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Difference, Integration, Transcommunality: The Case of California

Renate Holub

The problematic concerning the integration of differently traditioned groups in the United States was mostly discussed in terms of multicultural justice. When many of the issues pertaining to multicultural justice first appeared in the public sphere of the United States, these issues emerged in most substantive ways not just anywhere in the United States but in California. It would be interesting to examine to which extent the emergence of multicultural justice politics – namely the attempt to legalize and see to its implementation a politics based on a justice model that recognizes the advantages and disadvantages that accrue to members of specific racial and ethnic groups – are related to earlier political and social movement formations, such as the Free Speech Movement, which also originated, as is well known, in California. Struggles for unionization, such as those waged by the Sleeping Car Porters Union in the San Francisco/Oakland area, probably would also have to be taken into account as enabling condition for social justice issues. If a general legacy of social justice oriented movements, such as the student movement, the anti-Vietnam movement, and the second wave women's movement no doubt played a role in the formation of social justice oriented politics all over the United States, specific political as well as cultural experiences in California no doubt played a significant role in the formation of specifically multicultural justice politics in the field of education. Above all, however, I would like to contend that it is the California's continuous ethnic diversification, leading to plural cultural experiences, multiethnic and multicultural experiences, that is, in the structures of everyday social life which significantly facilitates plural ways of seeing and judging the world. California's multiethnic social and cultural sphere lends itself to the evolution of epistemological and evaluative pluralisms.

It should be pointed out, however, that the campaigns for multiculturalist educational policies, as they were carried out in the universities, engaged many

a middle class non-minority activist with Eastern ivy league schools credentials. Indeed, the elite universities within California, such as Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, which compete with the Eastern elite universities, were among the first in the United States to apply principles of multicultural justice by systematically de-Europeanizing and de-Westernizing the canon in many of their undergraduate and graduate courses. What was at issue here was the gradual critical deconstruction of the assumptions of the predominant knowledge paradigms on the one hand, and the gradual development of new knowledge paradigms on the other hand, paradigms which would be capable of accommodating non western points of view in knowledge production and reception. While most of these multiculturalist educational measures were initially promoted by diverse student bodies whose interests were powerfully supported by an extraordinary proliferation of multicultural literary and cultural texts, the measures themselves were ultimately passed and put into effect in conjunction with university leaders who more often than not had not been trained in multiculturalist traditions. They had been educated in the pre-multicultural age. Or to put it differently: as many writers, artists, and critics from marginalized social and cultural groups increasingly thematized their personal experiences of identity in a monocultural society, younger generations, increasingly developing a heightened consciousness of ethnic identity, demanded educational programs capable of accommodating experiences and knowledges based not on mainstream culture but on marginal cultures. Ethnicity, race, and gender turned into key concepts commanding the structures and languages of curricula and syllabi. If ethnic minorities are responsible for developing the content of the new educational materials, the implementation of programs conceived from the point of view of ethnicity, gender, and race would not have been possible, however, without the consistent cooperation of the educational leadership. Ultimately, it was an alliance between establishment educational leaders and those promoting alternative visions which enabled the proliferation of multiculturalist educational policies in California. Without the active support of mainstream liberal and left educators, who surely had been touched in fundamental ways by the women's movement, the Free Speech movement, the civil rights movement, the student movement, and the critical thinking of the Left, the multicultural revolution would not have taken place.¹

As the multiculturalist wave gradually engulfed most universities in the United States, conceptual innovations, shifts, and transformations with respect to the issues of multiculturalism and multiculturalism continued to primarily emerge from California. Perhaps it is not inadequate to claim that while Ea-

