Sabine Haupt (Hg.)

Tertium Datur!

Formen und Facetten interkultureller Hybridität. Formes et facettes d'hybridité interculturelle

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Der Topos des ‚Dritten' zwischen Diskursen und Realitäten

Zur Einleitung

Sabine Haupt

1. Die Zielsetzung des Sammelbands

„Tertium non datur" – ein Drittes ist nicht vorhanden: so lautet eines der grundlegenden Axiome der klassischen Logik, besser bekannt als „Satz vom ausgeschlossenen Dritten". Dieses ursprünglich von Aristoteles gegen die Philosophie der Vorsokratiker, insbesondere gegen Heraklit, aufgestellte logische Prinzip garantiert – innerhalb der klassischen zweiwertigen Logik – die Widerspruchsfreiheit der philosophischen Prämissen. Für Aristoteles ist der Satz verbunden mit der ontologischen Kategorie des „Identischen". Jedes Seiende – so die Aristotelische Logik – sei mit sich identisch und widerspruchsfrei, ein „Mittleres" könne es nicht geben.[1]

Es soll hier nun keineswegs der Versuch unternommen werden, die in der Mathematik geführte Auseinandersetzung über eventuelle Alternativen zur zweiwertigen Logik beziehungsweise über gewisse Ansätze des mathematischen Konstruktivismus[2] und dessen Versuche, ein „Mittleres" oder „Drittes" in der Logik zu etablieren, eins zu eins auf Bereiche der Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften zu übertragen. Der amerikanische Physiker und Wissenschaftstheoretiker Alan Sokal hat 1996 mit der Publikation seines parodistisch gemeinten Artikels *Transgressing the Boundaries. Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity* in der für ihre Affinität zu postmodernen Thesen bekannten

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[1] Vgl. Aristoteles: *Metaphysik*, griechisch-deutsch. Neubearbeitung der Übersetzung von Hermann Bonitz, mit Einleitung und Kommentar, hg. von Horst Seidel. 3. verb. Auflage, Hamburg 1989, S. 171–175 (Metaphysik, Buch 4, Kapitel 7/1011b–1012a).

[2] Vgl. den so genannten von Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer begründeten ‚Intuitionismus', der – im Kontext des in den 1920er Jahren geführten ‚Grundlagenstreits der Mathematik' – das klassische Axiom des ausgeschlossenen Dritten durch eine Mengenlehre ersetzte, die ein Kontinuum und die Erfahrung eines „Zwischen" postulierte, sowie Kurt Gödels so genannte „Unvollständigkeitssätze", mit denen die Grenzen der formalen Logik und logizistischen Mathematik aufgezeigt werden. Vgl. L. E. J. Brouwer: *Begründung der Mengenlehre unabhängig vom logischen Satz vom ausgeschlossenen Dritten*. Amsterdam 1918 u. 1919, sowie: Kurt Gödel: Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der *Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I*. In: Monatshefte für Mathematik und Physik, Nr. 38 (1931), S. 173–198.

Nobody's Nation

Multiculturalism in American Society and American Literature

Thomas Austenfeld

My title, "nobody's nation", is both an adapted quotation from a poem by Derek Walcott and an acknowledgement of the impasse in multiculturalism; that is, its differential success in academic culture on the one hand and in political discourse on the other. Walcott, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992, was born on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia in 1930. As the son of a black father and a white mother, he straddled cultures from the beginning. His family were Methodists on a predominantly Catholic island. Raised in the English colonial school system on the island, Walcott realized at age 14 that he wanted to be a poet. Since the 1960s, he has generally been treated under the headings of both Caribbean and American literature as a result of his long association with Boston University. His close friendships with Robert Lowell, Joseph Brodsky, and Seamus Heaney make him part of a genuine world literature. Walcott constructed a number of poetic personae in his work that spoke to his identity, among them a Castaway, a Crusoe figure, a "compound ghost" like the one familiar from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, and an exile in the manner of James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus, the protagonist of his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. My quotation is from Walcott's famous poem *The Schooner Flight* in which Shabine, a seafaring Caribbean mix of races, speaks about himself:

> I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
> I had a sound colonial education,
> I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
> and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.[1]

Politics, identity, and culture are all mapped out in the final phrase. "Multiculturalism" – an umbrella term whose variations are being explored in this volume – can have political, ethical and dismissive overtones, but perhaps most often has an identitarian meaning. I see my own field of studies, American literature, both as a privileged site of investigation into multiculturalism and as a key link in our Fribourg department of many literatures, itself a multicultural arena

[1] Walcott 2007: 128. Walcott uses the term "nigger" unselfconsciously in letting Shabine speak. The speaker adopts island patois in the unmarked 3rd-person verb form "love".

because it is multilingual. Contemporary American society, on the other hand, has certainly not achieved a settled multicultural identity.

