

American-Canadian Relations in a Cultural Studies Perspective

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Today the humanities and social sciences tend to conceive of themselves as richly intertwined cultural studies. Culture, for its part, has come to mean an ever-changing network, or overlapping, of discrete human phenomena, particularly those relating to ethnic groups and social strata and involving interchange and negotiation of power. This view of culture is not to be equated with multiculturalism. In conceiving of numerous distinct cultures, multiculturalism involves a totalizing view of each, thus jarring, not jibing with the culture concept indicated, which could be called an interculturalist concept. Closely examined, multiculturalism is a very equivocal position, evoking both a vision of mutual respect between cultures and the specter of an endless multiplication of nationalisms. Interculturalism's foremost spokesman is Homi K. Bhabha, who emphasizes cultural hybridity and critiques multiculturalism by treating it as a rhetoric of exclusion that ignores the interrelatedness of cultures and of their historical locations. For Bhabha, culture is located in what he calls „the third space,” defined by him as „the ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.” In this, it would seem, Bhabha was anticipated by Mikhail Bakhtin, who says: „A cultural domain has no inner territory. It is entirely located upon