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Werner Sollors

Beyond Multiculturalism?

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**Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.
U.S.A.**

Werner Sollors

Beyond Multiculturalism?

“Multiculturalism” in American literature still promises something of great interest to me, but I cannot deny that I often tend to be a little disappointed when I read the criticism that travels under that name.¹ One expects new findings from the history of San Francisco’s first Chinese newspapers (that Xiao-huang Yin is now investigating) or new collections from New Mexico’s long tradition of Spanish-language publications (that Erlinda Gonzales-Berry has edited) or of the untapped legacy of writings in many Indian languages (recently assembled, for example, in Mashpee, by Kathleen Bragdon), books about New Orleans Creoles (like Caryn Cossé Bell’s), about Norwegian writing in the United States (as Orm Øverland’s *The Western Home*), or about the German-language press of New York City around World War I (as did Peter Conolly-Smith in his 1996 dissertation).² Or one hopes for more work in the manner of the pioneering and continuing contributions that were made by Jules Chametzky and Berndt Ostendorf, for provocative essays about bilingual poetry from antiquity to the present (as Tino Villanueva’s), about forgotten plantation novels (as Simone Vauthier’s analysis of *Old Hepsy*), or, perhaps most importantly, about the interaction of all these trajectories in United States culture, which would thus appear more international and connected to “the rest of the world.” For it is true that, after a century of professional literary studies of the United States, we still know very little, and though such areas as Black Studies have benefited from the massive work of textual recovery by such leading scholars as my colleague Henry Louis Gates, Jr., there are some other areas in which we know less now than scholars did at the beginning of the century.

Yet my heart often sinks when I dig into the countless collections of multicultural criticism and find again and again a purely contemporary and hermetically sealed national, Anglophone, US focus, and, worse than that, a predilection to debate what are “admissible” approaches, the “positionality” and shortcomings of other contemporary multicultural (or insufficiently multicultural) critics, turgid blueprints that outline which works are permitted to be compared with which other works (without, however, presenting the actual comparisons), and jargon-ridden accounts of the need to resist any attempts at synthesizing. All of this is as exciting as finding out that there are bibliographies of bibliographies, even if the criticism may surround itself by a halo of righteousness. Not very often do I find collections that are as interesting and exciting and fresh as Winfried Siemerling’s and Katrin Schwenk’s recent *Cultural Difference and the Literary Text: Pluralism and the Limits of Authenticity in North American Literature* (University of Iowa Press, 1996)--that grew out of a Berlin workshop; anyone who knows this collection will also understand that I do not here have to comment on it at greater length.

For today's occasion I have taken seriously the call to go "beyond multiculturalism" by opening with comments on some interesting recent book-length contributions to multiculturalism, continuing with a brief passage on multiculturalism in Germany, and concluding with detailed examinations of literary examples that mark directions into which I believe multicultural interests could fruitfully develop--or be transcended.

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I have been attracted for a long time to using titles beginning with "Beyond," or to adding the prefix "post-" in front of many words. In fact, David Hollinger's book *Post-Ethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (1995)--to whose work I assume the title of the present conference is indebted--credits an old essay of mine for having coined the term "post-ethnic." Hollinger's own work may well constitute the most persuasive and sustained brief to transcend and go beyond--*jenseits, au delà, oltre*--multiculturalism. Unlike the demands to go *Beyond Good and Evil* or *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, going "beyond multiculturalism"--and I shall be making some suggestions as to *where* we might be going--may express fatigue from journalistic overstimulation rather than constitute the logical endpoint of a sustained argument (which is, however, precisely what Hollinger does offer). Hollinger's proposal is not for us to "return" to a retro-universalism, to the blindness in some scholarship of the 1940s and 1950s when some social scientists could still believe that small ethnically skewed samples taken in the US were representative of mankind. As Hollinger develops his plea, he argues that the past half century has made scholars sensitive to the issues of diversity, so that new forms of stressing commonalities may be called for that show the signs of having gone through the ethnic stage. Hollinger's new, "postethnic" universalism would thus be informed--but not stymied--by the particularist challenges: "A postethnic perspective recognizes the psychological value and political function of groups of affiliation, but it resists a rigidification of exactly those ascribed distinctions between persons that various universalists and cosmopolitans have so long sought to diminish."³ Thus new scholarship could avoid repeating the mistakes of the old pseudo-universalists as well as the new exaggerations that have been advanced by the ethnicists and multiculturalists. For what good does it do now to imagine group affiliations only within the pattern of what Hollinger calls the "ethnoracial pentagon," according to which Americans belong to one and only one of the five affirmative action categories of white, black, Asian, Latino, or Native American? Wouldn't it be more productive to promote (and for scholars to investigate) voluntary membership in varied and multiple social groupings? Couldn't such a move broaden the circle of the "we" and enhance the cosmopolitan rather than the myopic side of multiculturalism?

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By "multiculturalism" we probably mean here a relatively recent phenomenon: a quarter to a half of a century of debate surrounding government policy in Canada, Australia, and some other former Commonwealth countries, a mere decade of mostly educational discussion in the

United States, and just a first beginning of examining the interrelations of immigration, citizenship, and rights in European Union countries.

Even the word “multiculturalism” does not seem to be much older than fifty years.⁴ It appears to go back to Edward F. Haskell’s *Lance: A Novel About Multicultural Men* (1941) whose hero Major Campbell is, as the *Herald Tribune* reviewer noted, “polyglot, bi-national, tied to no patriotic loyalties but ardently a servant of science and of social science particularly” who feels happy only with people who “are ‘multicultural’ like himself.”⁵ The reviewer put the brand new term into quotation marks here and when she assessed the books as a “fervent sermon against nationalism, national prejudice and behavior in favor of a ‘multicultural’ way of life and a new social outlook more suited to the present era of rapid transport and shifting populations” (Barry 3). Haskell was the son of a Swiss-American couple of missionaries and grew up in the United States, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, and Switzerland, before going to Oberlin, Columbia, and Harvard and becoming an activist aiding political prisoners and an investigator of political trials; and, as the dust jacket tells the reader, Haskell regarded his novel “not only as the statement of a problem, but also its partial theoretical solution.” His mouthpiece, Major Campbell, states at a dramatic point in the novel:

[M]en in all climes and all times live by the narrow little things they know.... Their contact has been with one language, one faith, and one nation. They are unicultural..... But we, being children of the great age of transportation and communication, have contacts with *many* languages, *many* faiths, and *many* nations. We are *multicultural*. (320-321)

Haskell’s characters whose life stories transcend (“go beyond”) the confines of individual nation states, of one language, or of a single religion, may be representative harbingers of what has happened in the world at a much larger scale since World War II. Haskell anticipated the anxieties that multiculturalism could unleash in readers accustomed only to the unicultural model of the nation state, readers who might suspect Haskell’s “multicultural men” of disloyalty and lack of patriotism. Thus he also lets Campbell stress the similarities between multiculturalists and uniculturalists:

Multicultural people . . . are just like unicultural people. They develop faith and loyalty and patriotism too: faith in science, loyalty to world organization, and patriotism for mankind. (321)

Edward Haskell’s 1941 novel introduced the word “multicultural” in order to describe the pioneering quality of a few exceptional men. In the meantime, the term has become so omnipresent that Nathan Glazer’s 1997 book *We Are All Multicultural Now* constitutes a perfect counterpoint to Haskell’s *Lance*. Glazer’s relatively new endorsement of multiculturalism comes as the result of his recognition that multiculturalism is simply the price America now has to pay for having failed in the past to integrate blacks. Against the historical backdrop of the failed multiracial integration, multiculturalism may be the next best thing to universalism, Glazer

argues--in fact, it may be the only way to go. If it weren't for the continued troublesome presence of racial inequality, he'd side with pure universalism any time, he states. But given the real conditions, Glazer is a pragmatic multiculturalist; and he cites approvingly the most detailed brief for multiculturalism published so far, Lawrence Levine's *The Opening of the American Mind*, a 1996 response to the late Allan Bloom. Glazer also quibbles with Hollinger's invitation to go beyond multiculturalism--though he ignores the fact that Hollinger devotes a whole section to "Haley's Choice," in which Hollinger focuses on the constraints placed upon ethnic options by "race." (The question why Alxe Haley's *Roots* only constructed a unilateral and monoracial African ancestry had already concerned Leslie Fiedler in *The Inadvertent Epic* [1979]--surely a work of multicultural criticism *avant la lettre*.)

