

How the Multicultural Ideology Captured America

by Lawrence Auster

Paraphrasing Richard Nixon's famous remark about Keynesianism, the Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer declared some years ago that "We are all multiculturalists now." One's initial response to such an unwanted announcement is to say: "What do you mean, 'we'?" Yet, even if "we" do not subscribe to multiculturalism, it cannot be denied that over the last twenty years multiculturalism has become the ruling idea of America, seen in every area of life from educational curricula to racial proportionality in private employment and university admissions (ensconced in the U.S. Constitution in *Grutter v. Bollinger*) to the quasi-official establishment of foreign languages to the constant invocations of "diversity" by our political, business, and intellectual elites. How, so quickly and effortlessly, did this alien belief system take over our country? I have elsewhere explained multiculturalism as an expression of the revolutionary increase of racial diversity that was unleashed by the 1965 Immigration Act.¹ In this article, however, I want to look at multiculturalism, not as the inevitable outcome of ethnic diversification, and not as the result of enforced political correctness, but as an ideology that has advanced itself by means of a set of propositions. My purpose is to examine the false arguments of the multiculturalists themselves, and to see how they have used these arguments to fool an all-too-willing American majority to go along with them.

The Fraud of Inclusion

The first principle of multiculturalism – if something so untrue can be called a principle – is the equality of all cultures. According to the multi-culturalists, America is

an assemblage of racially or ethnically defined subcultures, all of which have equal value, and none of which can claim a privileged position.

The second principle of multiculturalism is inclusion. It is said that minority and non-Western cultures have been unjustly excluded in the past from full participation in our culture, and that in order to correct this historic wrong we must now include them on an equal basis. Moreover, we are told, such inclusion of different cultures does not threaten our culture, but "enriches" it. By this reasoning, if we became (say) an officially bilingual society, with Spanish appearing alongside English on every cereal box and street sign in the land (as is done with the two languages of Canada), our culture would not be harmed in the slightest. We would only be including something we once excluded. We would have become something *more*, not *less*. What could be more positive? How could any decent person object?

To answer that question, let us imagine a scenario in which a Western cultural group – say a large population of Italian Catholics – moved en masse into a non-Western country – say in the Moslem Mideast – and demanded that the host society drop all public observance of its majority religion and redefine itself as a multicultural state. When the Moslems react in fear and outrage, the Catholics answer: "What are you so uptight about, brothers? In challenging Islam's past exclusionary practices, we're not *threatening* your religion and way of life, we're *enriching* them." Of course, as even the multiculturalists would admit in this hypothetical instance (since in this scenario it is a non-Western, rather than a Western, culture that is being threatened), such "enrichment" would change Islam into something totally unacceptable to the Moslem majority. By the same logic, if the U.S. Congress were required to conduct all its proceedings in Chinese or Spanish alongside English, that would obviously not "enrich" America's political tradition, but radically disrupt and change it. To say that a majority

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culture must “include” alien traditions in order to prove its own moral legitimacy is to say that the majority culture, *as a majority culture*, has no right to exist.

Since multiculturalism claims to stand for the sanctity and worth of each culture, the discovery that its real tendency is to dismantle the existing, European-based culture of the United States should have instantly discredited it. Yet whites in general, and conservatives in particular, have continually failed to notice this obvious contradiction. One reason for this failure is that modern conservatives – being race-blind, democratic universalists – tend to see multiculturalism solely as an attack on the ideology of universalism. They don’t see multiculturalism as an attack on a *particular culture and people*, namely their own, because as universalists they have no allegiance to that particular culture and people. Thus the typical white conservative today will say that multiculturalism is bad because “it divides us into different groups” – which is of course true. But he rarely says that multiculturalism is bad because “it is destroying *our* culture” – the majority culture and peoplehood of European Americans – since that would imply that he was defending a particular culture rather than a universalist idea. Since conservatives have been unprepared to defend European America as such, they have been unable to point out the true nature of multiculturalism, which is that it is an attack on white Western civilization, and so they have been unable to oppose multiculturalism effectively.

The following examples will help illustrate the real aim of multiculturalism and the white majority’s persistent blindness to it. My use of the present tense in these examples to portray the respective sides of the diversity debate should not be taken to suggest that the debate is still continuing in any practically meaningful sense. As has been increasingly evident since the mid-1990s, the “culture war,” if there ever was one, is over and the left has won. My purpose therefore is not to warn against the multicultural takeover of America, since that has already happened, but rather to show *how* that takeover occurred, and, equally importantly, to show the failures of thinking on the part of the white majority that allowed it to occur. It is only by exploring those intellectual errors to their root, and by reversing them in our own minds, that there can be any hope of mounting an effective resistance to the multicultural regime under which we now live.

Example 1: The multiculturalists charge that the Western literary tradition is too “narrow” because it doesn’t include voices of Third-World peoples of color. The implication is that the Western tradition as it has existed up to the present moment is not legitimate, and that it can only become legitimate by including other traditions.