In this essay, designed to be ruminating rather than definitive, I propose to trace the gap between the canonical acceptance of multiculturalism in the corpus of American literature and the divisive perception of multiculturalism in American political discourse. Multiculturalism as a political initiative in the United States, resulting by necessity from the country's history as an immigrant nation, has failed so far to implant itself reliably into the political fiber of the country, remaining instead the province of (some) intellectuals. I conclude with an appeal to popular culture to help us reach a point at which multicultural difference can become a welcome diversity instead of a regulated imposition. The essay is intended to provide a snapshot of the current debates within a historical context; it is not intended as a scholarly retracing of the definitions and frequent political grandstanding surrounding multiculturalism.

President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves in the "rebel states" took effect on January 1, 1863, one hundred and fifty years ago at the time of this writing. It would be reductive to limit the discussion of multiculturalism in the present-day United States to the history of black slavery, emancipation, the long road to civil rights and the eventual ascent of a black person of mixed ancestry to the presidency. But the tortuous path of America's black population towards some measure of equality may stand as exemplary in the country's difficult history with peoples of different color, ancestry, and cultural heritage – "different", that is, from Euro-American persons.

Multiculturalism in American society and in American literature are two different things. The election of President Barack Obama to a second term in 2012 does not signal that a person of mixed ancestry may now, as a matter of course, hold the highest political office in the land irrespective of skin color. On the contrary: latent racism in some Republican as well as in some unreconstructed Democratic voters alike led the former to confirm their bigotry and the latter to profess it more openly than in the 2008 contest. If President Obama won nonetheless, and won decisively, it was because his competitor was relatively weak and because the nearly reactionary "tea party" movement within the Republican party never fully supported a moderate Mormon as the GOP's standard bearer. Moreover, given Mitt Romney's enormous wealth and his all-too-obvious display of disconnectedness from average voters, it was easier for Democrats to frame the election in economic terms. Finally, cultural shifts profoundly influenced the election. Hispanics, one of the most important and fastest-growing minority populations, overwhelmingly saw Obama as supporting the poorer economic segment of the population in which they still frequently find themselves. African Americans, disproportionately poor, and proud of the first office holder of color, strongly supported Obama. Women voters who were repulsed by highly insensitive comments on rape on the part of some Republican Senate candidates and who felt that Mitt Romney's policies might re-institute the social mores of the 1950s, helped vote Obama into office as well. If we view the election

of 2012 in the terms in which analysts presented it, we see clearly that cultural parameters and identity politics are virtually taken to be measurements of political allegiance. Multiculturalism, which besides its integrative intention implies the possibility of making potentially meaningful distinctions between cultures, has become the demographers' favorite tool. Far from being an accepted fact, a glue, or a known feature of public life, multiculturalism here suggests cultural allegiances that divides persons into opposite political camps. Race (or what Americans understand by "race"), ethnicity, gender, self-perceived social status, and – in this latest election – sexual orientation have become determining factors in the political realm. Multiculturalism in American society, as viewed in political terms, is therefore a category of classification and contrast.

In American literature, on the other hand, both when measured by the prevalence of texts in commonly-used college textbooks and in terms of what bookstores sell to the reading public, a merry mix of ethnic and cultural diversity beckons the reader, whether in fiction or in how-to advice books. American social history since World War II, and the sometimes overlapping, sometimes opposing strands of cultural development in popular and academic culture, have served to keep the issue of cultural difference before the eyes of the American public. The most significant social event of these past 65 years, I would argue, was the eventual achievement of civil rights by the black population over the course of the 1960s. Once this breakthrough was on course, the expansion of full acceptance to Native Americans, Asian Americans, and next beyond ethnicity to persons of differing sexual orientations, all accompanied by a parallel and intersecting development to give women equal status with men in all arenas of life, turned out to be logical extensions of the long post-slavery struggle.