On Glazer's opposite side is Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (1995), a scathing critique of interwar pluralist theory and, at least by implication, of contemporary multiculturalist practice. Michaels believes that a paradigm shift from Progressive liberalism and universalist racism to a new mode of cultural pluralism cum nativist modernism qualitatively transformed the older racism in the course of the 1920s. Whereas the old racist belief in a hierarchy of discreet races had still rested on a belief in universal categories *outside* of the races themselves from which judgment could be passed, pluralism and especially, *relativism*, set up a widespread operation that assumed the equal value of different cultures. (Q. What joke does one multiculturalist tell another? A. It does not matter; they are all equally worthy of our attention.) In the old mode, race was a *fact* and did not imply cultural practice. The new mode, however, did away with any external categories except the different cultures themselves and demanded cultural work to be done, thus setting free race as a project and a source of affect. The various racial and national slots required not merely membership by blood or descent but became the locus of affective cultural work. If the old paradigm allocated race by descent, the new at first *seems* to be replacing "race" by "culture." Yet in fact, as Michaels stresses most forcefully, many of the "cultural" operations were in reality "racial." "For cultural identity in the '20s required . . . the anticipation of culture by race: to be a Navajo you have to do Navajo things, but you don't really count as doing Navajo things unless you already are a Navajo" (125). "The modern concept of culture is not," Benn Michaels writes most memorably, "a critique of racism; it is a form of racism" (129). What he has in common with Glazer is the belief that there seems to be no end to multiculturalism, though Benn Michaels would probably find a title such as *We Are All Racists Now* more appropriate to describe this state of affairs.

In a lecture series of 1997 entitled "Achieving Our Country," Richard Rorty offered a very cautious endorsement of the various movements that later became known under the slogan multiculturalism (though he stays away from the term) as having done much to reduce the forms of *social sadism* (against women, against members of ethnic minorities, against homosexuals, against handicapped people and so forth) that were still commonplace in American life of the 1950s, including the academic world. This is no small accomplishment.

Rorty's central concern is, however, the eclipse of the American reformist Left in the decades since the Vietnam War. Yes, "macho arrogance" led to this disastrous war, and we must be grateful to the angry New Left of the 1960s for helping to stop it and to prevent a possible Orwellian scenario of its long-term continuation. Still, Rorty has argued, nothing that this nation has done makes constitutional democracy improbable. How can shared meaning in social reform be achieved in a secular age, when after all the price to be paid for temporalization is contingency? Not by an academic pseudo-left that in its mocking detachment is in danger of--again Rorty: "sinking to the level of a Henry Adams" in decadence and hopelessness. The literary utopias Rorty reads are full of self-disgust, and the rhetoric of the academic left is inadequate to the task of revitalizing a sense of social engagement that would bring back the visionary project of Whitman or the pragmatic approach of Dewey.

Rorty also sees the danger that the international world of cultural politics has helped to mask the real issues of a growing social inequality in the United States and around the globe (and this is why he is critical of *cultural* studies and *multiculturalism* for focusing on culture at the expense of the goal of social equality). There may now be many multicultural men and women who are completely disconnected from any proletariat anywhere, and multicultural internationalism may even serve as the marker that separates these intellectuals from people, making multiculturalists instead part of a global ruling class (a worry that resembles John Higham's earlier critique of pluralism's ability to reduce the intellectuals' interest in working people except insofar as they embodied authentic cultural practices of discreet ethnic groups. And Michael Lind has also rigorously stressed that the vast majority of poor people in the United States is white, and hence of little interest to multiculturalists). How can new social movements be built, Rorty therefore asks, that would (as did precursors from the 1930s to the 1960s) attempt to fight the crimes of (social) selfishness with the same vigor that multiculturalists have focused on the crimes of sadism?

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Such recent contributions to the multiculturalism discussion may help to illustrate the difference between multiculturalism in the United States and in Germany. What Günter Lenz described some years ago may still be true today: in the US, multiculturalism refers to the experiences and demands of the plurality of ethnic group identities *within* the country; in Germany, multiculturalism marks a contrast to the concept of national identity embodied by the *jus sanguinis* (always sounds like blood juice when you say it in English) and consequently a contrast of *we/they*, of *inside/outside*, of "vertraut" and "gefährlich fremd" (as a recent *Spiegel* cover put it).

The United States has long been viewed as a polyethnic immigrant country with policies and mythologies ranging from the melting-pot of assimilation to the mosaic of pluralism, and multiculturalism is an aspect of this tradition. This has been less the case in Europe, where various states have prided themselves for *not* being immigrant countries, and where the historical

excavation of actually existing polyethnicity may not have gone far enough to explain the issues of diversity that the current demographic data force onto the consciousness of Europeans. In 1993 there were about eleven million foreigners legally present in the fifteen member states of the European Union; and the number goes up to sixteen million if one counts citizens of other EU member states as foreigners. In Germany alone, there were nearly seven million foreigners in 1993 (among them about 1.5 million from EU member nations). These appear to be numbers significant enough to solicit political debate and reactions ranging from at times sentimental multicultural advocacy to the brutal hostilities of waves of xenophobia.

How can one make sense of developments which bring many European countries into a growing *union*, while the divisive tendency is pronounced within countries from the former Soviet Union and the former Czechoslovakia to the Basque separatists and the quest for a Northern Italian republic of Padania? Will the different Irish factions become harmoniously united fellow Europeans, or will they interact in the way in which Turks and Greeks continue to do within the shared framework of NATO? How can the complex and historically charged web of blurry terms such as ethnicity, *demos*, race, culture, identity, language, and nation state be disentangled and put into sharper focus so as to arrive at a better understanding of the current debates on citizenship, on legal inclusion and exclusion of political membership in states? Will governments and legislators make concessions to politically significant xenophobic voters or will they remain faithful to the democratic procedures of the previous decades? And what role, if any, might education play in the various countries in which multiculturalism has become a pressing topic of public discussion? These questions loom large at the present moment, and a historical perspective informed by what one might call “comparative multiculturalism” might be helpful in approaching them seriously.

The German multiculturalism discussion has indeed often focused on the clash between “*jus soli*” and “*jus sanguinis*” in extending citizenship rights. And *jus sanguinis* is the “German” model, but it also obtains in many other countries, including most of the East European states, and it is practiced in an even sharper way in Greece, a member country in the European Union that *never* releases Greeks from their citizenship, even after emigration (unless they are of Turkish ethnic origin--in which case they are not really “Greek” to begin with, even though they and their ancestors may have been born in what is now Greece and speak perfect Greek). The status of “Greek subject” is also hereditary, so that a Bronx-born US citizen with a Greek surname may find himself detained during a Mediterranean cruise and exposed to Greek officials' questioning why he has not yet done his military service in the Greek army.

Jus soli has its home in France, though it has not only been tied to the cultural factor of language, but under Charles Pasqua the Law was modified in such a way that, effective 1 January 1994, children born in France whose parents are not French do no longer acquire French citizenship at birth, but only at age 16. This had the intended effect that illegal aliens (the “*sans-papiers*”) can no longer derive from the children to whom they give birth in France a claim for a

permit to stay there. (Similar restrictions affect residence rights acquired by marriage.) Thus the *jus soli* has been modified into the direction of a concept in which the citizenship of the parents plays a much larger role than before, hence, in fact, a modified form of *jus sanguinis*. It is this development of the “French model” (subject to new changes under Jospin) that generated the crisis of August 1996 in Paris.

The history of *jus sanguinis* is not always taken into consideration in discussions of the topic; and I shall therefore offer a brief sketch of it.⁶ The German model derives from a relatively late departure from the feudal order. In nineteenth-century Germany, territorial membership meant membership in nearly 2,000 feudal units, and in order to overcome the feudal divisions into the direction of the new nation state, the concept of *jus soli* did not seem attractive. Hence *jus sanguinis* emerged as an alternative that was for the first time articulated in Prussia (in 1842). Yet the “Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz” of 1913 established the *jus soli* as the new national norm for imperial Germany only forty years *after* unification.

