavery and the legal discourse emanating from that experience is primarily visual, judging people by their phenotype. To be sure, looks *are* very important and we all make decisions based on exterior prejudices. After all, we do not always have the time to

[11] The editing of the present volume is a good example of the additional work it takes to meet printing demands when your clientele's standards of writing differ considerably...

go deeper. But my personal conviction and my research on cognition tell me that identity, the self (so much denied by hopeless poststructuralist theoreticians), is better expressed through a person's interiority, i.e., his or her own language behavior. You shouldn't judge a book by its cover, as we say.[12]

In "Thin Pluralism" I gave the example of the ex-wife of the Swiss ex-ambassador to the United States, Shawn Fielding (or: Mrs. Thomas Borer), a former Texas beauty queen, who may look white or "European," but who will be recognized as a foreign American as soon as she opens her mouth, no matter how lavishly she dresses up with Swiss crosses (google her!). In contrast to her, former track athlete Dave Dollé is black and used to look very much like his competitors from Jamaica when in competition. But when he speaks on the radio, his dialect is most certainly ours. There is not doubt that he belongs, because you can only speak the authentic local language if you have grown up here. I have a daughter who looks Vietnamese, was born in California, but considers herself Swiss German, and a son who looks Ethiopian but was born here and identifies with his parents' language as well.[13] Thus Switzerland, where dialects are extremely important, categorizes differently. Voice is more real than skin. You bet that Minnesotans, Bostonians, certain Southerners and even New Yorkers also honor that kind of difference, but still, "local sound" has not been on the central radar of American identity discussions for a while.

Multiculturalism is a very complicated affair, and one of the claims of this collection is that there are many different approaches and that we should compare notes. Everybody is exceptionalist. Still, when it comes to institutionalizing things, there is another point. As a European, I am worried about American violence in general, the lack of gun control, the prison-industrial complex, the death penalty in Texas. I wouldn't want to live there. After the election of Donald Trump, the United States is certainly no longer a progressive role model. I think there are alternatives and we need more competition. In my own Swiss canton, Solothurn, the last official

[12] Ultimately, this is a matter of digitalization, of conceptual representation (cognitive result), as opposed to mere analogic imagery (perception, WYSIWYG); see my discussion of this issue in *CONCRETE LANGUAGE* ("Theoretical Premises: Digital Essences and Analogic Images" 18-44) and later in *Pragmatist Realism* ("The Cognitive Paradigm: Or, an Alternative Lineage of Pragmatism" 27-88).

[13] Curiously Amharic was entered as his language and Christian Orthodox as his religion in Jonathan's birth certificate (!). As if language and religion were part of your genetic heritage…

execution took place in 1855 and the death penalty was abolished in 1874 (*Swiss Historical Lexicon*[14]). The percentage of prisoners is much lower.

If multiculturalism is supposed to be a desirable state of things beyond the experience of slave narratives, we certainly need to agree on some kinds of human rights as a common goal. And though Humanism has been deconstructed by the new theorists and exposed as a colonializing device to impose European culture, the continuous immigration "pull" factor to Europe and the United States speaks otherwise. There is obviously still something desirable about certain Western values beyond mere wealth or power even though, in parallel acts of slandering, Western neo-liberal capitalism has opened up (or rather sold out) its own "market economy" of the formerly so-called "free world" to a host of new entrepreneurs from China, Saudi, Russia, and many other governments whose cronies rank low in the Transparency International corruption index[15] and who have bought some crown jewels of our economy beyond big football teams, undermining a free trading system that has formerly emphasized its ties with democracy and human rights. *Tempi passati*. Obviously, global capitalism without human rights is not a cure-all.