The United States is a country historically defined by race more than by just about anything else. In her 2008 novel, *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison, another Nobel Prize winner, imagines the colonial situation on the North American continent in the 1680s. Black chiefs in Western Africa were selling black people to white and black slave traders. The infamous Middle Passage brought these slaves to Barbados for sugar cane harvesting and to Virginia and the Carolinas for cotton and tobacco crops. It was at this time, when indentured servants from European countries also worked in the colonies in a slave-like dependency, that the fateful equation of race and slavery began to fossilize, according to Morrison.[2] By 1700, it was established. By 1776, when Thomas Jefferson penned the *Declaration of Independence*, the phrase "all men are created equal" probably was implicitly understood to mean that all white, property-owning men were created equal. From 1861 to 1865, the country fought a devastating Civil War ostensibly over the question of states' rights but truly over the question of slavery. By 1903,

[2] Morrison 2008: 0:35–1:22.

W. E. B. DuBois proclaimed that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line"[3] – and he was right.

Yet the United States pioneered the discourse of multiculturalism in public life and has not shied away from social engineering – that is, legal intervention – to bring about its practice. I want to suggest that the great era of multiculturalism in American politics lasted from just after World War II to the late nineties. In 1948, President Harry Truman ordered the United States Armed Forces to be desegregated. The U.S. Army thus became a laboratory of social practices that continued through the Civil Rights Era of the mid-sixties with Lyndon B. Johnson, were experimentally applied to the Equal Rights Amendment of the seventies which was ultimately not ratified by a sufficient number of states to become law, and were picked up again in Bill Clinton's 1993 "don't ask, don't tell" policy to integrate gays and lesbians into the military, a policy since revoked by the Obama administration.

In university curricula, the decades since World War have seen a vast expansion of reading material deemed canonical. Beginning in the fifties, and solidifying in the sixties, African American authors became part of the established canon. From the sixties to the seventies, women writers – both contemporary and historical – were integrated into the reading lists. The seventies and eighties saw the ascendancy of Native American writers; the eighties and nineties that of Asian Americans, be they Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, or Indian. These are real achievements in the multicultural debates.[4] For a time, multiculturalism became "sexy", as the title of Jhumpa Lahiri's short story, "Sexy", slyly suggests.

Anishinaabe writer Louise Erdrich may well be one of the most accomplished authors to have successfully negotiated a multicultural ancestry and to have written a program for productive multicultural existence into her body of fiction. Honored in 2012 with the National Book Award for her latest novel, *The Round House,* described in *The New York Times* as "a novel about racial injustice",[5] Erdrich has consistently explored cultural, religious, and gender differences in her work. In her 2001 novel *The Last Report of the Miracles at Little No Horse,* for example, Erdrich considers "ethnicity, region, religion, and gender, but in employing those categories with considerable (and on occasion re-

[3] DuBois 2003: 9.

[4] An incomplete list of names would have to include (I am just naming those one would find at one time or another in the major anthologies): African Americans Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Alex Hailey, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison. Women writers Kate Chopin (rediscovered), Willa Cather (rediscovered), Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich (a predominance of poets). Native Americans N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, Gerald Vizenor, Sherman Alexie. Asian Americans Eileen Chang, Jessica Hagedorn, David Henry Hwang, Maxine Hong Kingston, Chang-Rae Lee, Jhumpa Lahiri.

[5] Kaufmann, NYT 2012.