Two realities are ignored here, both by the multiculturalists and by the mainstream American whites who are their primary targets. The first reality is that the Western tradition *is* a tradition. The second reality is that it is *our* tradition – the “our” referring to all those who are, or who aspire to be, heirs and members of that tradition. When multiculturalists object to the word “our,” claiming it is exclusive, they are really saying that they don’t consider the Western tradition to be *theirs*. They are saying that they want to take it over and change it into something else. They are saying *that they don’t want the Western tradition to exist any more*. And when whites quickly agree that whites shouldn’t say “our” tradition (because the Western tradition is universal and belongs to the whole world), they have tacitly conceded that the Western tradition has no right to exist.

Example 2: Black studies professor Henry Louis Gates writes that the universities should adopt a curriculum that reflects all the world’s cultures, not merely Western culture. Such a world culture, Gates continues, “situates the West as one of a community of civilizations. After all, culture is always a conversation among different voices.”

That last comment is a snare for the gullible. It is one thing to say that the Western conversation consists of such different voices as (for example) Christianity, Judaism, Greek philosophy, and modern science. It is quite a different thing to say that the Western conversation consists of Shi’ite Islam, Animism, Voodoo, and Rastafarianism. Clearly, to include every voice as an equal participant in the Western conversation would mean the end of the Western conversation. Gates tacitly admits this is his purpose when he remarks: “To insist that we ‘master our own culture’ before learning others ... only defers the vexed question: What gets to count as ‘our’ culture? What has passed as ‘common culture’ has been an Anglo-American regional culture, masking itself as universal.”²² In other words, the Anglo-American or Western culture should not be transmitted as our primary culture because it is not really “ours,” and it is not really

“ours” because it doesn’t include all cultures, meaning non-Western cultures and those who belong to them.

Leaving aside the complex question of whether and to what extent Western culture includes non-Westerners, the more immediate concern to us here is that Western culture *is* the culture of *Westerners*. Gates wants to include other cultures within Western culture so that the resulting hodgepodge will belong equally to everyone in the world. But – and this is the point overlooked both by

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the multiculturalists and their white universalist critics – that means taking Western culture *away* from Westerners.

Example 3: In a widely-publicized incident at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1990s, an administrator sharply criticized an undergraduate on a diversity planning committee for writing of her “deep regard for the individual.” “This is a RED FLAG phrase today,” the administrator wrote back, “which is considered by many to be RACIST. Arguments that champion the individual over the group ultimately privilege the ‘individuals’ belonging to the largest or dominant group.”³ For the multiculturalists, Western individuality is nothing but a mask of illegitimate white dominance, which must be stripped away. But for Westerners, Western individuality is an integral aspect of their being. Therefore to get rid of Western individuality (so as to include non-individualistic, non-Western cultures) is to destroy the very essence of Western people. Conservative critics of multiculturalism never grasp this fact, because, as universalists, the notion of a particularist Western essence is alien to them.

Example 4: The celebrated black novelist Toni Morrison writes that the American ideals of liberty and the rights of man are “*permanently allied with . . . the hierarchy of race.*”⁴ [Emphasis added]. Morrison may be

more correct than she realizes. The ideals of liberty that she despises – whether they be secretly “hierarchic” or not – *are* white Western ideals, and it’s clear to anyone with eyes that race-avenging blacks such as Morrison will quickly destroy the rights and institutions based on those ideals as soon as they are in a position to do so. If blacks believe – whether correctly or not – that liberty is only a *white* ideal, then the acquisition of political power by blacks, with their contrasting *black* ideals (i.e. ideals of black racial consciousness and black racial power), must mean the end of liberty. Meanwhile, the white universalists see Morrison’s ideas only as a threat to a universal order in which blacks and whites could live together as one. They fail to see these ideas for what they really are: an attempt to destroy *white* culture and replace it by *black* culture.

Example 5: The more outspoken multiculturalists will admit that the cultures they want to “include” in the American culture are radically at odds with it. Diversity consultant Edwin J. Nichols teaches the following model explaining the divergent intellectual styles of ethnic groups:

The Philosophical Aspects of Cultural Difference:

- European and Euro-American: Member-Object. The highest value lies in the object or in the acquisition of the object.
- African, Afro-American, Native American, Hispanics, Arabs: Member-Member; the highest value lies in the inter-personal relationship between persons.
- Asian, Asian-American, Polynesian: Member-Group. The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group.
- Native American: Member-Great Spirit. The highest values lies in oneness with the Great Spirit.⁵

Observe how Nichols portrays the Western orientation in negative terms (“Member-Object,” “acquisition”) that suggest cold selfishness and materialism, while he describes the non-Western cultures in positive terms (“inter-personal relationship,” “group cohesiveness,” “oneness with the Great Spirit”) that suggest warmth and humanity. Yet Nichols’ very attempt to debunk the West and praise the non-West has the opposite effect from what he intends, since the

unpleasant-sounding phrase “Member-Object” is really a way of describing the Western belief in *objective truth* – the very basis of Western religion, science, philosophy, law, and government. Since the non-Western orientations that Nichols promotes are all antithetical to Western objectivity, how could they possibly be “included” with it on “equal” terms? Similarly, Nichols unfavorably contrasts the European logic system, based “in dichotomy, by which reality is expressed as either-or,” with “African logic” which is “characterized by the union of opposites.”⁶ But this wonderful African freedom from “either/or” dichotomies indicates the lack of something indispensable to Western civilization – the rational faculty by which we attempt to distinguish between what is objectively true and what is only a feeling or opinion.