In addition to homogenizing a national form of citizenship the legislation had a dual intention: It wanted to make it easier for Germans to retain their citizenship even after long stays abroad. (In fact, a Volga German trying to “return” to Germany before 1913 might have found that much harder than his grandchild would in our days.) And it also wanted to make more difficult the naturalization of strangers at a time that about 700,000 Poles, that is approximately 20% of the Polish population, had become Prussian subjects and hence citizens of the Reich, and many migrated to the Ruhr area and to Berlin; in addition, there were 1.25 million foreigners in the Reich in 1910, not including hundreds of thousands of seasonal workers.⁷ The first part of the 1913 law was enthusiastically endorsed by Left and Right (the Left thinking of German working-class emigrants wishing to return, the Right of colonial administrators and German businessmen who lived abroad). The second intention, however, was the pet project of only the ethnonational conservatives, who opposed even the slightest concession to *jus soli*, wished to prevent the assimilation and naturalization of foreigners, wanted an ethnically homogenous German nation state defined by language and race, and thus believed that the only legitimate criterion for membership had to be ethno-cultural, transmittable by descent. (This was a matter of male descent, as the wife's citizenship was tied to that of her husband; only illegitimate birth resulted in the mother's ability to confer her citizenship to the child, a legal problem of some significance to binational married couples, before the law was changed early on in East Germany, and in West Germany only during the Brandt era.) Supported by Poles, Progressives and the Catholic *Zentrum* party, the Social Democrats proposed reforms toward a liberalization of naturalization some of which have not lost their relevance today. Rogers Brubaker summarized that “one proposal would have given a right to naturalization to persons born in Germany and residing there without long interruptions until majority; another to persons born and raised in Germany and willing to serve in the army.”⁸ The debates of the present suggest who won the battle. The 1913 German citizenship law articulated *jus sanguinis*

with a vengeance, firmly established the German citizenry as a “community of descent” (Brubaker), and viewed citizenship as a unique, single quality, and hence could not easily accommodate dual citizenship (about which more later).

Yet feudal concepts also continued to coexist with the new model of *jus sanguinis*. Aristocrats have always been able to feel at home in a country even if they did not know the vulgar language, and not being descended from local blood was precisely what may have strengthened their legitimacy. And even after the law of 1913, in World War I, as Eric Hobsbawm reported, a Baltic count who taught at Göttingen was summoned by his feudal lord to lead a regiment, and he took a leave from the university, first paid and later unpaid, and continued to read his students' work on the front. There would be little unusual about his case if the feudal lord of this professor had not been the Czar of Russia so that one has to imagine, at the peak of nationalism and shortly after the firm establishment of *jus sanguinis*, a German professor leading a foreign army against his own students--all of which was tolerated because the nation state reached its ideological limit in recognizing the legitimacy of remnants of the feudal order. To put it differently, the coexistence of feudal loyalty and modern nation-state patriotism could lead to the practice of “dual citizenship” even in cases which might be regarded as treason if viewed through the modern lens alone.

Dual citizenship has become a buzzword. In the United States, Randolph Bourne described it in World War I as a cultural ideal marking the way to true cosmopolitanism (very much in the vein that Haskell's *Lance* was to continue 25 years after Bourne): “Dual citizenship we may have to recognize as the rudimentary form of the international citizenship to which, if our words mean anything, we aspire.”⁹ It is widely believed (and occasionally even stated by German government officials) that, by contrast, Germany adheres to a strict principle of denying dual citizenship. Yet the exceptions to this rule are remarkable, perhaps also as far as numbers are concerned (though I do not have a reliable statistic listing the number of German citizens who are also citizens of another country).¹⁰ First, all children born from binational marriages have two citizenships from birth; they may, but they do not necessarily *have* to, opt for one of the two later on. Second, refugees who left Germany for political, racial, or religious reasons in the Nazi period--and, following the logic of *jus sanguinis*, their descendants, have a constitutional (and hereditary) right to claim their old citizenship without necessarily giving up the new. The same article 116 of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law, or Constitution) also regulates the status of the numerically most relevant group of immigrants of German descent, the *Volksdeutsche* or *Aussiedler* from Eastern Europe--the *jus sanguinis* group par excellence. From 1950 to 1993 more than three million were thus “repatriated,” more than half of that number arriving from 1988 to 1993. In 1993 alone, 219,000 *Aussiedler* became German citizens (the vast majority of them Russians, and others Rumanians and Poles), and they are not required to go through the complicated bureaucratic process of relinquishing their old citizenships. In the same year 13,000 Turks (of more than 1.8 million living in Germany, two thirds for ten years or

more) were also naturalized as German citizens--but they are usually required to give up their Turkish citizenship (though in Berlin, for example, most were, until recently, permitted to keep it after becoming Germans).

Dual citizenship has become so much the noteworthy exception to the supposed rule that a recognition of its widespread existence may well ultimately shape the political debate in Germany about a reform of the "Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht." This is all the more the case since the growing European Union will also have a bearing on citizenship in the various member states. As far as dual citizenship is concerned, the most populous countries France, Britain, and Italy do not require that naturalized immigrants relinquish their old citizenships, and neither do the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, or Greece. European citizenship, though less the subject of public debate, is at least as important as the Euro.

Nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War and in the middle of the process of European unification the time may be ideal to take a "secular," unemotional, and pragmatic survey of the possibilities of citizenship. Feudal notions of people "belonging" as "subjects" to their aristocratic liege or to his descendant, the modern nation state, are today at variance with the concept of democratic citizenship, yet the opinion also seems justified that whatever the original emancipatory potential may have been in *jus sanguinis* has been lost with Fascism and become quite inadequate in the age of mass migrations and ever growing streams of refugees. A change of the mode of defining citizenship (away from *jus sanguinis* if not completely into the direction of *jus soli*, which has many problems of its own) might thus profitably be contemplated in present and future discussions, especially in Germany.¹¹

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Going beyond multiculturalism might mean somewhat different things in the Old World and the New. As Glazer views it against the history and the scars of racism, American multiculturalism--with all its drawbacks and philosophical weaknesses--still offers a new approach to integration that amends the incomplete assimilationist paradigms of the past. Or as Rorty casts it, multiculturalism's success in curbing the crimes of social sadism may be one of the reasons why crimes of selfishness should now move to the top of the agenda. Perhaps some active multicultural work aimed to reduce the virulent forms of social sadism could also be helpful here at this time, especially if it could be undertaken without the drawbacks of identity politics. In Germany, multiculturalism is directly linked to debates about citizenship and rights of sizeable residential minorities. Going beyond multiculturalism here would thus seem to mean most of all working toward the ratification of the kind of legislation that is most likely to create a stable realistic framework that is needed to reflect the changing composition of the country, its new European context, and the continued need for economic migration and for accommodating those who desperately search for political asylum. My first recommendation then is for Germany to go "beyond multiculturalism" and toward creating easily recognizable avenues toward citizenship. And perhaps some features of the defeated Social Democratic

proposals of 1913 could still be of help today. A clear and just system of accepting immigrants and conferring the rights of citizenship to them within a reasonably short time might go further than decades of teaching “citizens” tolerance toward culturally different “foreigners”--who cannot vote.

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This might look like one-sided advice to some, and advice coming moreover from someone highly unqualified to offer any. For the sake of balance, then, let me now proceed to make two recommendations to go “beyond multiculturalism” in the US, and here I speak from my professional vantage point as an Americanist interested in literature and culture. These concern first, the unpredicted proliferation of biracial, multiracial, and racially mixed identifications in the American populace (about 10 million at this moment use such a self-designation--and for those of you who may be disappointed that I am not talking about this topic exclusively, let me mention that my new book *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both* has just been published, dealing with some of these issues in depth); and second, the unsung history and continued presence of multilingualism in the United States. In these two aspects the European and American situation may again be seen to diverge.

When the *Nation* reviewed the new *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by ~~my colleague~~ Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and by Nellie McKay, it singled out the surprising short story “The Mulatto” of 1837 for praise. The first published short story by an author of African ancestry born in the United States, it is a remarkable tale, indeed, suggestive of the strength of the whole œuvre produced by the New Orleans-born and -raised writer whose full name was Jean François Louis Victor Séjour Marcou Ferrand (1817-1874). Victor Séjour's father was a free man of color from Saint Domingue; his mother Eloise Phillippe Ferrand was a Mulatto born in New Orleans; Victor's baptismal record at the Cathedral Saint-Louis identifies him as “quarteron libre” (free Quadroon).¹² The father had a shop on Chartres Street, and Victor studied with the famous tutor Michel Séigny, attended Sainte-Barbe Academy, and in 1836 continued his education in Paris. Yet once there, he must have decided to stay, as he returned to the United States only once more in his lifetime, most of which he spent as a well-known playwright and poet in France. He knew Alexandre Dumas (père), who supported him. His ode “Le Retour de Napoléon” (1841) was included in the famous Creole anthology *Les Cenelles* (1845); and among his many interesting dramas are “The Outlaw of the Adriatic” (1855), “The Brown Overcoat” (1858), and such problem plays as “Diégarias” (1844), and “The Fortune Teller” (1859). He also had connections with Victor Hugo; and the preparation of Séjour's dramatization of the life of John Brown was announced in 1861. He married a New Orleans woman when he returned for a visit, and he also brought his parents back to live with him to Paris. He died of tuberculosis and was buried at Père-Lachaise.