freshingly irreverent) playfulness, [she] transcends the individual categories towards an American entirety. [She demonstrates ...] how a Native American novel is at the same time an American novel. Set on a fictional reservation and offering deeply observed descriptions of Native life along with unflinching evocations of abject poverty; steeped in Catholic lore though cognizant of the charged interaction of Native and missionary cultures; abounding in rich and evocative descriptions of Northern landscape; describing religious, musical, and sexual ecstasy, Last Report is above all an American novel. In the figure of Agnes/Father Damien, Erdrich has created an Adamic American hero. Self-begotten in the decisive act of slipping on the clothes of a dead priest while standing by the side of a roaring river, Agnes reinvents herself as Father Damien much like Gatsby "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself" [...]. As Huck Finn, quintessential American youngster, dons girl's clothes [...] prior to his advance into the Deep South from where he will depart for the Western territories, so young Agnes turns herself male for protection and social status while penetrating into the Northern wilderness. "Call me Damien Modeste", she might have said at the beginning of her new life, as she begins a test of survival in both physical and metaphysical terms – the constant danger of starvation and the development of a Catholic theology and practice responsive to local conditions – that is no less existential than that of Ishmael in Moby-Dick. Like Ishmael, Father Damien will be the only survivor at the end of the tale; the only one who can still offer testimony to Father Jude, the inquisitive visitor sent by the Vatican. Like Holden Caulfield, Father Damien will find his life's consuming duty to be that of caretaking, the cure of his Native flock. I recognize that Gatsby, Huck, Ishmael, and Holden are the creations of white male novelists and that I may bend – though not intentionally misread – Erdrich's text in order to suggest a literary parentage, but I would assert Willa Cather's characters, from Thea Kronborg's musicianship, via Alexandra Bergson's masculine clothing and vacillating gender position, to Antonia Shimerda's caring and competent motherhood and leadership of a farm would allow us to find an equally rich set of precursors for Erdrich. In any case, our ability to place motifs from Erdrich's *Last Report* into different strands of American literature undergirds my assertion that this text is as much to be appreciated for its American appeal as for its Native roots – and that the duality of this appreciation is complementary, not conflictual"[6]. This is American multiculturalism in literary practice at its very best.

The increased debate over multiculturalism in the literary world is well reflected in the image below, a graph generated by Google's n-gram viewer, a statistical tool that can show us the incidences of the appearance of the word "multicultural" in Google's English-speaking corpus of texts.[7] One may track a curve

[6] Austenfeld 2013: 78–79. In the preceding paragraph, I quote from one of my own earlier publications. The passage originally appeared in "Louise Erdrich in Company".

[7] As each user generates his or her own graph, there is no permanent record except one's private notes. The tool can be found online at http://books.google.com/ngrams.

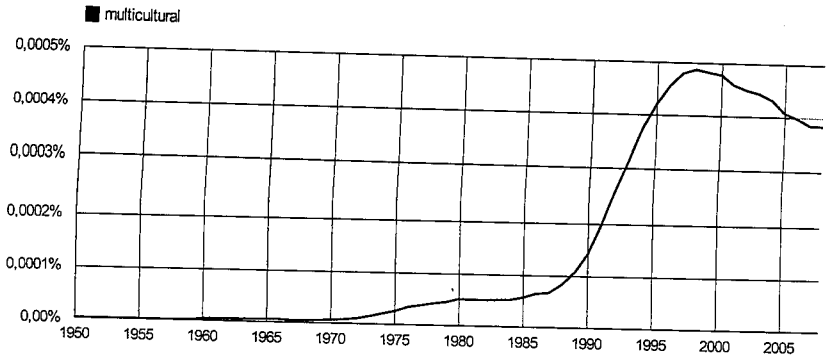

Figure 1

that starts in the 1950s when the term did not yet exist but interest in the subject matter increased, reached its apex in the late nineties, and has vacillated since that time with the changing political fashions (Fig. 1).

As far as life in the United States is concerned, multiculturalism is here to stay. The phrase "God's own country" is nowadays more firmly associated with New Zealand, but for a while in the 19th century it seems to have been in currency in the United States. Today, I would argue, the country is not properly "owned" by anyone, certainly not by European Americans. According to demographic forecasts widely discussed, by 2040 at the latest, no ethnic group will have, or be, a majority in the United States (Hsu). The U.S. census, conducted every ten years since 1790, demonstrates how cultural and ethnic affiliation have undergone significant changes in the past few decades.

The 2010 census form[8] is particularly interesting on its question 9: respondents may choose themselves what race they think they belong to, and one may choose more than one option. But, as question 8 shows, the traditional choices on the US census – white, black, Asian, Native American or Alaska Native, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – have been augmented in recent years by the category "Hispanic", where "whites" simply choose "Hispanic" or "non-Hispanic". According to a 2011 document published by the Congressional Research Office, this option resulted in about 13 percent Hispanic and 87 percent non-Hispanic self-identification in 2000 (Shresta)[9]. The study also predicts that Hispanics will constitute at least 30 percent of the U.S. population by 2050 (Fig. 2).