In *Human Rights Without Democracy?* Gret Haller, once president of the Swiss parliament and later OSCE Human Rights Ombudsperson for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, compares American and European approaches and makes some astute comments on the legal predicaments of "ethnic rights" and the imposition of American identity issues in the Dayton Accords that have lead to a virtual gridlock in Bosnian politics. Her point is that there are only "human rights" and she insists on that common denominator above any ethnic declinations. This will allow for a multiculturalism without fragmentation, a form of essentialism that allows for empathy and the recognition of the other as "equal" in the sense of "equally human," a positive force of self-determination and self-expression that eludes "negativity," that cankerous dark backside of formalist logic enamored with its own discourse. Thus we need multiple positives, as we need to accept multiple superlatives. We should not be guided by want but by our curiosity. In our final discussion at the international conference on American multiculturalism in Mulhouse,[16] we agreed that one of the issues was to avoid defining the other in terms of negativity and our own projections, and instead to opt for a multiplicity of positives. Instead of defining

[14] See http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D9617.php
[15] See http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015
[16] See our facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1433389346974155/

the other by the darkness of our own mind, we should listen to what the others have in *their* mind (and listen to the "dark" people).[17]

It is for this reason that the present collection cannot be comprehensive (a preposterous claim), but simply aims to create a forum of different approaches, different disciplines and different opinions. Organizing our contributions has been challenging and ultimately somewhat arbitrary. The collection begins with a section on art and culture, and a series of more general articles that make a theoretical contribution. The first is *Natalia Vysotska*'s "Multiculturalism as a Challenge to Aesthetic Theory." Natalia is a major figure in American studies in the Ukraine, and in her paper she sets out to explore the uneasy relations between the tenets of classical aesthetic theory and the realities of cultural diversity. She looks at the complex relations of multiculturalism "with the category of the aesthetic linked to the issues of cultural identity and canon formation," discussing the work of conservatives, theoreticians, and a "third group of thinkers […] still seeking ways of non-reductive preservation of both universal and particular, objective and subjective, to provide adequate response to cultural diversity." This kind of quest has for her the greatest appeal. Vygotska gives us a history of the formulation of modern aesthetic concepts and how this has lead to a debate between the aesthetic and the political. Looking at the work of Elliott, Ickstadt, Mohanty, and many others, she moves on to the "concept of transculture" as a new episteme that refuses complete cultural translation. This is where she can also bring in the contribution of multiple Eastern European scholars.

Next is *Meili Steele*'s contribution to a very American debate of "Multiculturalism versus Inequality: A False Opposition," in which he discusses the problem that "[m]any in the American Left have gone from advocating attention to cultural and social differences, or multiculturalism, to criticizing it as a distraction from social stratification." He discusses two major approaches to normativity employed by critics of multiculturalism, namely the "constructivist" approach, which finds expression in the work of legal and political philosophers, such as Habermas, Rawls, Korsgaard, and Benhabib, and the "antisubordination" approach in American political theory, which "looks at patterns of subordination, at the effects of laws and not at the intentions of the authors." He then sketches "an alternative approach to normativity that enables us to speak of the normativity bound up with texts and discursive forms," followed by a discussion of Barack

[17] Also see Snead, who states: "Blacks still 'represent' otherness and/or dark areas of the white mind" (49).

Obama's famous "race speech" entitled "A More Perfect Union" and the way it relates to the discursive form of normativity laid down by *Brown v. Board.* Steele concludes: "Multiculturalism is necessary to protect equality, for equality must be understood through discursive forms and not just through the application of a principle."

In "Democratic Doxa: Toward a Genealogy of Typicality in American Nationalist Literature" *Christopher G. Diller* approaches American multiculturalism from a particular historical perspective, discussing the work of the Beecher family, moving via Tocqueville to Harriett Beecher Stowe and her twentieth-century descendent John Beecher (1904-1980), discussing their different notions of "democracy." Analyzing the "type" in antebellum America, many of Diller's subtle observations are based on the fact that "Darwin's new paradigm inverted the relationship between the individual and the typical that had undergirded the antebellum literary type." Starting out from Walter Lippmann, Diller then discusses the modern definition stereotype, which "became the dominant understanding of typicality—ironically, a kind of stereotype of the stereotype—and one that informs American literary studies to this day." Thus he suggests differentiation because types "are pre-rational ideas and images deeply saturated by emotional and cultural predispositions."