The frame of the tale is provided by a first-person-singular narrator who approaches Saint-Marc, a small town in Santo Domingo, “these days the Republic of Haïti,” as the narrator

adds so as to suggest immediately the Haïtian Revolution as the significant historical background to the story. The narrator meets Antoine, an old black man who greets him as “master” and who, when reminded of an earlier promise, agrees to tell the story of his friend Georges. The old man's narrative, told from a close to omniscient point of view, and full of vivid dialogues and descriptions, forms the remainder and the bulk of the tale, which does not return to the frame narration at the end.

In the days before the end of slave sales, the estate Saint-M*** that Antoine points out to the narrator, was used as a market where husband was separated from wife, and brother from sister. There the twenty-two year-old Alfred, one of the richest planters of the island was bidding for a young Senegalese beauty and ended up purchasing her for a very high price. She is an orphan whose name is Laïsa, and when Alfred's driver Jacques Chambo speaks with her as he is taking her to the plantation they recognize each other as siblings and embrace each other in tears. Alfred is furious when he sees them in each other's arms and whips Jacques bloody.

A tough and heartless master, Alfred takes violent possession of Laïsa, but finding her proud and cold, loses interest in her before she gives birth to his child, a boy she names Georges and whom Alfred never acknowledges. Mother and child are relegated to the meanest cabin on the plantation. When Georges grows up without ever hearing the name of his father mentioned he becomes curious about the mystery of his origin, but his mother guards the secret, promising him only that he will learn his father's name at age twenty-five. However, Laïsa dies, and leaves Georges as his heirloom only a sack containing a portrait of his father; the son has to promise to his dying mother not to open it before coming of age.

As Georges grows older he keeps this promise despite his curiosity. By coincidence he learns one night that a group of robbers who have been killing planters are planning Alfred's assassination, and Georges immediately warns his master. Alfred, mistrustful like all tyrants, suspects the loyal Georges, but four assassins arrive, and in the ensuing fight Georges saves his master's life, is seriously wounded, and carried to his cabin. Antoine interrupts the flow of his narration because he forgot to mention that Georges had a wife, the young and beautiful Mulatto woman Zélie; and when Georges' life was still in danger, Alfred often came to visit him in his cabin and became enamored of Zélie who rejected the master's advances with humble dignity. Alfred is piqued by the thought that the Sultan of the Antilles would be turned down by a mere slave woman, and he orders her to his chamber where he assaults her, despite all her pleas, and she, as a last resort, pushes him away--but she does it so forcefully that he loses his balance and injures his head falling down. The unfortunate Zélie immediately understands that this means that she will have to die. Alfred obviously calls upon an often-cited paragraph of the *Code noir*. Knowledge of the *Code noir* is so much taken for granted by Séjour's characters and narrator that it does not have to be explicitly named or fully cited in the text.

In tears Zélie tells her incredulous husband what has happened though he, in his weakened state, cannot do anything to help. Ten days later Zélie's execution is being prepared in

front of a crowd of heartless spectators. Georges pleads in vain for Alfred's pardon, reminding him of the promises he made when his life had been saved. When Alfred remains unmoveable, Georges accuses him of wanting Zélie hanged only because she had refused him. Georges threatens to kill Alfred, rushes into the forest where he finds and joins the slave rebels, and Zélie is executed.

The ending of the story, set three years later, brings home the violence of the family tragedy to the master's mansion. Georges has heard that Alfred has married and that his wife has given birth to a son; he secretly approaches and manages to enter the master bedroom, having first put poison into the mistress's broth. He makes himself known to the frightened Alfred and congratulates him sarcastically on the birth of his son. Georges also asks him whether it isn't horrible to die when one is happy. When Alfred asks for mercy "in the name of your father," Georges relents for a moment and asks Alfred whether he knows who his father is. But now the wife cries for water, and Georges keeps Alfred from helping his wife whose screams of agony soon fill the room. He shows Alfred the water that could serve as antidote to the poison, but smashes the bottle against the wall because he wants his master to watch his wife dying. Finally Georges takes a hatchet in order to decapitate Alfred whose last pleading words are, "since you have poisoned her, you may as well kill your fa--" --at which moment the head is separated from the body; but rolling away, the father's head audibly mumbles the last syllable, "--ther" (302). Georges cannot believe his ears, opens the bag and exclaims that he is doomed. The next morning his body is found next to that of Alfred. Séjour ends the story abruptly on this high point: what could a return to the frame narrator and Antoine have added at such a moment?

Séjour's tale is a strong concentration of the horrors of slavery told from a point of view of antislavery urgency, and it was published at a time when New England's abolitionist fiction had not yet contributed anything resembling the force of this tale. Especially effective is Séjour's mythic method of locating the deep tragic themes of the son's search for the name of the father and of the father-son conflict culminating in a lurid, unknowingly committed patricide in an interracial family structure in which a modern Oedipus or Job endures the loss of his mother and his wife, and has to make the agonizing discovery that the tyrant and villain he has decapitated in revenge is his own father. As Simone Vauthier has observed in her reading of another text, "oedipal fantasies of parricide and the dream of social redress" may get "fused" in such mythic tales, resulting in images which have, "at the same time, psychoanalytic significance and revolutionary relevance."¹³ Georges becomes a political rebel to the extent that he opposes his own father, a fact which heightens the revolutionary spirit of the tale as does the seemingly limitless array of injustices that Alfred is able to commit before--brought about by the master's incestuously toned desire for his own son's wife and his revenge on her through the ruthless application of the *Code noir*--the Faustian Georges finally opposes him with equal violence. The

Code noir is also the father's law, and Alfred's application of it forces his son to become an outlaw.

While the clash between father and son is central to *Séjour* and marks the gory climax of the tale, the stark presentation of the fates of the two women at the hand of the master is also remarkable. In *Séjour*'s world the sexual aggression that the tyranny of slavery implies leaves few choices to the enslaved women, single or married: Laïsa's "coldness" prompts Alfred to banish her, and Zélie's resistance makes him invoke the deadly extremes of the *Code noir*.¹⁴ And the property owner's jealousy toward "his" slave woman's brother (Laïsa's Jacques) or husband (Zélie's Georges) demonstrates the rawness and violence of the possessive urge that is unleashed by slavery. The reference to Alfred as the "Sultan of the Antilles" connects the attack of tyranny with the orientalist critique of the slave owner's desire for a harem. *Séjour*'s "Mulatto" is a brief tale for so much and for such spectacular action; and the characters are defined by their actions and by their constellation to each other more than by psychological depth, but the story is undoubtedly effective in energizing antislavery sentiment toward a revolutionary overthrow of the status quo.

By locating the dramatic development within an interracial family structure of white father, black mother, Mulatto son, *Séjour* also called attention to the tragic and explosive potential of unrecognized family relations across racial lines. The denial of legitimacy to biracial individuals thus becomes an important building block in the construction of "race." Mediating categories which were commonly used in Latin America, the Caribbean, and in New Orleans, too, were largely absent in the United States where racial dualism obtained and where one could (and still can in Hollinger's ethn racial pentagon) only be black or white, but not both. (The obvious and explosive exception is constituted by Latinos who, for the census, may be of any race.) Multiracialism (with all its problems for identification and census counting) thus implies a transcendence of multiculturalism: where the additive approach is characteristic of much multiculturalism (with its widespread use of the rhetorical figure of the catalogue, the listing of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and whites), the multiracial approach is, from the start, more likely to focus on the qualitative consequences of *interactions*.