In 2010, "Hispanic" was further specifically defined: "For this census, Hispanic origins are not races"[10]. The U.S. government recognizes that "race" and

[8] https://www.census.gov/schools/pdf/2010form_info.pdf.
[9] The chart in figure 2 is reproduced from p. 23.
[10] Cohn 2012: par. 2.

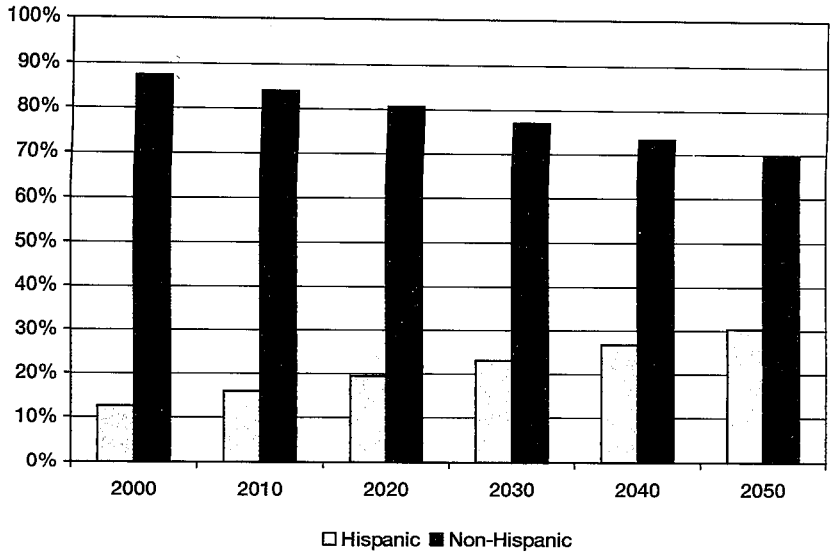

Figure 2: Hispanics and Non-Hispanics as Percentage of U.S. Population: 2000–2050. Source: For years 2010–2050: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Table 6. Percent of the Projected Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2010 to 2050 (NP2008-T6). Release Date: August 14, 2008. For year 2000: CRS extractions from: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, at http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/, internet release date: March 18, 2004 the U.S. Census Bureau.

"ethnicity" are not genetic or scientific categories, but believes that they circumscribe "social and cultural characteristics as well as ancestry".[11] Quite obviously, then, given the importance of the census for political decision-making, racial and ethnic characteristics are determining features in American identity. They decide whether a neighborhood or a school is a "black" or a "Hispanic" or a "white" neighborhood; they decide whether public works jobs have been given out fairly; they help measure the adequacy of food stamps programs, determine poverty lines, and monitor the degree of "racial profiling" at airports and speed traps. Categories of race and ethnicity have in the past 40 years taken the place of older distinctions, such as Polish-, Italian-, German-, Irish-, Swedish-, Bohemian- and other hyphenated Americans. All of these earlier groups were white, which is to say, European American. The political destiny of the United States has been shaped through the consciousness of ethnic and racial difference, and

[11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_and_ethnicity_in_the_United_States_Census.

through the degree to which an amalgamated Americanness could be conceived or constructed. In that process, there have been few or no winners. The American nation is now, in a real sense, "nobody's nation".

Yet, unfortunately, the rich changes in American culture through the influx of Hispanics also have brought back to the fore some of the ugliest arguments about the purpose of paying attention to one's roots. The backlash against multiculturalism, specifically in the past two decades – and in exacerbated form since 2001 – has occurred nearly simultaneously with a generalized fear that many Americans feel vis-à-vis world cultures, in particular Muslim cultures. This is evident in the political arena in the quick and totally irresponsible slapping on of labels such as "terrorist" or "un-American". Instead of specifically analyzing the Muslim phobia today, I want to take a closer look at the backlash against multicultural in other arenas; one in social life, another in the realm of education.

