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# Introduction

Derek Rubin and Jaap Verheul

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

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

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

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

## Multiple Multiculturalisms

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

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

the movement has been driven as much by the “politics of recognition,” forcing society at large to recognize and “incorporate” these minorities on an equal footing.<sup>5</sup>

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

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

## Culture and Diversity after 9/11

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

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

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

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

## Multicultural Boundary Crossings

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

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

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

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

## Cultural Reflections of the Unthinkable

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Transatlantic Dialogues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Notes

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

- sity Press, 2003); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007).
3. Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 12.
  4. David Theo Goldberg, "Introduction: Multicultural Conditions," in *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 1, 4, 6.
  5. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
  6. For an overview of the debate see for instance Will Kymlicka, "The New Debate on Minority Rights (and Postscript)," in *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*, ed. Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also the essay by Ed Jonker in this volume.
  7. Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism. Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Second ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 336.
  8. Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
  9. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987); James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: BasicBooks, 1991); Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 305-07.
  10. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Disuniting of America* (Knoxville: Whittle Direct Books, 1991); Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995). For a liberal defense of multiculturalism see also Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).
  11. Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995); Emory Elliott, Louis Freitas Caton, and Jeffrey Rhyne, *Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
  12. Modood, *Multiculturalism*, 14.
  13. For a quantitative overview of multiculturalism as a "central problematic" in American Studies scholarship between 1949 and 1999 see Larry J. Griffin and Maria Tempenis, "Class, Multiculturalism and the American Quarterly," *American Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2002). See also Linda Kerber, "Diversity and the Transformation of American Studies," *American Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1989); John Higham, "Multiculturalism and Universalism: A History and Critique," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1993); Gary Kulik, "Special Issue on Multiculturalism," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1993); Lucy Maddox, ed., *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
  14. For instance, the second edition of Bhikhu Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, which appeared in 2006 with a chapter that responded to criticism, makes no reference to

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