stern universities tend to focus on issues pertaining to race, racialism, racialization, and racism, Western universities, in particular the Californian universities, tend to focus on issues pertaining to multiculturalism and multiculturalism. In this sense, when it comes to multicultural educational policy, to multicultural canon formation, to the establishment of new departments such as Ethnic Studies, California was, and still represents, the undisputed cutting edge. Whether it concerns the multicultural programs of its grammar schools, its secondary schools, or its universities, including its most prestigious ones, when compared to the rest of the country, California constitutes a Mekka of sorts. Many scholars from around the globe intermittently arrive in California to examine the theory and practice of multicultural education. What emerged in California is a specific constellation of alliances between variously grounded groups, a »dialectic of multicultural education« of sorts. The »California Multicultural Dialectic« consists in a specific constellation that obtained in California of the sixties, seventies, and eighties between social practices of multiculturalism and theories of a multicultural society. For this dramatic conceptual shift from western monoculturality to ethnic identity politics – tendentially enabling visions of global multiculturalism, of what we might call transcommunality – has not only effected many aspects of institutional and professional life. It is also the continuous diversification of California's social and cultural life which affects the ways of seeing and judging of many of its intellectuals, its organizers of knowledge, and its managers of culture. In California, it is easy to become witness to a dialectic of multicultural theory and practice. And it is also possible to discern the limits of this particular Californian dialectic. What I am referring to is the recent passage of Proposition 209 by the California electorate, a proposition which abolished preference in university admission and hiring policies based on race and gender. This policy, known as »affirmative action«, represents one of the most advanced political forms of integrating a series, if not all, disadvantaged social groups into processes of knowledge production and distribution.²

When I claim that issues pertaining to multicultural justice models appeared above all in California, then I do not mean to say that California is the sole producer of a multicultural conceptual model, the world's think tank on multiculturalism, so to speak. Rather, what I would like to stress is the particular constellation that obtains in California, what I have called above the »California Multicultural Dialectic«. Obviously, multicultural theoretical work has been done in many institutes and universities all over the United States, and in other parts of the world, and many disciplines are participating in the shift from western hegemony in knowledge production to global approaches to va-

lue systems and norms. Of particular importance in this context is surely the work of Stuart Hall, who systematically internationalizes questions of ethnicity, identity politics, and cultural domination by linking those topics to global concerns.³ What is most interesting in the U.S. American context is the practical cooperation that obtained between a variety of cultural workers in the production of a new cultural model. While many public cultural workers – writers, critics, poets, artists – propagated the multicultural point of view in their creative work, their challenges were further developed by cultural workers within the academic institutions, in particular in the humanities and social science disciplines. As a result, many required core courses were based on curricula which systematically included the work of writers and critics who thematized issues of identity, cultural domination, cultural assimilation, and resistance politics. They include Linda Chavez, Shelby Steele, Richard Rodriguez and Ronald Takaki, as well as Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa bell hooks, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Alice Walker.⁴ These critics problematize theoretical and political issues in relation to ethnicity, identity politics, and resistance and domination. At issue were demands for recognition of cultural difference. Discussions focused on the conditions for exclusion and inclusion in specific groups, as well as on problems pertaining to identity politics. They also involved critical approaches to the ethics of ethnic or racial difference theory and theoretical work on possible epistemological gains based on difference. These efforts in the realm of literary productions and literary theory were substantively supported by theoretical and methodological work in the social sciences. Often undertaken under the rubric of »reflexive sociology«, »reflexive anthropology«, or »new historicism«, intellectual workers from these disciplines continued to challenge the hegemony of predominant knowledge systems.

If workers within the literary or cultural paradigm tended to focus on the multicultural experience within the United States, workers from social science paradigms were able to extend these debates to the socio-economics of knowledge. Many of them questioned the privilege the western subject ascribed to its particular point of view, methods, values, and assumptions when examining an object. When the object of study pertained to non-western worlds, to cultures, nations, and communities, that is, that have not primarily taken part as subjects, but rather as objects in the economic and political management of the access to control of global resources and rewards, the knowledge produced about such objects usually contained the bias, conscious or unconscious, of a knowledge producer who is also a holder of power. This nexus between power and knowledge, between privileged and non-privileged communities,