The next section directly moves into specifics and covers a newly rediscovered multicultural group: Arabs in America—and that in readings from outside, by authors working outside the American campus discourse. The Algerians *Bouchra Bouterra* and *Toufik Lachouri* proudly celebrate "Arab Americans: The example of Naomi Shihab Nye" and give us a great sense of the importance of having a voice of one's own! They associate the Arabs in America with "neo-Puritans" who have "escaped segregation, terrorism, and all sorts of problems in their own countries and fled to this Promised Land in an attempt to have a better life." Discussing Arab American literature Bouterra and Lachouri observe that it "has been influenced by difference and the principle of acceptance of differences." The lines of Palestinian American Naomi Shihab Nye "stress the most sensitive side of humanity; how we can feel each other and carefully listen to each other. When we listen, and understand each other's suffering, it will be impossible for us to hurt each other." I hope their optimism is contagious when they conclude that "Nye's 'kindness' theory, or therapy, solves all multicultural and ethnocentric issues."

In "'*D'ici et d'ailleurs*': Hybridity, Double Standards and the Western Arab-Muslim Woman," *Rim Khaled* provides a comparative Tunisian perspective on the hyphenated Arab life in in France and the United States,

based on the biography *Née en France. Histoire d'une Jeune Beur* by Aicha Benaissa, a French woman of Algerian descent, and the American television show *All-American Muslim*, which focuses on a group of families of Lebanese descent living in Dearborn, Michigan. Khaled observes how her heroines advance "one culture or the other depending on the context and on which culture feels closer at that moment. This is a tendency typical of hybrids, and it demonstrates how the process of self-identification is quite relative and contextual." She notes that these women experience the "idea of 'polyphonous identity,' as […] a form of cultural schizophrenia" reminding us of Bateson's notion of the "double bind." The liminal "third space" is not celebrated but rather like Ralph Ellison's invisible identity experienced outside of history.

Another comparative contribution comes from *Sihem Arfaoui*. In "Ex/tension Of/In 'A Nation Peopled by the World': Re-evaluating the Kaleidoscope in Arab American and Asian American Texts," she traces similarities in *Mona in the Promised Land* (1996) by Chinese American Gish Jen and *Crescent* (2003) as well as *The Language of Baklava* (2005) by Arab American Diana Abu-Jaber. Arfaoui criticizes strategies of fetishism in which "ethnic writers end up overlooking that the very process of accentuating the worth and distinctiveness of ethnic idiosyncrasies also involves pinning them down" to gestures of commodification. Instead Arfaoui suggests that "ethnic writers, individuals and communities […] look for and ponder upon less ambivalent alternatives in ways which could allow them to disrupt the order of domination while also resisting and transcending stereotypes."

Arfaoui's comparison piece serves as transition to our section on American minority literature, which starts with an astute analysis on the commercial Orientalizing tendencies in Asian American literature. *Sheng-Mei Ma*'s "Asian Birthright and Anglo Bequest—Chang-rae Lee and Bich Minh Nguyen" discusses the frequent abuse of the label "immigrant writer" as a "race card" being played by the publishing industry:

> …immigrant's linguistic dis-ability is as a rule suppressed in Asian American writings featuring immigrant characters. Only in novelists with a musician's ears and a linguist's skills of transcribing un-English sounds and rhythm can we expect to hear the mangled speech pattern of a large portion of immigrants, such gifted novelists as Louis Chu, Chang-rae Lee, and Patricia Park.

Thus he suggests that "[b]y the standard of the word test that diagnoses Alzheimer's in *Still Alice* (2014), I, an immigrant from a non-English

speaking background with a career in academe, having written my share of books in English, would be deemed exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's." Discussing the danger of using the terms "immigrant" and "refugee" interchangeably, Ma find his material in surprising places, like when he observes that "[e]xcerpts from Nguyen's books are compiled into 'The Good Immigrant Student' on a U.S. Department of State website pitching multiculturalism, 'Immigrants Joining the Mainstream.'"

Yet another perspective is presented by the poet and Latin American literature professor *Fernando Valerio-Holguín*, who discusses in "Multiculturalism and Transnationalism: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz" the failure of "integrationist multiculturalism" in that book. He finds that Oscar Wao "evokes an archetypal racial solitude of numerous black characters from the Western world." Invoking Homi Bhabha among others, Valerio-Holguín concludes that "[t]he privileged status conferred by Bhabha to the concept of 'third space' with respect to the hybrid becomes a disadvantage as Oscar lives in a status of double marginality." He rather sides with Fanon's notion of the "anxious man who cannot escape his body."