The problem becomes more acute when we realize that these subjectivist modes of black thought are not merely an invention of white multiculturalists, but an enduring legacy of black people in both Africa and America. The black system of “logic” is evidenced in popular conspiracy theories that have claimed, among other things, that white doctors were deliberately implanting the AIDS virus in blacks; that the white race was created 5,000 years ago by a mad scientist named Yacub; that Aristotle “stole” his philosophy from the “black” Library of Alexandria (even though Aristotle died before the library was built); and that four bumbling Los Angeles homicide detectives managed to organize, on a moment’s notice, a conspiracy of superhuman complexity in order to pin a gruesome double murder on a popular black athlete and entertainer. In underscoring the pervasive black rejection of logical thought, Nichols does not seem to realize that he is making a most compelling case for whites (or at least those whites who still believe in logical thought) to reject black claims of cultural equality.

Nor is the Arab “Member-Member” orientation, which Nichols contrasts favorably with the Western “Member-Object” orientation, a mere multiculturalist fiction. It is seen in the Arab ethos in which “keeping face” is more important than speaking the truth, as David Pryce-Jones has described in his important book on Arab culture.⁷ We can also see the Arab attitude toward truth in those Arab-American “moderates” who with straight faces deny that there is such a thing as Arab and Moslem terrorism. These are the same “moderates” who

have organized mass campaigns of intimidation against American journalists who revealed the facts about Arab and Moslem support for terrorism.⁸ Given the Arab/Moslem frame of mind that is intensely ethnocentric and fundamentally at odds with Western notions of rationality and fairness, we can only conclude that if Moslems gained real power in America the result would be the same kind of chronic inter-group conflict, political instability, and lack of freedom that obtains in every Arab country.

The inclusion of non-Western cultures in our culture must spell the ruin of our culture, since those other cultures are – and are explicitly understood by their spokesmen to be – radically incompatible with our culture. Inclusion is not a good idea that suddenly turns bad and harms our culture; such harm is its destined result, even its conscious aim, from the very start.

The Denial of Difference

Even as the inclusion of minority cultures threatens the identity and existence of the national culture, so-called “moderate” multiculturalists tell us that changing our culture beyond recognition does not threaten our culture, but just makes it more inclusive. According to Professor Carlos Cortes:

Overwhelmingly, this curricular reform has involved no rejection of American Unum, no repudiation of Western civilization, no adoption of valueless, non-judgmental relativism. Rather, it has involved a serious recasting of the meaning of American Unum as a more Pluribus concept that recognizes the importance and value of engaging and considering previously marginalized voices and perspectives.⁹

Beneath the soothing professional verbiage, we can discern the familiar outlines of the multicultural paradigm: that there is a designated Hispanic, Asian, Afro-Caribbean, and woman’s “perspective”; that each of these perspectives must have equal representation in every academic subject and hiring decision; and that the goal is power and official recognition for those groups *as* groups. Cortes must also know that as those previously marginalized groups become dominant, the former majority culture, along with its “Unum,” will disappear. His real message is that the disappearance of the majority culture is just fine, *so long as we maintain a pleasing front of “Unum”* that will keep the gullible Anglos safely

pacified until the transition to the multicultural society is complete.

Cortes reveals his real intentions when he says that, until the state of perfect inclusion has been reached, the minority cultures must continue to enjoy privileged enclaves in the curriculum (which is sort of like calling for the withering away of the state, then adding the caveat that *in the meantime* society must come under the dictatorship of the proletariat.) In other words, while the majority culture is in the process of being submerged by the inclusion of every minority culture, every minority culture is to be guaranteed the mastery of its own domain. The majority will give up its identity, while the minorities aggrandize theirs. This is no mere theory, but an activist agenda that has been put into effect throughout our society. In every field one can think of, ranging from student groups to professional associations to legislative bodies, the former mainstream organization has been “quota-ized” via minority representation so that it can no longer represent the traditional American majority culture, but only the idea of “diversity,” while at the same time each of the minority groups has been granted the right to have a separate and exclusive sub-organization to represent its racial interests. There is the Congressional Black Caucus that speaks for blacks as blacks, but no Congressional white caucus that speaks for whites as whites; the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials that speaks for Hispanics as Hispanics, but no association of white elected officials that speaks for the interests of whites as whites; an Hispanic Journalists’ Association, but no European-American Journalists’ Association; black policeman’s organizations, but no white policeman’s organizations; an infinite number of nonwhite student organizations, but no white students organizations. And, of course, any attempt to create white-oriented organizations is stopped in its tracks by the same mainstream institutions that officially promote the development of non-white organizations.