has been considerably explored and continues to be explored in the course of contemporary multidisciplinary and multicultural research and teaching agendas. The study of this nexus has effected almost all disciplines. Some disciplines have substantively changed, others have merely modified their approaches to their object of study, and other disciplines are literally on the verge of disappearing. By the same token, new disciplines, such as cultural studies, have emerged. Cultural Studies Readers and materials have colonized bookstore rows, libraries, and required reading lists alike, and nouns such as »Postcoloniality«, »Marginalization«, »Hegemony«, »Resistance«, and »Domination« govern the multicultural day.⁵ While a multicultural intelligentsia has emerged throughout the United States, and while all major intellectual leaders of liberal and left persuasion alike have in one form or another positively addressed issues pertaining to multiculturalism, it is nonetheless particularly in California, rather than in other locations, that the products of such intelligentsia, their discourses on multiculturalism and multiculturalism, finds superb conditions for their proliferation. A de-facto multicultural society has emerged, facilitating many different ways of seeing. Such a cultural sphere in turn enables a conceptuality that is capable of apprehending many ways of validating, judging, and acting. This includes culturally and socially produced differentials in the production of meaning. By implementing educational reforms which would accommodate such differentials, California's educational elites were substantively aided by the very fact that their experiences in the structures of everyday life were essentially culturally heterogeneous, and not homogeneous. If California's intelligentsia, by resolutely enacting a politics of difference over the past 20 years or so, seemed to have internalized the splendid rainbow of its public sphere, it seems to have exorcized this splendid multicultural dream when passing Proposition 209 in November of 1996. For how else can we explain this shift from one extreme to the other when we compare California to other regions in the United States?

There is one variable in the story of California's politics of multiculturalism which may help us to solve this paradox. This pertains to the attitude, or rather the actions, of its intelligentsia during the culture wars. For when these culture wars ravaged the landscapes of universities, institutions, and foundations, contesting, from the left and right alike, the multicultural challenge to hegemonic modes of thought and representation, most Californians were conspicuously quiet. When in a myriad of public debates, hearings, publications, talk shows, and radio stations leading intellectuals engaged on issues of »political correctness«, »multiculturalism«, »postmodernism« and the like, Californians were mostly absent. When the major intellectual leaders on the East coast and in

the Midwest sharpened their pens in justification of the multicultural, called it into question, or radicalized it – Henry Louis Gates produced a defense with his *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (1992), renowned public intellectual Christopher Lasch passionately intervened with his *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (1995), accusing the multicultural advocates of betrayal, William Julius Wilson reminded us, with his *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) or his *When Work Disappears. The World of the New Urban Poor* (1996), to reassess the relativity of the multicultural discourse, and John O'Neill pointed to the shortcomings of multiculturalism in his *The Poverty of Postmodernism* (1995) – California's leading intellectuals again practiced inaction.⁶ This inaction is somewhat peculiar in light of the fact that Californian multiculturalists are hardly rhetorically underdeveloped when it comes to ideologically promoting the virtues of all that is not modern, anti-modern, not linear, not mono-cultural, in short, in promoting all those powers miraculously inhabiting the multicultural space. It was literally only at the very moment of passage of Proposition 209 that a group of Berkeley intellectuals chose to get explicitly engaged, perhaps belatedly, in theoretical issues pertaining to multiculturalism and affirmative action.⁷ There is but one exception to my account of California's plain multicultural inaction in moments of national political crisis. I am referring to Todd Gitlin's *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (1995).⁸ Todd Gitlin is also known as former leader of the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), author of key publications on the tumultuous years of the sixties, and a brilliant cultural analyst. Surely, when he published the above mentioned title, T. Gitlin had already moved away from California to the East Coast. If someone chooses to interpret his departure from multicultural California in a symbolic key, so be it. His publication will not be as pliable to multiple interpretations. For the message it signals is straightforward and clear: as observing participant in California's multicultural project, Gitlin has come to the conclusion that California's multicultural evolution has led to political involution. Excessive ethnic identity politics have destroyed common ground. A plurality of visions has contracted into a multicultural blindness to commonality of action. Trans-communality has not taken place.

It would be easy to dismiss Gitlin as just another disgruntled white male leftist whose power position got somewhat dented by multicultural politics. While the multicultural leadership surely displayed no particular propensities for listening to pontifications from the left, old and new alike, it is nonetheless a fact of history that the various social movements of the past thirty and more years have paved the way for multicultural politics. Hand-on experiences in