In "Straddling Worlds: A Comparative Study of the Multicultural Experiences of Anurag Mathur and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie," *Arpa Ghosh* looks at the example of ethnic visitors' experience in United States academia and how they are keeping their distance:

> *Americanah*, a pejorative term in the onset of the novel meaning a Nigerian student blindly and snobbishly enamoured of America and the cultural liberalism it stands for, takes on a multicultural dimension at the end, signifying an independent, experienced woman who has earned wealth and self-confidence during her stay in America and who is capable of holding her own in the patriarchal culture of modern day Nigeria.

Yet Ghosh observes that

> America, as culture and nation state, offers an essential open-mindedness and valuable democratic freedoms to its guests and citizens: the freedom to question and criticize its shortfalls as unbiased nation state, as is evident from Mathur's and Adichie's novels. Both criticize Americans for their naïveté and lack of interest regarding minority cultures, yet read against the grain their texts portray America as a land of opportunity and open-mindedness.

The crucial issue seems to be a supra-nationality that Ghosh even finds … in Karl Marx.

The fourth section is dedicated to the work of a specific contemporary writer, honoring Ishmael Reed's lifelong commitment to American multiculturalism. It presents a stunning array of new comparative insights on his work, starting out with *Wendy Hayes-Jones*'s "Multiculturalizing America: Ishmael Reed and the Cultural Mosaic." She reminds us that Reed "is in many ways the quintessential American patriot finding his artistic inspiration within the cosmopolitanism and pluralism of U.S. life." Surveying his career and its development, Hayes-Jones lays out "how Reed establishes his own particular take on combining cosmopolitan values within the creed of American Exceptionalism." Thus

> the writings of Ishmael Reed draw our attention to a central irony. For if the discourse of 'multiculturalism' emerged due to the ethnic resilience of African Americans, it now functions as a term that allows white Americans to embrace their diverse ethnicities (Irish-American, Italian-American, Jewish-American etc.), while denying that diversity to African Americans who are rendered homogeneously as 'black'.

Hayes-Jones discusses this conceptual paradox in a memorable discussion of Reed's claiming his Irish roots.

An outstanding contribution with historical scope and literary sensibility is *Stephen Casmier*'s "The First Rainbow Coalition and the End of Multiculturalism in Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*," in which he starts out from the imagery associated with the death of a character and then moves to the history of the Black Panthers and their newspaper coverage: "Indeed, turning to the morgue of a paper such as *The Chicago Tribune* reveals that *Mumbo Jumbo*'s newspaper stories are more pastiche than invention." Introducing us to a "revolutionary, theatrical art group—The Motherfuckers—who took their name from Baraka's poem" and Tom Wolfe's "Radical Chic" new journalism, Casmier makes the case that "[b]y the end of the 1960s, mainstream media representations of Black radicalism seemed inescapably entrenched in and controlled by the minstrel aesthetic."

In *Yuqing Lin*'s "Didn't I Tell You?—The Hoodoo Conjurer of *Japanese by Spring*," we learn that Reed's "essay 'America: The Multinational Society' has been excerpted in the most widely used College English textbook in China, as a testimony of American multiculturalism. His trademark Neo-Hoodooism brings a new consciousness of folk culture into American multicultural writing." One of her most interesting observations is when she finds that Reed's "idea of multicultural syncretism is similar to the Confucian notion of "seeking harmony without uniformity" (和而不同), which means people should tolerate disparate ideologies and contrib-

ute different opinions." As she observes, "uniformity [is] like mixing water with water, or playing the same tune over and over." Thus Chinese Harmony is like Ishmael Reed's gumbo, like cooking soup, "using right amounts of water, fire, wood, vinegar, meat sauce, salt, and plum to cook fish or meat": "the cooks add ingredients to complement the taste, adding condiments if it's too mild or adding water if it's too rich."

Jiří Šalamoun is a young scholar from Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, who has extensively worked on the function of humor and irony in Reed's work. In "The New Irony of Ishmael Reed against the New Racism of Postracial America," he writes that "satire is vitally dependent on social norms" and observes that Reed's humor has changed in his work, moving from contrast-based irony in his early novels to an argument-based irony that coincides with the beginnings of the so-called postracial period: "[A]rgument-based irony provides the reader with more explanation as to why a type of behavior or thinking may be objectionable than contrast-based irony." Šalamoun's examples show that nowadays racism "has to be proven in the first place before it can be attacked. In this respect, argument-based irony eases the process of recognition of racism and anti-multiculturalist sentiments."