*

Such interactions have, however, run against significant legal and cultural obstacles. In the United States, for example, the little-known Supreme Court decision of *Pace v. Alabama* (1882) set in motion new and powerful patterns of racial segregation long before *Plessy v. Ferguson* followed suit. In *Pace*, the judges found unanimously that punishing interracial adultery more harshly than illicit intraracial sex constituted no racial discrimination since both the black and the white partner were punished more harshly. And such familiar questions as "would you like your daughter to marry one" have functioned as central, and not always ineffective, attacks on racial equality and integration. Widely familiar from American literature, this question was also asked in the Berlin *Reichstag*, not long before *jus sanguinis* was established there, by a Sanskrit

scholar, “Wirklicher Geheimer Rat,” Dr. Dr. Heinrich Solf who had previously served as Governor of the German colony of Samoa, who in 1911 became the head of the German colonial office (*Staatssekretär des Reichs-Kolonial-Amtes*), and soon began to work on his pet project, a *Mischehen-Verbot für Samoa*. In the parliamentary debate on May 8, 1912, Solf used the example of the United States as a threat--“was ist denn die *negro question* - die Negerfrage - in den Vereinigten Staaten anderes als eine Mischlingsfrage?” and appealed to the *Abgeordneten* of all parties to follow their instincts and not social or dogmatic considerations:

Ich bitte Sie, einfach die nackten Tatsachen auf sich wirken zu lassen. Sie senden Ihre Söhne in die Kolonien: wünschen Sie, daß sie Ihnen schwarze Schwiegertöchter ins Haus bringen? wünschen Sie, daß sie Ihnen wollhaarige Enkel in die Wiege legen?¹⁵

(It may very well be that the mobilization of such fears is one of the core sources of social sadism.) Yet the *Reichstag* was not swayed. Though the deputies said some of the strangest things about race that day, Solf's government proposal to ban intermarriage in colonies was defeated (with 202 : 133 votes) and it was resolved in a motion sponsored by Zentrum and supported by Social Democrats, that the *Bundesrat* enact legislation securing the validity of marriages between whites and natives in all German colonies and regulating the rights of illegitimate children. (But here I go again about Germany.)

In some aspects the multiculturalism discussion has replicated the fictions of separable races. While large numbers of Americans still oppose interracial marriage (though the intermarriage rate has been going up very dramatically in the past twenty years--perhaps at a higher rate than the growth of any single ethnic category), multiculturalists sometimes act as if racial mingling--or even the focus on it in literary studies--were a form of caving in to what is sometimes believed to be “the dominant assimilationist ideology.” Isn't it more accurate to say that, after centuries of legal bans, cultural ostracism, and historical denial, the time may have come to go “beyond multiculturalism”--toward interracialism, not only on the (most significant) black-white fault line, but on all lines dividing so-called races. Instead of looking at interracial relations as those interactions that are often prohibited between people from “different races” we might also regard intermarriage bans--and the denial of legitimacy to biracial individuals--as important building blocks in the construction of “race.” The hackneyed notion of “pure blood” always rests on the possibility and the reality of “mixed blood”--though violent “cleansing” may be deemed necessary to constitute “purity.” Investigating interracialism may thus also lead to new understandings of “race.” It may help particularly in confronting the emotional core of much racism; but it may also suggest the long tradition of interracial stories that have preceded and are likely to outlast racism--from foundational stories of origin (such as the one Jane Ray's *The Story of Creation* recently retold as part of the impressive contributions multiculturalism has made to children's literature) and multiracial representations of *fraternité* to stories of utopian possibilities in the future.

Séjour's story is interesting to me also from another point of view. It was written in French, entitled "Le Mulâtre," Alfred actually said "pè--re," and I have here quoted from a translation prepared for the Longfellow Institute by Andrea Lee. It is an interesting sign that the *Norton Anthology* includes at least one non-English text--just like the *Heath Anthology* opened its pages to a very few American texts that needed to be translated into English. This gets me to the issue of multiculturalism and language.

Originally, an "Americanist" was a person who studied American Indian languages. In my student days in Berlin, there was still the likelihood that an "Amerikanist" would be mistaken for an "Altamerikanist." This legacy has been all but forgotten within the largely monolingual and Anglophone American Studies Association of today. According to a 1996 communication from the Executive Director of the American Studies Association, the majority of academic Americanists in the United States is now monolingual in English only, with the exception of "native speakers who happen to be US residents/scholars, or with folks in (mainly comparative) literature or ethnic studies where language is required."¹⁶

Though perhaps the most significant and fascinating form of "diversity," and certainly the single most important medium for literary expression, the multitude of languages in which literature of the United States has been written has rarely if ever been made the center of readers' attention so that the history and continued existence of multilingualism in the United States remain largely unexplored. This is partly a result of the scaling down of language requirements in the US--ironically just in the period in which the word "multiculturalism" also achieved popularity.

The learning of languages other than one's mother tongue is considered part of an educational agenda that political conservatives as well as radicals in many countries of the world would unhesitatingly endorse. The European Community, for example, which has more official languages than the United Nations, actively supports language acquisition in educational institutions from grade schools to universities. British schools offer an expanded officially approved list of "modern foreign languages" that may be taught privately by immigrant groups, and in Sweden all school children have the right to receive at least two weekly hours of mother tongue (*hemspråk*) instruction with the result that 80 (of an accepted list of 124) languages were taught in Swedish schools in 1993, the less well-known ones by traveling or part-time teachers.¹⁷ There are forms of official bilingualism in European Union countries that might surprise US bilingualists: for example, in Italian South Tyrol/Alto Adige all state and private employees in the public sector must now be able to answer all their customers' questions both in German and Italian. Yet it is also obvious that only *some* European languages are official languages, so that, for example, Catalan and Basque, Welsh and Ladino are not among the elect--only because they are not official languages in a European Union member state. In the discussion of multiculturalism in Germany the hidden significance of language manifests itself in the

frequently made casual mention that the nationalized *Volksdeutschen* do not speak German whereas the second-generation Turkish-Germans do. But does that imply that *only*, or that *all*, people who speak German *are*, or should be permitted to become, German citizens? After all, such linguistic minorities as Danes, Frisians, and Sorbs enjoy the protected status of “national minority” in Germany whose non-German language rights are constitutionally guaranteed and do not call into question their German citizenship, their “Germanness.”¹⁸ In this case different coexisting models of membership in a nation become apparent.

In the United States, however, an “English only” movement has captured the conservative imagination at the very same time that NAFTA would make the intensified teaching of at least Spanish and French more plausible. Schools and colleges have steadily been reducing their language offerings and requirements, with the support of conservatives who otherwise would make demands for more rigorous educational programs. A recent survey by the Modern Language Association shows that foreign-language instruction in such languages as German or French has continued to decline in the 1990s (after increasing a little in 1989, the German-language registration in United States colleges and universities, for example, went down by 27.8% from 133,348 in 1990 to 96,263 in 1996).¹⁹ While liberals and radicals may have paid lip service to a support of bilingual education for Hispanic-Americans, they have remained uninterested in the larger issues of linguistic diversity; and the history of language bans in the United States has hardly seeped into even the most ardent multiculturalists' consciousness. As Gerald Early put it, in commenting on the provincialism of what he calls the multiculturalism craze, “multiculturalists generally do not see learning foreign languages as a major part of their educational reform.” Early's point is well taken, yet his use of the term “foreign” also suggests how natural of the notion of an Anglophone United States has become even to its critics.²⁰ Recently voices have been raised that propose, in Mary Louise Pratt's words, “expunging the term *foreign* to refer to languages other than English” for it applies neither to Spanish nor to “French, Cantonese, Italian, or Japanese--to say nothing of Lakota, Navajo, or Cree.” Yet the programmatic definitions from 1975 and 1993 of the field of Comparative Literature in the United States make clear that, if anything, it has become *more* acceptable in the last two decades to work only with English translations of non-English originals, in effect making all languages except English more “foreign” than ever.²¹

In the various fields of literary and historical study and in literary histories of the United States, the multitudes of texts written in languages other than English have tended to disappear from view. After World War I, with all its efforts at Americanization in an English mold, there was still a sense left in the world of scholarship that “language and literature of the United States” was a field not limited to English. Thus, the old *Cambridge History of American Literature* of 1919ff. stressed that the “language of the people of the United States has been English even more prevailingly than their institutions and their culture”--yet it included more than sixty pages exclusively dedicated to “Non-English Writings.” Written by Albert B. Faust,