these dynamic liberational movements, coupled with intense debates on notions of justice, justice implementation, and social utopias, mark the structure of the conscious and the unconscious alike of many who lived through the sixties and seventies. Without these experiences, the alliance which was needed between multiculturalist innovators and educational leadership, and to which I referred above, would not have taken place. While many members of the educational leadership may not have been educated in multiculturalism, their monoculturalism, nonetheless, in general contained a basic feature. Trained in critical thinking within or outside the Marxist tradition, it generally included attention not to analysis of injustice tout court, but attention to analysis of economic injustice. Any analysis of economic injustice involves the notion of class. The multicultural project does not programmatically exclude the notion of class. However, as this project gradually evolved in California, it multiplied into a myriad of increasingly heterogeneous multiculturalisms which, intent on pointing to cultural and symbolic injustice systems, increasingly silenced substantive analyses of the conditions that produce economic injustice. Insistence on economic factors in the age of postmodernism more often than not lead to disenfranchisement on the intellectual market. Conditions for alliance formation weakened. Solidarity broke down. Most importantly, however, with the displacement, if not abandonment of the economic analysis, many multicultural politicians simultaneously abandoned a social group which is clearly marked by a certain kind of injustice. It is not cultural injustice, or ethnic injustice, but social injustice nonetheless: the injustice of poverty, which does not only include minorities, but also members of the non-minority groups. Martin Luther King Jr. warned in the sixties that the struggle for equal rights should not emarginate particular social groups.⁹ Advocates of »Affirmative action«, by not substantively addressing the educational, social, and cultural injustice that accrues to young people from poverty stricken families, disregarded the warning. In this protracted struggle over language, symbolic systems, and meaning, in the proliferation of books who discuss the inventions of race, the effects of such inventions, and the historical accounts that favor Europe over Africa, Asia, and other non-Western regions of the world, in this immense, necessary, and revolutionary struggle of global dimensions, the local, more often than not, got left out.¹⁰ Systematic indifference to the category of economic analysis, and thus to poverty residing in many different sectors of society, constitutes the Achilles heel of the multicultural discourse.¹¹ Widespread indifference to class issues haunts California's multicultural politics. It is not the place here to examine those aspects of multiculturalism and postmodernism that have successfully bluffed their neo-conservative way to a left public

sphere by adopting a left vocabulary.¹² The defeat of »affirmative action« has surely more than one cause. Yet it is directly linked to an indifference to an analysis of economic injustice. And an understanding of what lead to this defeat cannot be adequate, it seems to me, by remaining indifferent to issues of economic injustice. Successful resistance to this defeat will probably reside not simply in determining the constitutionality of »affirmative action«. It will also reside in a political vision which radically addresses the issue of economic injustice. That revalidation could become the foundation for transcommunal alliance politics.

In the informed public debates, the political economy of multiculturalism has as of yet not received widespread attention. There are good reasons for this. For the affirmative action termination move was primarily politically motivated. Yet the political motivations of the primary movers of this initiative cannot explain why California's voters, or at least over half of them, went along with this advocacy. In other words, while Republican politicians orchestrated the defeat of a socially conscious educational measure, there is no reason to believe that the voters participating in this defeat necessarily intended to support the political ambitions of their republican leaders and the ideals they promote. And in fact, many of the voters who opted to abolish »affirmative action« were not republicans but democrats, just as some historical supporters of »affirmative action« were republicans, and as some opponents were democrats. President Clinton, who remained remarkably non-committal on the issue when he visited California in the crucial pre-election weeks, is surely a case in point. What the anti-affirmative action California voters have in common with their leaders are thus not necessarily political proclivities. What they have in common is their location in the state of California in the last decade of the twentieth century. And, at this point of historical juncture, California happens to be the largest immigration state. Indeed, California leads those states – Texas, New York, Illinois, Florida – which together account for 81% of the 3.2 million illegal immigrants that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services estimated to be present in the United States in 1992.¹³ As a result, while in the rest of the United States, the two concepts of »affirmative action« and »immigration« may not have all that much in common on the surface, in California these two concepts do. For over the past year or so, California's citizens were not only asked to make up their minds on the issue of »affirmative action«, they were also asked to face the issue of immigration. With the passage in Congress of the immigration reform act in August of last year, California's many illegal immigrants are faced with the possibility that their children will not longer be allowed to attend public schools. And California's legal immi-

grants are, like all other legal immigrants in the United States, faced with limited access to federally mandated social programs. Many of California's citizens, whether they like it or not, will have to be part of the enactment of the welfare reform and immigration acts, as a continuous flow of legal and illegal immigrants encourages employers to keep wages down, to employ illegal immigrants as cheap labor in sweatshops, and to discourage the formation of unions. And many other Californians will have to compete for low wage jobs. Did many of California's citizens participate in republican politics because they feel, or indeed are, more vulnerable to the economic conditions that give rise to the conservative revolution? Are there particular circumstances which facilitate California's affinities with the political issues of the republican day?