The icing on the cake in this section is of course the contribution by *Ishmael Reed* himself. In "Jazz Musicians as Pioneer Multi-Culturalists, the Co-Optation of Them, and the Reason Jazz Survives," he moves from painting and literature to jazz, arguing that many of the jazz musicians have embraced foreign influences earlier than other artists, in particular when it comes to their religious orientation: "Like their predecessors, these musicians not only performed a mixing and sampling of other musical traditions, but they were avant-garde in fashion, philosophy, language and religion." Covering bepop, Afrosurrealism, and statements by many jazzmen and critics, Reed once more provides a host of facts: "In the 1960s, Black poets would make important breakthroughs. They would end the copying of the 'masters' T.S. Eliot, Henry James, and Hemingway, and begin to explore other languages, Arabic and African languages. But the musicians were there first." Reed provides statistics, personal testimony, the works. And as always, he has something to say: "Kalamu was saying that Jazz is the most influential. I was saying words. I said what would have happened if Martin Luther King, Jr. had played his 'I have a dream speech' on the saxophone. Bullins thought this funny. But Kalamu had a point."

From this intensive contact with contemporary fiction and Ishmael Reed in particular, we move on to a next section on poetry. *Jennifer K. Dick* dis-

cusses "Craig Santos Perez and Myung Mi Kim Voicing the Integral Divide: Reshaping American History through Multi-lingualism." She explores "how Perez and Kim's making of a new English within their poetry collections seeks to account for the experience of the multicultural and polyvalent self, for their lost or vanishing cultures as those are absorbed into America." We read, for example, that "Kim delights in this untranslatable, naming it not as a space of division, of a lack of communicative possibility, of that which is forgotten or lost, but rather she announces that this blank line is a link, it is something we share in, that spans across languages and peoples." As Dick concludes: "In each of us, certainly, there are many things we simply cannot say even in our own language, let alone in the language of someone else."

Nevertheless, poets are trying to express their multicultural experiences. This is why this section also contains poetry—first two poems by *Tennessee Reed* on her experiences in Mulhouse, France, and in the Engadin mountains in Switzerland. This is followed by her father *Ishmael*'s poem dedicated to Professor Peter André Bloch, on his impressions of staying in the house in Sils where Nietzsche wrote some of his most important works.[18] And I am especially pleased that we also received some wonderful poems from Linda Sue Warner, a Comanche Indian who writes under the name of *V. Jean Tahdooahnippah*:

> Your traditions and mine are not forgotten.
> The past can not be changed and it is not our
> right to forgive.
> You ask me to be Indian,
> but,
> I dare you to be.

These creative contributions demonstrate the common efforts of artists and critics to come to grips with our transcultural world.

One of the aims of the inclusiveness of this collection is also to present issues of multiculturalism beyond the word. In "Suzushi Hanayagi at Mulhouse" *Carla Blank*, distinguished author, dancer, and choreographer, presents the work of her late friend, the extraordinary Japanese artist Suzushi Hanayagi, who combined traditional dance training with highly experimental modern expressionism: "Hanayagi created and performed dance and theater works based within Japanese performance traditions and from disciplines culled from various cultures and times." Multiculturalism is

[18] See http://nietzschehaus.ch/en/

obviously also a matter of bodily expression—and Hanayagi was promiscuous in her cultural contacts: "For over fifty years she actively continued to perform, choreograph and teach classic Japanese and contemporary dance forms in the United States, Europe and Japan." In the United States, she cooperated with some of the best-known choreographers of her time, such as Robert Wilson. Blank cooperated with Hanayagi in several projects and gives us a very detailed report on these activities—Hanayagi "uniquely bridged East and West in multicultural work that expanded what classical or modern dance is and could be."