Edward J. Fortier, Nathaniel Buchwald, and Mary Austin, these specialized sections focused on German, French, Yiddish, and “Aboriginal” texts, but other parts of the *History* also paid attention to non-English authors so that the old reference work touched upon writers from Lorenzo Da Ponte to Victor Séjour and on texts from Pastorius's *Bee-hive* to the *Walam Olum* that will now need to be reintroduced to the general reader and the specialist by a new direction in scholarly work. It is also noteworthy that the authors of the *Cambridge History* generally still assumed that their readers were fluent in French, German, and Latin.²² And it was also in the same period that H. L. Mencken paid notable attention, in *The American Language* (1919), to the non-English elements of its topic. As late as 1946, Robert Spiller's *Literary History of the United States* included a chapter by Mencken on “The American Language,” a section by Stith Thompson on “The Indian Heritage,” and an entry by Henry A. Pochmann and others dedicated to describe “The Mingling of Tongues” that followed and abridged the old *Cambridge History* in delineating German, French, and Yiddish writing, while adding new and shorter sections on Spanish, Italian, and Scandinavian texts. In contemporary literary histories, however, readers may be invited to pause for a moment and reflect on the many voices that were silenced, yet will find little space dedicated to descriptions of non-English writings of the past. Literary histories, anthologies, and even bibliographies nowadays inevitably imply a monolingual Anglophone reader. A representative example for the “natural” way in which this exclusion takes place can be found in the volume *Asian-American Literature: An Annotated Bibliography*, a comprehensive publication of nearly 300 pages, which includes the following, telling declaration of limits: “we exclude works written in Asian languages, unless they have been translated into English.”²³ As many other examples could illustrate, non-English languages of the United States have been marginalized in the field of American Studies, even when it has intersected with Ethnic Studies or been undertaken with a multicultural focus. This is all the more surprising since multilingualism would seem to be so easily linked with the multiculturalism debate. For example, Hollinger's approach could be strengthened, and Benn Michaels's generalization could appear more questionable if the issue of language were included into their reflections, for language provides a model for an understanding of culture that need not be based on race, and language acquisition may be one way of making voluntary affiliations, widening the circle of the “we,” and at least in part “becoming what one is not.” Language certainly is a part of “culture” that is not automatically synonymous with “race,” and “doing Navajo things” could mean for a non-Navajo to learn the Navajo language.

There are many, many culturally fascinating, historically important, or aesthetically outstanding texts that were written in languages other than English, ranging, for example, from works in indigenous Amerindian languages and from Spanish, French, Dutch, German, and Russian colonial writings to immigrant literature in all European languages and to Arabic texts by African Americans. (At Harvard's Widener Library, for example, a data-base search revealed that there are more than 120,000 imprints published in the United States in languages other

than English.) These little-studied texts raise important issues of language policies, national identity, and education, and they are especially suited to international scholarly collaboration.

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One such example is Victor Séjour's story "Le Mulâtre," that I just spoke about. Another example of the kind of text that a multilingual orientation of multiculturalism might discover is a comedy entitled *Die Emigranten. Deutsch-Amerikanisches Lebensbild in fünf Akten*. St. Louis, Mo.: Aug. Wiebusch & Son Printing Company, 1882. The play was published anonymously, it came to be part of the Harvard College Library through a bequest from Evert Jansen Wendell, but its author is not identified in the text or the card catalogue (the item has not yet been entered into our electronic listing.) Thus I do not know who the author was, but some of you present who have worked in this field may know more about this play or its author.

In *Die Emigranten*, Marie, the young niece of the German-American Schneider who has changed his name to Taylor, has recently arrived from Germany and is urged by her uncle to marry his son, her cousin (though nobody comments on *that*), the worthless gambler James (yes, James Taylor!). Yet she refuses the uncle's authority: she is about to come of age, and his command is palpably wrong and made, though Marie does not know it, only in order to keep the Taylor family afloat, whose wealth secretly rests on Marie's estate "in the West" and on her fortune that Schneider/Taylor has been squandering through his ill-advised speculations. Marie finds an ally in James's sister Ella, manages to narrowly escape the disastrous match, and is betrothed to the good German immigrant Dr. Heinrich Gruner instead. Ella, impoverished by her goodheartedness (though Marie vows to support the Taylors) ends up approaching a marriage with Karl Meyer (who had hesitated earlier only because he saw Ella's money as an obstacle and whose happiness is boundless that the beloved who appeared to be a rich American fortunately was really a poor German). Yet this double match that provides closure to the comedy plot seems not to be where the playwright's heart is. It seems to be a mere excuse for a sustained game of mixing German and American elements in ever-changing doses and to enjoy what happens. For the true spirit of *Die Emigranten* is not in the success of its plot in saving two couples for "Germanness" and from shallow Americanization, but in its thorough exploration of the language that has been called "Germerican"--a mixed language of the types that are also present in many other American texts. For much of multilingual America has used the "hybrid tongues," or, as one could also say the "melting glots" of Franglais, Portinglês, Yinglish, Italglish, Spanglish, and so forth.²⁴

Die Emigranten is remarkable, though it may not be exceptional, in approaching the new language out of old ingredients. At the opening of the play the leading characters (among them our two men destined to be bridegrooms at the end) develop a sense of "heimat" because of the shared journey on the ship, not of their common origin in Germany: allegorically speaking, what ties the characters to each other is not their original locations, but the fact that they have emigrated and recognize that there will be no return to Germany. And Doktor

Gruner, who promotes solidarity among the immigrants (or, from the German-language vantage point, among *Emigranten*), exacts the promise from the others that if they ever come to St Louis they must look him up in order to relive in memory “that important epoch of human life known as ocean journey” (5). And Gruner also presents a counterbalance to a character merely called “S.”, a rural critic of America (who likes the land but not the people and complains about the speed of pedestrians, not permitting him to light and smoke a pipe in peace): Gruner reminds him (and the spectators) that there is no compulsory military service, no hierarchical bureaucracy in America, creating more egalitarian conditions than in the Old World. Nonetheless, it is S. who introduces the first bilingual pun when he complains about the street here called “Brod--weg” (5) thus Germanizing *Broadway* and inviting the readings “bread-way” (weeg) or “bread--gone” (weg). Two pages later, one of our two heroes sings a song devoted to denouncing titles and ranks, even in the New World in which he ominously rhymes the English “care” and the German “mehr!” The first scene thus sets up a theoretical openness toward German-America against the ideal of the temporary migrant (who wants to make money and then go back and marry his Rosa) and that of the anti-urban villager. It also sings the praises of sophistication and adaptability against the syndrome of what the play will later call “Grünhorner”: incredible naïveté, here represented by the Swabian immigrant girl Louischen.

Gruner: Why don't you rather tell me how all of you like
 America. After all, - we have been here now for more than
 a week, and each of you must have had some adventure. How
 about you, Louischen?

Louischen: Well! I like the country, and I like this city - but the people - they are so
 strange, and their language is so strange.

Karl: It's true that they don't speak Suabian.

Louischen: And yesterday I met a coalblack woman, and she starts speaking German
 to me, and then I ask her how long she's been gone from Germany, and
 she says with a laugh: Only five years, but that the sun had burned her so.
 Well, in five years, I'd be only twenty-one years old.

Karl: Oh, so you are afraid for your pretty white complexion and
 believe that you'll turn black, too, and will then not find a husband, or
 only a black one?

Louischen: Oh, how terrible.

Karl: Well, don't worry - this must have been only the joke of a Negro woman who has learned German somewhere.²⁵

Turning "black" within five years may well be an interesting way of imagining Americanization, resonating with what Carl Gustav Jung later observed about white American adoptions of Indian and black American ways. (It also brings to mind the more explicit forms of interracialism in Ludwig von Reizenstein's *Die Geheimnisse von New=Orleans*, the novel Steven Rowan rediscovered, translated, and is now publishing in the Longfellow Institute²⁶ series, or the anonymous and fragmentary *Geheimnisse von Philadelphia* that is being edited and translated by Elliott Shore). But it is not the way advocated by this play which associates an enjoyment of minstrelsy and the use of the slur "nigger" only with the negative foil, Mr. Taylor (12).