In 1990, the state of Alabama adopted an so-called "English-only" policy for state transactions, with direct repercussions on the drivers' license exam. "Previous to 1991, Alabama had administered the written part of the driver's exam in 14 different languages, including Spanish, Korean, Farsi, Cambodian, German, Laotian, Greek, Arabic, French, Japanese, Polish, Thai and Vietnamese. In 1990, Alabama had amended its constitution to make English its official language, and the drivers' licensing rules were then changed, the interpretation having been made that the officialization of English (Amendment 509) required this change"[12]. In a country in which driving is often the only way one can ever get from point A to point B, the consequences of these provisions are extreme. The proceedings were tied up in court for many years, but in 2010 gubernatorial candidate Tim James made this one of his key issues ("We speak English").

One of the most highly publicized events resulting from a sense of over-politicizing multicultural studies has been the abolishment of Mexican-American studies in the high school curriculum of the Tucson, Arizona school district in 2010 and 2011. This case is all the more significant because Tucson is a fertile meeting ground of culture, and also because Tucson came to be in the news in other contexts. Tucson is located about 60 miles from the Mexican border in a breathtakingly beautiful part of Arizona. Home to The University of Arizona, Tucson is the capital of this border state. Drug smuggling and human trafficking are rampant, and relations between the different constituencies in the city can seesaw quickly between harmony and confrontation. What was probably the most famous gunfight in the history of the old Southwest, the shootout at the OK Corral between Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp, Billy Clanton and others, took place in Tombstone, Arizona, in 1881, not far from Tucson. In January 2011, a Tucson shopping mall was the location of a tragic shooting, in which six people were killed and fourteen injured, among them Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, a

[12] Schiffman 2013.

Democratic congresswoman. At this time, connected by context though not by cause, a battle erupted in Tucson over the high school curriculum.

To briefly rehearse the case of the school board issue, which created acrimonious debates across the country, I rely on excerpts of the statement issued by the Modern Language Association in response to the events; a statement to which I full subscribe:

> In 2010, the Arizona state legislature passed HB 2281, which was signed by Governor Jan Brewer. The bill forbade any school district to include in "its program of instruction any courses or classes ... that promote resentment toward a race or class of people[,] ... are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group[,] ... [or] advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals". State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal declared in January 2011 that Tucson's widely admired Mexican American studies program was in violation of HB 2281 [...]
>
> As a result, the district's school board voted 4–1 to shut down the Mexican American studies program. The school board president, Mark Stegeman, took several measures to bring that termination about, the most publicized of which involved the removal of several books from ethnic studies classrooms in Tucson and their sequestration in a storage facility. [...]
>
> [The MLA is] unaware of any similar argument or policy initiative aimed at, for instance, Americans of Irish or Polish descent; no one argues that Irish American or Polish American children who learn about their ethnic heritages in school are promoting racial resentment or ethnic solidarity, even though the history of Irish and Polish immigration in the United States is not free of instances of ethnic discrimination. [...] We note that programs in Native American and African American studies seem not to have triggered fears and anxieties among the supporters and enforcers of HB 2281.
>
> We believe that teaching Mexican American children about Mexican American history and heritage *is* teaching them as individuals – indeed, precisely as the individuals they are. But more important, we believe in teaching all American children about Mexican American history and heritage. [...]
>
> Throughout the United States, and especially in the Southwest, Mexican American studies is an integral part of the study of American identity and history; ideally, every schoolchild should be acquainted with that fact. [...] Mexican American studies is a field of inquiry, not a form of propaganda. It is designed to lead to a greater understanding of the histories and cultures of the peoples of the United States, not to any partisan political outcome".[13]

[13] Modern Language Association 2012.

In many ways, the Tucson debate over Mexican-American studies in high schools is the low point in the debate about multiculturalism in my lifetime. It marks the first time that an already achieved consensus about the value of the presence of different cultures in one place, namely the public school system, has been officially rescinded and rendered invalid. This is my reason for concluding that multiculturalism has failed to implant itself into the political fiber of the country. It remains, quite incredibly, along with health insurance and sex education, a contested value; unlike, say, the right to gun ownership which – though occasionally contested – enjoys the Constitutional protection of the Second Amendment.[14]

Intellectually, the case appears clear: Mexican-American studies must enjoy the same protected status as the study of any culture. High schools shape young Americans' sense about mutual cultural respect; to banish all cultural studies to the college and university level would be unconscionable. And while one temporarily misguided school district should not be seen as representative of the generally integrating function played by American high school curricula, it serves to show how tenuous the gains of recent decades have been. Shortly after the 2012 election, Republican William J. Bennett, former Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan from 1985–1988, invoked the familiar metaphor of the "culture war" to analyze why his own party performed so poorly:

> For decades liberals have succeeded in defining the national discourse, the terms of discussion, and, therefore, the election, in these terms. They have successfully set the parameters and focus of the national and political dialogue as predominantly about gender, race, ethnicity, and class.[15]

I would differ with Bennett in his application of the term "have succeeded". If seen as the continuing history of what began as the liberation and emancipation of black Americans, then cultural studies is not a political agenda but an evermore probing exploration of the complexities of American's national heritage.

Can there be any middle ground in this debate? Is there a place where Americans welcome cultural difference without suspicion? I believe that popular culture has long been advancing a message of inclusion, even in the traditionally conservative bastions of musical theater and country music.

Beginning once more in the 1940s, we see the increasing awareness by Americans of other cultures and their difference. Black American soldiers wondered openly why they were fighting on the side of the British who, after all, were the greatest colonial power on earth with a long track record of lording it over dark-skinned peoples. Encounters of U.S. soldiers with Pacific islanders gave rise to

[14] The statement remains true even after the implementation of "Obamacare" has begun. A Google search for the term "delaying Obamacare" will yield a series of articles detailing how large companies and religiously affiliated private employers are seeking ways to avoid providing the mandatory contraception coverage included in "Obamacare".

[15] Bennett 2012.

popular culture myths such as the one reflected in James Michener's blockbuster novel *Tales of the South Pacific*, quickly turned into a musical. In it, a French planter on the Solomon Islands is useful to the America military as an informant in 1943, as the military sends an enlisted nurse, Nellie Forbush, to win him over. Now Nellie – and this is important – is not from Kansas, the Midwestern state known for its wide-eyed innocence and represented in the figure of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. No, Nellie is from Arkansas (later to become famous as Bill Clinton's home state). Nellie, that is to say, is a Southern gal. She knows about race relations. She has an implicit multicultural understanding. To her, foreign-looking people are potentially interesting. Yet the drama of the encounter in Michener's novel lies not so much in Nellie's meeting a Frenchman. After all, he is just a representative of old colonial power. In *Tales of the South Pacific*, the encounter between the American military and the native population is far more interesting. Relegated to the subplot in the musical, it remains an important feature: an American staff officer falls in love with a local girl and philosophizes about prejudice: neither Michener nor Rogers and Hammerstein could speak about the South directly, but they sure could speak about the evils of racism transported to a remote bucolic spot: consider for a moment the song sung by Lt Joseph Cable, as he reflects with bitter irony on the fact that racists are not born but made:

> You've got to be taught
> To hate and fear,
> You've got to be taught
> From year to year,
> It's got to be drummed
> In your dear little ear
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught to be afraid
> Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
> And people whose skin is a diff'rent shade,
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught before it's too late,
> Before you are six or seven or eight,
> To hate all the people your relatives hate,
> You've got to be carefully taught![16]

Today, trend-setting pop stars like Lady Gaga are, of course, expected to advance highly progressive social aims. In her 2011 song, "Born this way", Gaga

[16] http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/southpacific/youvegottobecarefullytaught.htm. A musical rendering is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diYlHI8Ghkg.

rings the changes on identity politics and sexual difference as she proclaims self-acceptance.[17] But of far greater interest to me is the quiet revolution implied in country music star Brad Paisley's song, "American Saturday Night" of 2009. Here, a carefully calibrated multicultural agenda meets the single most conservative American music genre: country music. Paisley's allusions to different European ancestries would keep him safely in the European American realm, but his authorized video goes beyond the icons of Americanness – ice cream, fraternity parties, baseball – to include foreign imports ranging from VW cars to Mexican beers. The Eiffel tower is peacefully joined by the Taj Mahal. If multicultural topics can invade country music and survive unscathed, there is hope indeed for a future of mutual understanding in the United States. To get an early sense of the stage on which multicultural acceptance may finally be advanced, then, listen to and watch Brad Paisley performing "American Saturday Night" on his YouTube video.[18]

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[17] See lyrics at http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/l/lady_gaga/born_this_way.html.
[18] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvdoKvHYxcA&ob=av2e.

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