The Myths of Mainstream Multiculturalism

If inclusion is as obvious a fraud as I have been suggesting, and so evidently directed at the destruction of America’s majority culture, why have mainstream Americans been so blind to it? One reason is the multiculturalists’ skillful portrayal of multiculturalism as a benign and harmless movement, based on established

principles that everyone, except for bigots, embraces.

The general pattern of the “good” multiculturalism goes something like this:

- The multiculturalists say that “respecting other cultures” poses no threat to American culture. This claim goes unchallenged by the leaders of the majority culture, partly because they believe it, partly because they want to appear inclusive rather than alarmist. According to the liberal critic Paul Berman, most academics who supported multiculturalism had no conscious desire to destroy Western intellectual culture. They only wanted to “expand” the Western tradition by including previously overlooked or excluded voices.¹⁰ Seeing multiculturalism as essentially benign, they dismissed the conservatives’ attack on it as overwrought.

- But as soon as multiculturalism is admitted into the mainstream, it suddenly turns out that “respecting minority cultures” means nothing less than granting those cultures a form of sovereignty, which means *delegitimizing* the mainstream culture in which the minority cultures have just been included.

- Even though this turn of events has exposed the “moderate” position as radical, anyone who questions it is now placed on the defensive. Almost overnight, what had once been considered radical, and had to conceal itself, has become the mainstream consensus, while what had once been seen as the mainstream consensus, and excluded radicalism, has been silenced.

- Finally, even after this darker side of multiculturalism has been revealed, there is no end of liberals who cry: “But that’s not what *I* mean by multiculturalism! I’m in favor of the *good* multi-culturalism.” As if to say: “This bad multiculturalism is not *really happening*. Therefore I don’t have to do anything to oppose it. I’ll just keep calling for the good multiculturalism.” Meanwhile, like the pod people in *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the bad multiculturalism continues to take over more and more of America’s body without anyone seeing that it is happening, until the moment arrives when we discover, in Nathan Glazer’s pathetic phrase, that “we are all multiculturalists now.”

The myth of the “moderate” multiculturalism is a theme with many variations.

*Moderate Myth Number One:
Multiculturalism is Only Theoretical*

One of the factors that helped multiculturalism gain a foothold in the academy is the notion that multiculturalism is part of the twentieth century's great intellectual movement of cultural studies, in which researchers in such fields as anthropology, archeology, and comparative religion have made extraordinary progress in understanding ancient and non-Western cultures and religions.¹¹ In fact, cultural studies have often served as a front for an ideological agenda.

At a symposium on "The Plurality of Civilizations" at an academic conference in Chicago some years ago, Professor Allen Heumer gave a talk on the religious beliefs of the Lakota Sioux.¹² The Lakota, he argued, do not worship nature gods as is widely believed, but a transcendent deity not unlike the God of Judaism and Christianity. He concluded that the Lakota religion has a deep spiritual validity that we should understand and respect.

As an apparently serious attempt to explain a non-Western culture to Western minds, Heumer's talk exemplified what some have called the good multiculturalism, and his paper received a sympathetic response from a generally conservative, or at least not left-wing, audience. But when I chatted with Heumer afterward, he unveiled a radical agenda that had not even been hinted at in his scholarly paper: the Sioux, he matter-of-factly told me, should carve a sovereign nation for themselves out of chunks of Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota. Somewhat taken aback, I replied that this would mean the break-up of the United States and possible civil war. Heumer said that was no problem. "What would there be to fight over?" he asked in a tone of airy dismissal. When I said that it is precisely over such issues of sovereignty that nations have always fought wars, he brushed that aside as well. He seemed indifferent to the prospect that other minority groups, each claiming large chunks of territory, might also want to secede from the United States. At this point, a deferential-seeming black graduate student from Canada who had been listening to our conversation politely suggested that my attitude was "reactionary."

Thus, in what seemed like the blink of an eye, the focus of the scene had shifted from (1) Heumer's engaging analysis of the inner life of a non-Western culture, to (2) his demand for *political sovereignty* for that culture, to (3) the labeling of a critic as "reactionary" for questioning this demand. Pretending to

seek some "higher truth" in a non-Western culture that could be seen as common to all cultures (an endeavor that would naturally appeal to well-meaning, universalist academics, especially conservatives), he converted that other culture into a political weapon that he then turned against *our* culture. For a non-academic like myself, this brief conversation seemed to capsulize everything I had heard about the radicalization of the universities in recent times.