In "Multiculturalism in Art: The African American Tradition Continues," *Paul Von Blum* discusses the work of Los Angeles artists George Evans, the muralist Noni Olabisi, an installation by Tony Scott, and Derrick Maddox—because the work of black artists "still remains less visible than that of their white colleagues and contemporaries of comparable talent and achievement." All of these works are unfortunately preoccupied with racism and police brutality—an issue that will further be traced in politics in the later contributions in this volume. Writes Von Blum: "Other racial and ethnic minority artist in the United States, including Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians, have likewise produced engaging artworks that reflect their struggles and their aspirations in an often hostile society," however, they "are routinely ignored in mainstream art institutions like museums and commercial galleries, despite some modest progress in recent years."

Moving from artistic issues to culture in a more anthropologcal sense, *Charlaine Ostmann* discusses the use of color in the Zuni universe and Zuni artwork. In "Multiculturalism in Color: Zuni Colors and the Non-Native American Art Market" she focuses on the effects of the circulation of culture-specific Zuni colors in non-Native American cultures. Far from the European system of colors based on the color wheel, the colors in Zuni culture represent benevolent animal deities and the sacred natural life, which both embody the core of Zuni beliefs. Ostmann observes that "the translation of color terms in legends of something as ordinary as Zuni dress code goes beyond the comprehension of any average non-Native American reader. For instance, in Zuni legends, a being associated with the color white becomes a supernatural being, a 'bringer of life'." Because of the often restrictive translation of color-terms in legends and in the commercial exchange of colored Zuni carvings of animal-deities, the Zuni colors have first been misunderstood and then alienated, giving birth to something new, which is neither Zuni nor Western.

The issue of ethnic art is carried into yet a different dimension in *Roxane Hughes*'s "Multicultural or Destitute Hawai'i? Re-visioning the Sym-

bolism of the Aloha Shirt," in which she looks at the commercial manufacturing of a symbolic item that reflects on the identity of Native Hawaiians: "The now common use of *aloha* in the English language further epitomizes the appropriation of the Hawaiian language and the resulting cultural dispossession of Native Hawaiians." Hughes writes: "The aloha shirt thus speaks as much about Hawaiian multiculturalism, as it speaks of American imperialism, and Asian settlers' colonialism." In this article she traces the history and function of the aloha shirt from its origins to its appropriation by Hollywood and mass manufacturing back to the recent arrival of organic brands, and many steps in between. She summarizes: "As seen with Hawaiian-based garment companies, the aloha shirt can contribute to teaching the richness of the *aina* and perpetuating its *aloha*—in the pre-colonial sense of the term—binding Native Hawaiians to the land, in the past, present and future." This is the ultimate story of the aloha shirt!

Next is a short but important section on teaching, on multiculturalism in the classroom. First, in "Rethinking Multiculturalism: Critical Pedagogy and Critical Literacy in Education," *M. Kamel Igoudjil* theorizes the fact that "multiculturalism as a theoretical approach is veiled by New Criticism, which covertly imposes a specific curriculum on diverse students" by claiming to provide what an educated person allegedly should know about the world in general and the United States in particular. Such ideological construction targets the very essence of one's identity with a specific purpose to eradicate the foundation of one's heritage and impose an exclusively Eurocentric ethos. Igoudjil rethinks multiculturalism at the levels of critical pedagogy and critical literacy using a Derridean approach to deconstruct texts in the classroom to facilitate the critical discourse/diversity. Starting out from the work of Paolo Freire, he moves via "universal humanness" to Anthony Appiah's "cosmopolitanism," arguing that "educators and students should […] more effectively utilize literacy as a culturally intertextual practice where multicultural approaches to literacy prove to be necessary more than ever." Igoudjil advocates "authentic intellectual learning [which] fosters the students' continued search for the truth by telling and retelling their personal story and perspectives, which ultimately transcend to a more humanistic and multicultural community and culture."

A solid empirical contribution is *Amanda de Varona* and *S. Leslie Naghib*'s "Identity Politics in the ESOL Classroom," in which they describe an action-research project conducted with students enrolled in Level 5 Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication courses, the most advanced and final level of English instruction, in the Intensive English Program at

the University of Miami. Drawing on their intensive teaching experience, they demonstrate how to begin and to sustain the redefinition of multiculturalism to focus more on individual identity in international contexts in the classroom. They give many examples of activities that deal with communication about identity. Verona and Naghib observe that it seems easier to talk about the other than the self: "While at the beginning of the semester, we hypothesized that ESL students were more attuned to the term identity politics than the term multiculturalism, the data from the level 5 RW class demonstrated the opposite. The term multiculturalism was a more relatable and linguistically accessible word for the students as opposed to the term identity politics." Yet they clarify that "multicultural education is a term better left behind. If teachers truly wish to advocate acceptance in their classrooms and make multiculturalism an action rather than a cliché, it should come as a result of self-awareness and analysis of one's own personal identity."