When Taylor makes his entry, code-switching also takes command, and we are led to believe at first that the mixed language is only a ridiculous quality that will be rejected by the good German immigrants. Taylor senior: "*You must know*, Sie müssen mich *excusen*, wenn ich Englisch spreche, *but you see*, ich bin schon lange in Amerika, ich bin, was man nennt so ein alter Settler der ist *smart*, der sieht es einem gleich an und dann *move* ich auch blos in *american* und englisch *society*, das heißt Gesellschaft und da vergißt man das Deutsch.--Wenn einer so lange im *country* ist wie ich, na, der spricht nur englisch" (9). (One could say, Taylors Motto ist ebenso unzulänglich wie doppelt gemoppelt: "Ihr müßt Alle Eure deutschen *manners* los werden, *you must get americanised*, das heißt: Ihr müßt Euch amerikanisieren" (11). Yet Taylor's language is only an extreme manifestation of "Germerican," and even though Karl Meyer sings a purifying song about "Muttersprache" und "Vaterland" after meeting Taylor, the interaction of German and American continues and even intensifies. For one thing, Taylor himself has a lot of Schneiderness left in him; for another, the names of the good German characters also alternate from "Carl" to "Karl" and "Marie" to "Mary," and Marie/Mary has to learn the lessons of America in the meaning of such concepts as "Müßiggang" (leisure) and such "American" words as "beau" (rhyming with German "so" and "froh").

What S.'s "Brod-weg" suggested now becomes a full-fledged possibility in the play's focus on the interaction of languages, and the clash of meanings of words that have the same sound. We have become accustomed to read much about Bakhtin's dialogic model for the novel--but *Die Emigranten* offers us a *duet* as the formal expression of the language situation. I have taken the liberty to prepare a handout for you with one of the most beautiful passages from the play (24-25), and if you are at all moved to sing it this probably in keeping with the spirit of the conference--as singing may be another way of going beyond multiculturalism (especially in conjunction with *schunkeln*). Please note the power of the single word "~~S~~choppen"/"shoppen" to build up a sustained cultural opposition. Also noteworthy, however, is the presence of a "third language" (not uncommon when two languages interact).²⁷

Here it is French, which is both “American” (in the case of “beau”) and “German” in the case of all those words like “coquettiren,” “räsoniren,” or “amüsiren,” which--unlike “shop” or “stores” do not sound “foreign” in the nineteenth-century German-language text.

Marie: Why, Ella? Wouldn't you rather go shopping? - You said so yourself.

Karl: **Schoppen**? What is this? In Germany, too, one goes to drink **Schoppen** - but only men do it, of course.

Marie: Oh, Karl, - you mean drinking a **Schoppen**, Ella means going *shopping*. Why don't you ask her to explain it to you, too? Perhaps in a poetic way?

Karl: Oh yes, Miss Ella. Please, why don't you start with the song of your **Schoppen**, and then I'll sing my **Schoppen**-song for you, or accompany you with it.

Ella: Oh, yes, there is so much we can learn from each other. I'll start with my song and you'll accompany me:

Oh, how lovely 'tis once more -
To go *shoppen* in the stores.
All the wares are there for trying,
And the clerks are there for flirting,
For the others there is gossiping,
For ourselves there's promenading,
All without embarrassment,
Such delicious amusement,
To fool the lads who love to drop in
As we enjoy the lovely art of *shoppen*.

Marie: Very good, Ella. But now let's hear your German **Schoppen**-song, Karl.

Karl: It's quite similar, only completely different. (*Sings:*)

Oh, how great it's once again -
To have **Schoppen** at the inn.

All the wine is there for trying,
With political cavorting,
With the others there is disputing,
So that wines and beers are soothing,
At one's table is much argument,
Such delicious amusement,
To take much more than one cool drop in
As we enjoy the greatest art - of **Schoppen**.

Marie: (*applauding*) Bravo, isn't this the true German-American **Schoppen**-song that glorifies both **Schoppen** and *shopping*. But don't you have a stanza you can both sing together?

Karl: Well, if it suits Miss Ella, why don't we sing a duet?

Ella: Agreed - let's try it. (*Both sing along to the same melody, but with different words:*)

Oh, how lovely 'tis once more -
To go *shoppen* in the stores.
There young men with friendly eyeing
To receive first, and then nodding,
And their hands so softly pressing,
And their hearts to be caressing,
To entangle them in weaving, tying
Happy knots they find a blessing.
And fool all, yes, all who love to drop in
As we enjoy the lovely art of *shoppen*.

Karl (*Sings:*)

Oh, how great it's once again -
To have **Schoppen** at the inn.
All the wine with careful eyeing,
To examine, and then nodding,
And the glass 'gainst lips pressing,
And one's head bent back ingesting,
Then small gulps of this great blessing
Will rejoice heart and intestine.

To take much more than one cool drop in
As we enjoy the greatest art - of **Schoppen**.

Marie: Bravo, bravo, that sounds wonderful! But if the husband goes to his German **Schoppen**, and the wife goes *shopping* American style, then it may not be as harmonious as it sounds in this song.

The encounter with Karl reminds Ella of her late mother and her German lullaby--really an exhortation never to give up "die Sprache die die Mutter spricht" (26).²⁸ Karl, however, in his anger at the moneyed rich, soon sings a mixed song of his own: "Es gibt der Menschen eine sondre Art,/ Die dünken sich als *super extra smart*" (34). And though Gruner (always called "Doktor"--a nice contradiction to the play's polemic against the use of titles in America) invokes Darwin in a song that claims that quickly assimilated immigrants are probably the best proof for the theory that the human species is related to the "corps of monkeys" (*Affencorps*--a Franco-German term in its own right), he describes this ideal type in German enriched by an English word:

Bald kann sogar kein Deutsch man mehr
Und Englisch radebricht.
Dann schilt er auch noch auf die *dutch*,
Der miserable Wicht. (35)

The word *dutch* in these lines repeats the very phenomenon of speaking in a mixed tongue ("radebrechen") that is being indicted. In another song, Karl similarly mocks quick assimilation and associates it with general infidelity when he sings about Aennchen, an immigrant girl whom Karl sees shortly after she has complained that she could never learn English, but who is now accompanied by a young American man. She answers Karl's polite German question how she is doing with a quick English response: "*I english Lady, dutch not spik*" (45).

The play thus paradoxically--in the polemical speeches and songs of its positively cast protagonists--presents the pitch for language loyalty in (and implicitly, *to*) an "impure" language. The assimilated German-American as the villain may still hold some potential for being reformed (as Taylor senior is), and the pampered, deracinated, and generally unbearable second-generation James who may be the living fear of what the future might hold for immigrants, is the one whom nobody marries, but whose new language, untranslatable into any other language--may somehow prevail. **Die Emigranten** makes the worst offenders only the most extreme representatives of a fairly general practice. The very title page illustrates this, as we find a German title and subtitle followed by "St. Louis, Mo." and (no longer in Gothic *Frakturschrift*) "Aug. Wiebusch & Son Printing Company." Like **Die Emigranten**, many works insist that we should not ignore such "impure" language elements as code-switching and

the bilingual pun, or the ethnic negotiations of “German-American” in relationship to other ways of being American.

German-American literature does not exist in isolation but implies in its very hyphenate adjective that it is part of an *interaction*; and that fact may give many works a prophetic quality as they foreshadow aspects of our own transnational period that has all but replaced the nationalist era in which “German America” may have had something unnatural, oxymoronic, or merely comic about it that could only be resolved either by an exilic self-consciousness as *Auslandsdeutschtum* or by a complete immersion into Anglo-America. After two World Wars and the end of the Cold War, the time may have come to go beyond multiculturalism (or more deeply into multiculturalism)--toward multilingualism.

It is exactly eighty years ago now that the revelation of the disastrous Zimmermann cable (in which the German government promised Mexico great parts of the US. Southwest if Mexico were to join World War I on the German side) led to military confrontation between the United States and Germany, with its well-known tragic consequences for German-Americans. Five and a half million Germans had emigrated in the century prior to that moment of crisis, most of them to the United States; before the year 1913, in which Germany introduced the new principle of *ius sanguinis* as the basis of citizenship, emigrants automatically lost their German citizenship after a few years abroad. The hopes of many for a compatibility of their past German identification and present American citizenship (which clearly animates *Die Emigranten*) were dashed when they were asked to choose one side or the other; or, rather, when they were really forced to choose one side. Did what Joshua Fishman termed “language loyalty” persist more in the Old World than in the New?²⁹ Was World War I really the watershed, or was, as Peter Conolly-Smith has argued in his wonderful study of the German-language press of New York City, the dissolution of German-America already in full swing when the War started?³⁰ *Die Emigranten* and other literary works might well contain the clue to answer such questions, and I am happy to be in the company of scholars who may become, or who are already, engaged in reading and studying such works.