No doubt, ever since a republican majority has seized the 104th Congress of the United States in January of 1994, republicans throughout the United States have systematically articulated an entire series of anti-liberal positions, including an anti-immigration stance. Although the United States, as compared to most European countries, entertained, and still entertains, relatively liberal immigration laws, recent public debates centering on substantive redefinitions of the »political«, of the nature of relations that obtain between citizens and their state, that is, also included the issue of citizenship and immigration. If scholars of migration policies have been able to point out that the relatively liberal immigration laws of a classical immigration country such as the United States and the relatively restrictive immigration laws of Western European countries are on their way to meet somewhere in the middle in order to more effectively control immigration in the age of global migration flows, the thrust of public debate, whether in the United States or in the European Union countries, focuses less on migration than on redefinitions of rights and obligations between citizens and the state.¹⁴ The discussion of welfare reforms, or rather the actual curtailment of government spending for social infrastructures and services, as they culminated in the welfare reform act of August of 1996 here in the U.S. are cases in point. As *The Contract with America*, a publication disseminated by »The House Republicans to Change the Nation«, unmistakably advocates, the dismantling of social infrastructures and the welfare state is purportedly taking place in order to strengthen the traditional family, as well as individual accountability and responsibility.¹⁵ Indeed, it is from within traditional family structures, rather than from public services, that conservative republicans hope to be able to draw unpaid social services which the society as a whole needs. The predominant logic of the conservative project assigns, in the name of personal accountability, responsibility, and authentic citizenship, specific functions to individuals in order to meet some of the social

problems. At the same time, individual misery and poverty, which may have social causes, are typically assessed not in terms of their social causation, but rather in terms of a demonstrated lack of an individual's responsibility and accountability. If structures within the private sphere, rather than programs within the public sphere or society in general, are expected to be able to produce the labor necessary for social services, such as taking care of the elderly, the private sphere must include labor that is free to provide such services. The model of the traditional heterosexual family, such as it existed until the early sixties, where a husband provides an income by working outside the home, whereas a wife is responsible for home care, husband care, and child care, seems to offer a structure capable of accommodating the increasing privatization of supply to social demands. In principle, unemployed wives or mothers can function as nurses to the elderly and the sick. The problem is, of course, that the model of the traditional family no longer exists in any substantive way. Most women, whether wives, mothers, single, or partners, work outside the home, sometimes by choice, more often than not by economic necessity. Given the social functions the republican congress wishes to ascribe to the traditional heterosexual family, it should come as no surprise that republicans systematically polemicize against advocates of alternative family structures. Rejecting women's right to choose, abortion rights, and rights to sexual preference are part of the parcel of the republican agenda. And so is the republican challenge to gays and lesbian rights, since visions of alternative community structures and family structures do not correspond to the outdated model of the ideal heterosexual family.

What is eminently striking about the vision of conservative America is not so much its rhetoric of morality, but rather the intended substantial structural transformations between the citizens and the state this morality attempts to disguise. The individual, who is, precisely by living in a society, always already part of social relations, is encouraged to disregard the nexus that obtains between the individual and society, or the particular and the universal, by taking, as an individual, the place of the social. It is not society as a whole but the individual who is primarily called upon to redress problems that arise out of the totality of social relations, and ultimately it is the individual, and not the collective, who is viewed as the last frontier. If in the context of the debates on communitarianism the individual's accountability with respect to social issues was somewhat mitigated by his or her membership in a specific community, a community that was capable of, or interested in assuming a certain measure of social responsibilities, in the conservative vision, the individual should be able to ultimately stand alone.¹⁶ The conservatives imagine an abstract com-

munity of strong individuals, who survive on the basis of their virtues and individual strength, while others will not survive due to their lack of virtue, or surplus of vice. In the mainstream imagination, the link between meritocracy and democracy, intermittently evoked in the political literature of liberals and not so liberals alike, may substantiate the advocacy of greater individual autonomy and independence from the interference of a centralized state. In fact, discussions concerning the promotion of stronger structures of local civil society at the expense of centralized political societies, discussions that pertain to decentralization and federalization as they have been going on in the United States as well as in Europe, deserve great merit, as long as decentralization is not ipso facto concomitant with re-hierarchization of class and status systems.¹⁷ Thus far, most of these discussions have attempted to hide their true colours: by speaking of greater autonomy, individual responsibility, local independence, many advocates of »freedom from the state« participate in freeing the state from protecting the individual from a new form of economic non-freedom. In the hands of the republican majority, the state is encouraged to absolve itself from responsibilities for many victims of an escalating racist and non-racist social and economic war. Yet the war has been, and is, on.