Moderate Myth Number Two:

Cultural Differences Don't Matter

Resistance to multiculturalism has also been softened by the idea that the non-Western customs being included in our society are insignificant and inoffensive, on the order of ethnic foods or folk songs. Educational historian Diane Ravitch, who is both a moderate supporter and a moderate critic of multiculturalism, once said (in a published exchange with this writer) that "[i]n the United States, one may be a good citizen without relinquishing one's native culture, language, religion, food, dress, or folkways."¹³ An ardent believer in the liberal democratic tradition and the idea of a common citizenship, Ravitch could only have made this remarkable statement if she believed that there are no cultural differences that can actually *matter* in a political or civic sense. If ethnic particularities cannot become a basis for civic conflict, then there's no need for minority immigrant groups to give them up.

To maintain this view, Ravitch has to ignore the many ethnic differences that obviously *do* matter in a civic and political sense. West African-style polygamy, Latin American political extremism, Chinese secret societies, Moslem absolutism, Haitian voodoo, African female genital mutilation, and Hmong cruelty toward animals, are some examples that come to mind. The moderate multiculturalists ought to explain how the carriers of such customs can be good citizens in a constitutional democracy founded on common allegiance to reason, tolerance, and respect for the rights of others.

Even "mere" differences in clothing are not necessarily benign or insignificant from the point of view of maintaining a common civic sphere. Would Ravitch have no problem with, say, a Congressman wearing a Sikh headdress on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives? How about a district attorney sporting an Afrocentric robe and cap, or a female Moslem police officer with her entire face covered in a black veil? Such

things are no longer impossible. Since the 1980s the Canadian government has permitted Sikh-Canadian policemen to wear their traditional turbans while on duty. Black lawyers in the U.S. have demanded the right to sport provocative ethnic clothing such as the kente cloth and outlandish hairstyles as expressions of racial solidarity with their clients and members of the jury. Moslem women wearing traditional head coverings are increasingly visible in America, and will soon be moving into the professions and other prominent positions.

My point is that the common political culture that Ravitch claims to believe in cannot long survive without certain *pre-political* commonalities – including language, food, dress, and folkways – that Ravitch dismisses as insignificant. Flamboyant dress conveying a distinct civilizational or racial identity not only breaks down the sense of a common culture, but the sense of a common citizenship.

If minority groups do not need to give up any aspect of their culture, as Ravitch and others have suggested, then it is hard to see why they shouldn't have their own systems of justice as well. Such an alternative system is already being practiced by black juries who refuse to convict their fellow blacks regardless of the evidence. Depending on the ethnic identity of the parties in a given case, there could be an African tribal council one day (complete with "enstoolment" ceremonies and ritual bows to ancestors), a Communist Chinese-style inquisition hearing the next day, a Mexican village-style gathering the next day, then an Iranian-style revolutionary tribunal presided over by a Mullah, then a trial with a black judge and jury getting revenge against the racist police. When things like this start happening, will the liberal believers in a pluralist civic culture – having encouraged non-Westerners to keep their language, dress, and folkways – cry out: "But this is not what I meant, not what I meant at all"?

Moderate Myth Number Three:

'Why can't we have both?'

If there are no important differences between Western and other cultures, then no hard choices between Western and other cultures are necessary. When a niece of mine was in college she said to me: "Western culture is good, but others are good, too." Her point was that we should welcome all cultures and fear none. Like my niece, the typical moderate liberal cannot understand that certain differences may be

irreconcilable. Confronted with dichotomies as old as the hills, the moderate innocently asks: "Why can't we have *both*? Why can't we have Western culture *and* multiculturalism? Why can't we have excellence *and* diversity?" When his wishful thinking collides with reality, he must resort to further evasions. Jim Bowman writing in the *Chicago Tribune* complained that advanced courses in the Oak Park elementary schools were being dropped because those classes tended to be all-white, which went against the school's goal of racial diversity in every classroom. "A good thing, diversity, is used as a club to bash another good thing, gifted or advanced classes." The schools, Bowman writes, "have elevated racial diversity (our civic religion) from a legitimate, permeating element to an illegitimate, all-encompassing one."¹⁴

But what, pray tell, is the difference between a "permeating" element and an "all-encompassing" one? Somehow Bowman imagines that the drive to establish proportional racial diversity in every niche of society is suddenly going to be abandoned when it threatens something *he* likes, such as advanced academic classes. Unable to grasp the radical essence of his own ideas, the moderate liberal always ends up believing that he can eat his civilization and have it.

Myth Number Four:

'Everything' is multicultural

In order to break down any resistance to multiculturalism, it wasn't enough to portray it as mainstream; it also had to be seen as *inevitable*. The moderate multiculturalists achieved both these ends by means of an audacious myth. America, they told us, has "always" been multicultural. In fact, all the societies that have ever existed have been multicultural. Multiculturalism is simply the human condition, not to be questioned any more than the air we breathe. Many advocates of this view are not multiculturalists *per se* but old-fashioned progressives (or, to put it less politely, international socialists), who have an ingrained hostility toward nationhood, religion, and all other inherited group distinctions, which they see as obstacles to the political and economic unification of mankind. When these progressives say that "all cultures are multicultural," they are not really seeking to emphasize cultural differences (as the radical multiculturalists do), but rather to underscore a universal *sameness* that would render nations – or at least the American nation – obsolete.