“Beyond multiculturalism?” was my question. I have suggested that for Germany one fruitful direction might be to link up with the German citizenship discussion of the pre-World War I era and with US multiculturalism’s focus on curbing social sadism. For the US, promising fields are multiracialism (already growing under such terms as “hybridity” and “Creolization”) and multilingualism (which is still at its very beginning and could also profit from examining the World War I scene); it will also important to find ways in which a new focus on fighting social selfishness might revive the reform tradition. Going “beyond multiculturalism” might finally also mean to engage scholars and students on both sides of the Atlantic to examine critically the history of German-American cultural production and interaction, a project for which the present moment seems ideal. In diesem Sinne, alles Gute beim “shoppen”/ ~~S~~choppen--whatever you associate with this sound!

Notes

¹The following comments were delivered at the “Beyond Multiculturalism” conference organized by Dr. Sieglinde Lemke at the Amerikahaus Berlin, 28 June 1997. I am grateful to the organizers and participants for comments and suggestions. Some sections from the essay were taken or adapted from “Multiculturalism in an Age of Xenophobia: An Introduction,” *Multiculturalism in an Age of Xenophobia: Canadian, American, and German Perspectives*, eds. Abraham J. Peck and Reinhard Maiworm (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives and Goethe-Institut--VISTA InterMedia Corporation, 1997), *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), “For a Multilingual Turn in American Studies,” *American Studies Association Newsletter* (June 1997), my preface to *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), and my reviews of Hollinger’s and Michaels’s books.

²For examples of these works and for new criticism see *The Longfellow Institute Anthology of American Literature*, eds. Marc Shell and Werner Sollors (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) and *Multilingual America*.

³David A. Hollinger, “How Wide the Circle of the ‘We’? American Intellectuals and the Problem of the Ethnos since World War II,” *American Historical Review* (April 1993): 317-337, here 335-336.

⁴The decade from 1940 to 1950 thus seems to have been particularly fertile in producing the terms of our contemporary ethnic debate. In *Beyond Ethnicity*, I have traced the first uses of the word “ethnicity.” The term “identity,” omnipresent today in connection with such words as “ethnic” or “national,” may go back only to Erik Erikson’s attempt at translating Freud in 1950. In a 1926 B’nai Brith address, Freud had opposed religious faith or national pride but described his sense of Jewishness as the result of unconscious elements and of what Freud called “the secret familiarity of identical psychological construction” (“Heimlichkeit der gleichen inneren Konstruktion”)—and in *Childhood and Society* Erikson offered the term “identity” as a shortened English formula for Freud’s notion. It was a formula that took. See Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” in *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader* (Basingstoke: Macmillan and New York: New York University Press, 1996), ~~123-149~~ ⁴⁶⁰⁻⁴⁸⁷.

⁵I am quoting from Edward F. Haskell, *Lance: A Novel About Multicultural Men*. (New York: John Day Company, 1941) and from Iris Barry, “Melodrama, Tract, Good Story,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (July 12, 1941): 3.

⁶In the next sentences I am following the article by Manfred Hettling, “Schritt nach vorn zurück: Das erste Gesetz zur deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 7, 1996): N6. See also Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992) and Dieter Gosewinkel, “Die Staatsangehörigkeit als Institution des Nationalstaats. Zur Entstehung des Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetzes von 1913,” *Offene Staatlichkeit: Festschrift für Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Rolf Grawert (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot,

1995). Significant excerpts of the 1913 law and of other legal work affecting foreigners from the Constitution to various ordinances are conveniently reprinted in Helmut Rittstieg, ed., *Deutsches Ausländerrecht* (München: dtv, 10th edition, 1996).

⁷See Valentina Maria Stefanski, "Die polnische Minderheit," in the most helpful new reference work *Ethnische Minderheiten in Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Ein Lexikon*, eds. Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen and Georg Hansen (München: C. H. Beck, 1995), 386-391, and Rogers Brubaker, 125, 128-137. See also Max Weber's observations in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, repr. in *Theories of Ethnicity*, 64.

⁸Brubaker, 120, drawing on *Verhandlungen des Reichstags* of 23 April 1913.

⁹"Trans-National America" (1916), in *Theories of Ethnicity*, 104.

¹⁰The remarks on this and the next page follow closely the argument made by Günter Bannas, "Ausnahmen bestätigen noch die Regel der Einbürgerung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (April 7, 1993): 5 and "Die Regel ist die Ausnahme: In Europa und auch in Deutschland wird Mehrfach-Staatsangehörigkeit hingenommen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 16, 1996): 10.

¹¹See Michael Schlikker, "Ausländerrecht," in *Ethnische Minderheiten*, 72-75, and Friedrich Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation: Soziologie inter-ethnischer Beziehungen* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1992), 236-241.

¹²The discussion of Séjour is adapted from my *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 14-16; Era Brisbane Young, "An Examination of Selected Dramas for the Theater of Victor Séjour Including Works of Social Protest," Ph. D. dissertation, School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions, New York University, 1979; and David O'Connell, "Victor Séjour: Ecrivain Américain de langue française," *Revue de Louisiane* 1.2 (Winter 1972): 60-61.

¹³Simone Vauthier, "Textualité et stéréotypes: Of African Queens and Afro-American Princes and Princesses: Miscegenation in *Old Hepsy*," *Regards sur la littérature noire américaine*, ed. Michel Fabre (Paris: Publications du conseil scientifique de la Sorbonne Nouvelle--Paris III, 1980), 90-91.

¹⁴This point was made by Young, 95. In the Anglophone part of the African American tradition, it was only Charles Chesnutt who, half a century later, attempted a similarly mythic, but less violently resolved family construction in his short story "The Sheriff's Children" (1899).

¹⁵Quoted from Theodor Grentrup, "Die Reichstagsdebatte 1912 über die Mischehen in den deutschen Kolonien," *Die Rassenmischehen in den deutschen Kolonien* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1914), 42. For information about Solf, see *Reichshandbuch der deutschen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Deutscher Wirtschaftsverlag, 1931), with an introduction by Ferdinand Toennies. See also Solf's *Reichstags* speech of March 6, 1913, in Wilhelm Pfläging, *Zum kolonialrechtlichen Problem der Mischbeziehungen zwischen deutschen Reichsangehörigen und Eingeborenen . . .* (Berlin: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei Gustav Schade, 1913), 59-63.

¹⁶Personal communication from Johns Stephens, December 3, 1996.

¹⁷Ingrid Gogolin, "Sprache und Migration, in *Ethnische Minderheiten*, 488-490.

¹⁸See the respective articles in *Ethnische Minderheiten*, with statistical appendices on which I am drawing throughout.

¹⁹“Results of the MLA’s Fall 1995 Survey of Foreign Language Enrollments,” *MLA Newsletter* 28.4 (Winter 1996): 1-2.

²⁰Gerald Early, “American Education and the Postmodernist Impulse,” *American Quarterly* 45.2 (June 1993): 220.

²¹Mary Louise Pratt, “Comparative Literature and Global Citizenship,” in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1995), 64. On the issue of translations, see the Greene report and the Bernheimer report in the same volume, 35 and 44.

²²William Peterfield Trent, et al., *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, and Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1943), 572-634.

²³King-Kok Cheung and Stan Yogi, eds. *Asian-American Literature: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1988), vi. The reason given is that this will help “keep the bibliography to a manageable size”—which implies that the Asian-language publications by Asian Americans must be sizeable. Other excluded items are individual poems, archival and private materials, and student publications.

²⁴For discussions of “Germerican”—as well as other mixed languages—see *Multilingual America*. The present section stems from an address delivered at the banquet of the Society for German-American Studies, at the Racquet Club, St. Louis, Mo., 18 April, 1997.

²⁵In preparing translations from passages of the play I benefited from a free English adaptation, “The Emigrants,” by Gabriele Weber-Jaric.

²⁶For information on the Longfellow Institute, see Daniel Zalewski, “Tongues Untied: Translating American Literature into English,” *Lingua Franca* (December/January 1996/97): 61-65, and the world wide web page located at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~lowinus/>.

²⁷See Alide Cagidemetrio, introduction to Luigi Donato Ventura’s *Peppino* (1885), *Longfellow Anthology of American Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

²⁸See Steven G. Kellman’s comments on the importance of the “mother’s lullaby” in literary discussions of mother tongues, “Translingualism and the Literary Imagination,” *Criticism* 33.4 (Fall, 1991): 527-41.

²⁹For a quick orientation, see Joshua Fishman’s contribution to *The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

³⁰See Peter Conolly-Smith, “The Translated Community: New York City’s German-Language Press as an Agent of Cultural Resistance and Integration, 1910-1918” (Diss., Yale University, 1996).