Research and statistics indicate as much.¹⁸ Let me point to a few examples. In an accessible language, Lester Thurow, with his *Head to Head. The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America* (1993) explains some of the agendas which will rule global economies and global technologies.¹⁹ In this changing economic and structural landscape, recently described as the rise of the network society, a fourth of the labor force will have to be able to perform highly skilled functions and managerial leadership tasks, and three fourth will not. The tidal waves of part-time employment, temporary employment, and unemployment, envisioned for the future, already roll towards their shores.²⁰ An entire series of economic and social science experts have focused on various features of global underemployment and unemployment and related it to employment conditions in the United States.²¹ Powerful shifts on a global level effect the workforces and their employment conditions as migration flows from South to North and East to West and West to East offer low cost and low maintenance labor. California, as the major immigration state of the United States, experiences major immigration waves as it continues to house those sites of revolutionary technological transformations – microelectronics, biotechnology, telecommunications, robotics, computers, and software – which see themselves increasingly challenged by competition from European and Asian regions.²² Given this double matrix informing Californian cutting edge material existence, it should come as no surprise if Californians

indicate particular propensities for republican political issues. The passage of Proposition 209 makes this point. California's extraordinary propensities for the formation of a multicultural consciousness, what I have termed the »California Multicultural Dialectic« at the moment accommodates the republican call to arms. As I have tried to show above, this accommodation was also facilitated by widespread multicultural indifference to issues of class. While affirmations of race, ethnicity, and gender may be able to afford the dismissal of the issue of class as long as class, or economic justice, is not an issue, once class, in its form as economic survival, becomes an issue, it becomes indifferent to notions of race, ethnicity, and gender. This is, it seems to me, what the case of California invites us to see. As I finish this article, the constitutionality of Proposition 209 is getting repeatedly tested in the California courts. The survival of the »affirmative action« model, and with it, its social history in the struggle for civil rights, will ultimately stand the test of time not because a variety of judges deem it constitutional, but rather because a majority of people will be able to recognize the injustice of economic injustice next to other forms of injustice. The promises of an authentic transcommunitality, of a global society based on cultural difference and economic equality, begin and end there.

Notes

- 1 Greg Ruggiero/Stuart Sahulka (eds) *The New American Crisis* (New York: The New Press, 1995) include a series of very interesting essays on the conditions of solidarity formation in of today as compared to the sixties.
- 2 For a brief history of »affirmative action« in the United States and in California see my »Difference, Multicultural Education, »Affirmative Action: The Case of California«, *Tertium Comparationis* 2/2 (1996): 170-178.
- 3 See Stuart Hall/David Held/Don Hubert/Kenneth Thompson, *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*, (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) and David Morley/Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds), *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).
- 4 It is worth citing some of the titles of the works of these most prominent intellectuals: Linda Chavez wrote *Out of the Barrio: Toward a new Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); in addition, Shelby Steele wrote *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990); Richard Rodriguez *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez: an Autobiography* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1982), as well as Days