I first became aware of this attitude on the left when chatting with a politically liberal female acquaintance of mine. It is futile to oppose multiculturalism, this exuberant lady told me, because *all* civilizations have been created by diversity; even ancient Greece, she said, was the product of many diverse peoples and cultural traditions coming together. I asked her what those diverse traditions were, and she emphatically replied: “*We can’t know that.*” Her insistence on the diversity of ancient Greek culture, combined with her odd refusal to consider what this diversity consisted of, made me realize that her motives were ideological rather than intellectual: The reason she had no curiosity in the cultures or beliefs that produced Greek civilization was that such information must lead to the conclusion that Greece, though of “diverse” cultural origins, had a “diversity” that was distinct from that of *other* “diverse” cultures. And that would have forced her back to the truth she wanted to deny – that different cultures are *different* and not easily assimilable to each other. When she called ancient Greece “diverse,” she was not trying to say anything specific about ancient Greece. She was saying that *all* cultures are diverse, and therefore that all cultures are the *same*.

The belief in a “universal” multiculturalism has become a truism in left-liberal circles. Writing in the moderate leftist journal *Dissent*, Reed Dasenbrock argues that medieval England, because its language was a hybrid of Anglo-Saxon and Norman French, was “multicultural.” But if late medieval England was truly a *hybrid* culture, as Dasenbrock believes, then it was *one* culture, not a multicultural, in the same way that a hybrid plant species is *one* species, not a combination of different species, or that a human being is *one* person, not simply a mix of his mother’s and father’s characteristics. In other words, Dasenbrock has misconstrued one of history’s most remarkable instances of cultural assimilation as an example of multiculturalism. He goes on to argue that the whole of Western culture is really “multicultural.” Like medieval England, Western culture was also a mix of distinctive cultural components, which he identifies as the Greco-Roman civilization and Christianity:

[I]t took an immense synthesizing labor across centuries to bring them into some sort of harmony. Dante, Spenser, and Milton – in seeking to fuse classical

*culture with Christianity – are thus ... multicultural ... and if we fail to realize this immediately, we are only testifying to how successful their work of assimilation was.*¹⁵

As with his discussion of “multicultural” medieval England, Dasenbrock’s proof of a multicultural West demonstrates the exact opposite: that during the centuries following the fall of the western Roman empire, there was a slow but successful blending of distinct traditions into a new culture that we call the Christian West or Western culture.

Dasenbrock does not stop at appropriating the entire West into the multicultural project. “Multi-culturalism is simply the *standard human condition*,” he declares.

“In order to break down any resistance to multiculturalism, it wasn’t enough to portray it as mainstream; it also had to be seen as inevitable.”

“We now need to do this [i.e., to bring different cultures together] *with the totality of the cultures of the world.*” [Italics added]. He describes his goal as “the construction of a world culture,” and ultimately a world government. Yet he also assures his readers that fusing the West with the world “doesn’t represent a surrender of the Western tradition as much as a reaffirmation of it.” This is an absurd statement, yet it follows with absolute, logical consistency from Dasenbrock’s absurd premise. Since he has defined the West as “multicultural,” i.e. as a collection of many different and unrelated parts, it follows that to combine the West with every other culture – Islam, Confucianism, animism, and so on – would only *increase the number of parts* and therefore *enhance* Western culture! The truth, of course, is that in such a promiscuous mix everything distinctive and individual about the West would be obliterated. But Dasenbrock has attained, at least in theory, the left’s millennial goal of a world without borders, a world without “us” and “them,” a world without distinctive cultures and their mutual hatreds, and, most

important of all, a world without white America and the white West.

The irony is that by today's standards Dasenbrock is a moderate. His method is not vilification of the West, but word-magic: Describing the West as a historically diverse mixture of many elements (a vague generality with which even cultural conservatives would have a hard time disagreeing), he then turns that description into an activist project to reconstruct the world by combining all diverse cultures into the global culture of his imagination. Finally, since this global project is only *enhancing* the cultural diversity that he has already posed as the defining characteristic of the West, Dasenbrock can plausibly claim that he comes not to destroy the West, but to fulfill it. The argument is a tunnel from which our culture cannot emerge alive. Once you have accepted the "moderate" premise that America and the West have no enduring identity of their own but are defined by diversity, it becomes logically impossible to oppose the rest of the multiculturalist program.