Starting with *Edward Mortimer*'s "Guests or Comrades? The Rights of Migrants in the Workplace," there is another change in the focus of contributions, which now move in the direction of migration and ethnic history. Analyzing claims of the "failure" of multiculturalism in Europe and the emergence of "parallel societies," Mortimer maintains that "these failures may reflect, in some cases, […] a mixture of well meant but ill thought out tolerance of diversity and not so benign neglect." Citing multiple liberal, conservative, "practical" and ethical positions on the issue of "basic rights," he observes that "we are not cosmopolitan to the point of saying that we are prepared to give up our own rights, and change the very nature of our societies, in order to give people throughout the world a slightly better chance of improving their standard of living." One of the crucial issues in this is the question of theory and practice: "While the political pressure on governments to restrict immigration is plain for all to see, the political and economic pressures on them to turn a blind eye to irregular employment of immigrants are less visible, but probably no less powerful—and this is unlikely to change."

Mortimer's discussion of migrants is followed by *Marc S. Rodriguez*' historical survey on "The Latino Condition: Understanding Multiculturalism and Pan-Latino Ethnicity in the USA." Starting out from issues of definition (Who are the Latinos? How have they been defined by the US Census?), he covers concerns of language and class, and the rising awareness of the Chicano movement:

> Mexican American civil rights politics ran parallel to but did not often overlap with the African American civil rights movement until the 1960s,

> as the states often deemed African Americans a separate racial group, allowing for their legal segregation ('Jim Crow') from whites. Without the backing of either the state or racially conscious philanthropists, Mexican Americans existed in a racially 'in-between' space.

And he continues: "Because of this ambiguity, civil rights organizations adopted a litigation approach to defend their meager rights as 'Caucasians,' (whites), even though they lived in segregated neighborhoods, worked in segregated workplaces, were paid 'Mexican' wages, attended segregated schools, and lived almost universally in abject poverty." Rodriguez also discusses Spanish-English bilingualism and its expansion into a multicultural Latino movement. He concludes: "In many important ways, the Chicano Movement created the foundation for the development of the immigration rights movement and educational, criminal justice, and political reform movements nationwide."

Atalie Gerhard's "*Bricolage* of Protest—Unveiling the Multicultural Dimensions of the Chicano Movement through its Murals" looks more specifically at the artwork of Chicanos and observes a close-knit association with other North and Latin American civil rights histories. In two close readings of Chicano murals by Antonio Bernal and by Willie Herrón III and Gronk, she uses Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of "bricolage" to probe into the intricate semiotics of this art form. Thus the murals use the "capacity of signifiers 'borrowed' by contemporary cultural productions from more traditional myths to retain their reference as a means of suggesting an analogy." Gerhard argues that it is no coincidence that *bricolage* also rhymes with "Chicanos' *mestizaje* identity as a source of inspiration."

Another minority is targeted by *Astrid Starck-Adler* in "Yiddish and American Multiculturalism: a 'postvernacular' language on the margin." Being one of the few European Yiddish scholars, she gives us an outside view of that language in the United States and its melancholy survival: "Faced with the multicultural empires doomed to disappear after WWI, European enlightenment ideology was based on monolingualism and monoculturalism, imposed upon colonies worldwide and thus valid as well within the Anglo-Saxon establishment of the United States." Starck-Adler gives a survey of the original cultural influences and literary and social developments of Yiddish in the New World, such as the leftist discourse and the solidarity with the African American cause, but also covers film stereotypes, parodies, and other cultural appropriations, among them even a Yiddish translation of *Hiawatha*, demonstrating that solidarity with Native America was a rather complex affair. Ultimately, she touches upon post-*Shoah* literature and the Israeli challenge of Hebrew, which has made