- of *Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (New York: Viking, 1992). Furthermore, Ronald Takaki entitled his works *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America* (New York: Oxford Up, 1987), and *A Different Mirror. A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1993). Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga are known for their *This Bridge called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1981) and bell hooks is known for an inordinate number of books, among them, *Ain't I a Woman. Black women and feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981). There is also Maxine Hong Kingston, with *China Men* (New York: Knopf, 1980) or her *The Woman Warrior. Memoirs of A Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Knopf, 1976), or Alice Walker, with her famous *The Color Purple* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1982).
- 5 In order to give a few examples, I would like to point to Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race. Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London and New York: Verso, 1994); Bill Ashcroft/Gareth Griffiths/Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Simon During (ed), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Russell Ferguson/Margha Gever/Trinh T. Minh-ha/Cornel West (eds), *Out There. Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge, MA & London, England: The MIT Press, 1990); David Theo Goldberg (ed), *Multiculturalism. A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994); Charles Lemert (ed), *Social Theory. The Multicultural & Classic Readings* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993); Ronald A. Takaki, *A Different Mirror. A History of Multicultural America* (Boston, New York, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1993).
 - 6 Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and The Betrayal of Democracy* (New York and London: Norton Company, 1995); William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987); John O'Neill, *The Poverty of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1995); William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears. The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996) as well as James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars. The Struggle to Define America. Making sense of battles over the family, art, education, law, and politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).
 - 7 The Berkeley based journal *Representations* published a special issue on «affirmative action» in the fall of 1996.
 - 8 Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams. Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995).
 - 9 Quoted from John David Skrentny, (1996) *The Ironies of Affirmative Action. Politics, Culture, and Justice in America*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 232.

- 10 In this extraordinary attempt to challenge the epistemological and normative hegemony of the western point of view a myriad of groundbreaking publications saw the day. There is no way to even to begin to adequately bibliographically substantiate this challenge. A few entries I hope will suffice for the moment. Samir Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period. An Intellectual Itinerary* (tr) Michael Wolfers (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994); Marimba Ani, *Yurugu. An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994); Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House. Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Martin Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Vol I. The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985. Vol. II. The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987 and 1993); Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, *Black Madonnas. feminism, religion & politics in Italy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993).
- 11 For a critique of a lack of economic analysis in the Italian American multicultural discourse see Renate Holub, »Italian American Culturalism: A Critique«, in Anthony Tamburri/Paolo Giordano (eds), *Ethnicity in Literature and Film: The Italian Experience in America* (Madison, N.J. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996).
- 12 I am referring here to discussions of the »political« from points of view which warn against the shortcomings of democratic and liberal models as they despise the majorities. Recent attempts to wrest Carl Schmitt from his conservative heritage in order to place him in a »critical« agenda are surely cases in point.
- 13 See again Sam Roberts, *Who We Are. A Portrait of America Based on the Latest U.S. Census* (New York: Random House, 1994) and Wayne A. Cornelius/Philip L. Martin/James F. Hillifield (eds), *Controlling Immigration. A Global Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994): 6, fn 3.
- 14 See again Wayne A. Cornelius/Philip L. Martin/James F. Hillifield (eds), *Controlling Immigration. A Global Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994): 3-54.
- 15 See Ed Gillespie/Bob Schellhas (eds), *Contract with America. The Bold Plan by Rep. Newt Gingrich, Rep. Dick Armeý and the House Republicans to Change the Nation* (New York: Random House, 1994).
- 16 See Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community. The Reinvention of American Society* (New York, London et al: Simon and Schuster, 1993).
- 17 One of the most pertinent examples of a proposition that aims at decentralization as it attempts to reintroduce hierarchized economic and social class systems pertains to the Lega Lombarda in Italy.
- 18 Joe R. Feagin/Melvin P. Sikes, *Living with Racism. The Black Middle-Class Experience* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1994); Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations. Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992); Russell Jacoby/Naomi Glauberman (eds), *The Bell Curve Debate. History, Documents,*

- Opinion (New York: Random House, 19950; Christopher Jencks, *Rethinking Social Policy. Race, Poverty, and the Underclass* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992. Original edn Harvard University Press, 1992).
- 19 Lester Thurow, *Head to Head. The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America* (New York: Warner Books, 1993).
- 20 Stanley Aranowits/William DiFazio, *The Jobless Future. Sci-Tech and the Dogma of Work* (Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1994); John Eatwell (ed), *Global Unemployment. Loss of Jobs in the '90s* (London, England and Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work. The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era* (New York; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996) and again W.J. Wilson, *When Work Disappears. The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
- 21 Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations. Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); see also Jeremy Brecher/Tim Costello, *Global Village or Global Pillage. Economic Reconstruction From the Bottom Up* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994) and Jeremy Brecher/John Brown Childs/Jill Cutler (eds), *Global Visions. Beyond the New World Order* (Boston: Southend Press, 1993).
- 22 This is the mainpoint of Lester Thurow's argument in *Head to Head*.

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