Moderate Myth Number Five:

The Pro-Western Non-Westerner

Another soothing fiction that has helped advance multiculturalism is a personality type rather than an idea. It is the friendly Third-World immigrant, who warmly professes his or her love for America, yet who, on closer examination, reveals a desire to do away with America as an historically distinct country. Such a moderate is the novelist Bharati Mukherjee, an immigrant to the U.S. by way of Canada, who had this to say in a public television interview with Bill Moyers in 1990:

What I like to think, Bill, is that you and I are both now without rules, because of the large influx of non-Europeans in the '70s and '80s, and more to come in the '90s. That it's not a melting pot situation anymore, and I don't like to use the phrase melting pot if I can help it, because of the 19th century associations with mimicry; that one was expected to scrub down one's cultural eccentricities and remake oneself in the Anglo-Saxon image. If I can replace melting pot with a phrase like fusion vat, or fusion chamber, in which you and I are both changed radically by the presence of new immigrants, I would be much happier. So that

you are having to change your rules, I like to think, and I am certainly have to change my Old World rules...[Emphasis added].

There are no comforts, no old mythologies to cling to. We have to invent new American mythologies. Letting go of the old notions of what America was shouldn't be seen as a loss. ...I hope that as we all mongrelize, or as we all fuse, that we will build a better and more hopeful nation.¹⁶

Underneath Mukherjee's confiding and civilized tone, she was informing her American audience that they must "mongrelize" themselves in order to accommodate non-Europeans.* In this new dispensation (unchallenged by her supremely passive and "open" interviewer, Bill Moyers, who piously hung on her every word), the preservation of America as a historic nation and people was not even an issue any more. To grasp how unnatural this situation was, imagine an immigrant in some relatively sane country – say Japan or Italy or the pre-1965 America – who, shortly after his arrival, announces to his new countrymen: "Oh, by the way, you people must – in order to make *me* comfortable – give up everything that has constituted your culture and identity. But don't worry! You shouldn't see this as a loss!" He would be thrown out on his ear. Yet by the 1990s America had become the sort of decadent place where a smooth-talking "moderate" could make a career saying exactly that.

Like most imperialists, Mukherjee seemed complacently oblivious to the culture and people she wished to dominate. At one point in the Moyers interview, she predicted an increase in ethnic violence, "because there's a kind of disinvestment in America. ... [P]eople have not invested in the country. There's been a 'What part of the pie is for me?' kind of an attitude..." It didn't seem to occur to her that the disinvestment in America that she regretted may have had something to do with the devaluing of America's historic identity that she applauded. Indeed, if anyone was wondering, "what part of the pie is for me," it would seem to be Mukherjee herself and her fellow immigrants, whom she spoke of as "we, the new pioneers, who are thinking of America as still a frontier country."

I think that the original American pioneers had to have been in many ways, hustlers, and capable of a great deal of violence in order to

wrest the country from the original inhabitants. And to make a new life, new country, for themselves. So that vigor of possessing the land, I like to think, my characters have.

Mukherjee's agenda, though expressed in terms of her fictional characters, couldn't be clearer. She was boasting that her fellow non-Europeans are seizing America from its historic white inhabitants, just as the early white settlers took the land from the Indians and dispossessed *them* as a people. Moreover, by smearing the American pioneers as hustlers, she was implicitly justifying any chicanery her own people might now use to gain power for themselves. Enlarging on her imperial afflatus, she went on to tell Moyers (who kept nodding his approval): "*I want to reposition the stars ... I want to conquer, I mean, I want to love and possess this country.*" [Italics added.] This South Asian immigrant "loves" America so much that she wants to take it over for her own people – and kick *us* out.

The sad part is that most people listening to Mukherjee wouldn't have picked up on her imperialist subtext. Americans today are so gushingly pleased whenever they hear an immigrant confess her "love" for America that they hear nothing else.

Moderate Myth Number Six:

How 'Equality' Becomes 'Diversity'

Now we come to what is perhaps the most important multicultural myth of all, the belief that inclusion is simply about equality. Equality – or, to be more precise, antiracism – is the sheep's clothing of multiculturalism. The opinion makers of post World War II America carefully taught us that ethnic and cultural differences are of no intrinsic importance and should *never* be a factor in how we treat people. Once our minds had been molded by this simple but powerful idea, we commenced opening the doors of our nation to formerly excluded groups. But each time the doors have been opened and some new group has been admitted, a very strange thing has happened: The ideal of "equality" has suddenly been replaced by the ideal of "diversity." Now the opinion makers tell us that the newcomers'

ethnic and cultural differences are of supreme importance and must be "respected." Now they tell us that we, the host society, must turn ourselves inside out in order to accommodate these differences, to "sensitize" ourselves to them, to "learn" from them. Before we opened the doors, we had been told that to exclude culturally different people from our society was racist. But now that we've let them in, we're told that to expect them to fit into our society is racist.

This bait-and-switch tactic – for that is what the appeal to a universal code of equality turns out to be – has played a decisive role in all the movements of inclusion, from black rights to women's rights to homosexual rights. Arguing for the sexual integration of the armed services in 1975 (and using language that was an exact paraphrase of that used by the 1965 immigration reformers), Rep. Sam Stratton of New York said that "the sole issue is a *simple matter of equality*... All we need is to establish the basic legislative policy that we wish to remove sex discrimination when it comes to admissions to the service academies." [Italics added].¹⁷ Yet as soon as this non-discriminatory standard had opened the military to a significant number of women, the rhetoric of sex-blindness was replaced by the sex-conscious promotion of women and women's concerns. Standards of training and performance were dramatically lowered to accommodate women's lesser physical abilities and different intellectual tastes (for example, women have far less interest in military history than men do), and the official campaign against the military's "culture of masculinity" had begun. In exactly the same way, the outlawing of racial discrimination against blacks (in the name of equality) led directly to a system of racial preferences *for* blacks and *against* whites (in the name of diversity).

Their unashamed adoption of racial quotas and other discriminatory practices suggests that the real object of the civil rights movement was never color blindness *per se*, but simply the advancement of black people, *by any means that would work*.^{*} From the 1954 *Brown* decision to the passage of the 1960s civil rights laws, the non-discriminatory, color-blindness worked. But when it had taken blacks as far as it could take them (to enforceable legal equality, but not to enforceable economic and cultural equality), color-blindness was immediately dropped in favor of race-conscious preferences. The ink was barely dry on the 1964 Civil Rights Act when the federal government began requiring proportional group

* Confirming my point, there is an activist organization called BAMN – the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration, and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary.

representation of blacks as proof that employers were not in violation of anti-discrimination laws, a demand that led to *de facto* quotas that systematically excluded qualified whites in favor of less-qualified blacks.¹⁸ When whites began to protest this unlawful discrimination, black Supreme Court Justice and civil rights hero Thurgood Marshall replied (to his colleague William O. Douglas, no less!): “You guys have been practicing discrimination for years. Now it is our turn.”¹⁹ The notion of civil rights as *justice* was thrown aside the moment it had served its purpose, to be replaced by the notion of civil rights as racial advancement, racial entitlement, and racial revenge.

In much the same way, the bait-and-switch was used to create a vast “bilingual” education establishment. The reasonable-sounding idea that non-English speaking children should be given special help learning English in order to have an equal opportunity in this country (as stated by the Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols*) was soon transformed into the requirement that such children be taught in their native language – often, it turned out, for their entire public school careers. In fact, for most “bilingual” advocates and not a few Hispanic parents, the transmission and preservation of the Spanish language as a major and official language in this country had been their real motive from the start, and it continues to be their real, openly stated, goal to this day.²⁰ Yet during these past 30 years of controversy over bilingual education, white liberals have consistently failed to hear what the bilingual advocates were plainly telling them. Whites would point to the many documented failures of bilingual education to make children competent in English, thinking that this was a sufficient argument against bilingualism. But as far as the politically active part of the Hispanic community was concerned, Spanish maintenance, not assimilation, was bilingualism’s true purpose. Seeing only the “bait” (equality and assimilation) and blind to the “switch” (diversity and ethnic pride), well-meaning whites would periodically call for more effective methods of English instruction for Hispanic youngsters – and then, to their shock, find themselves attacked as “racists.” Unnerved, they would beat a quick retreat from the issue, leaving bilingual education in place.

In much the same way, the bait-and-switch has been used to accommodate whites to the browning of America. The belief that all the peoples in the world are

“the same as you and me” is used to get the immigration doors opened; as Bob Dole put it at the 1996 Republican Convention, the latest immigrants from Mexico are “as American as the descendants of the Founding Fathers.” But as soon as the strangers are within the gates and it has become evident that they are *not* like you and me, the assurances of sameness are replaced by celebrations of difference.

Immigration advocate Earl Shorris admitted in his book, *Latinos: A Biography of the People*, that Hispanics were not assimilating like previous immigrant groups. Optimistic 1960s liberals, he said, seriously underestimated the tenacity of Hispanics’ cultural and ethnic differences from the American mainstream. Shorris nevertheless denied that Hispanics are fragmenting America. They are “seeking *their version* of the American dream. – [T]he victories of Latino culture are victories of pluralism. ...Nothing is taken in return for this enrichment; it is, by definition, a gift.”²¹ [italics added].

In a rational world, the announcement by an open-borders advocate that the largest immigrant group is not assimilating would have been seen as at least somewhat damaging to the immigrant cause. But Shorris effortlessly turned this embarrassment into a blessing, telling his white liberal readers that, far from being upset, they should be *grateful* for the existence of a rapidly expanding, non-assimilating group that is intruding its own way of life, language, educational standards, and ethnic allegiances into this country.

Shorris had good reason for confidence that he could get away with this obvious ploy. He knew that white people cannot face the reality of ethnic and cultural difference and what it means for this society, because it would destroy their universalist belief that all people and all cultures can get along on a basis of perfect equality. The bait-and-switch almost always works – because whites *want* it to work. •

NOTES

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