

# Reconciling the West to Extinction

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This is a book about the future of white majorities in Western nations, written by someone whose biography reads like a send-up of multiculturalism: born in Hong Kong to a Jewish father and mixed Costa Rican/Chinese mother, raised in Vancouver, he spent eight years in Tokyo before becoming professor of politics at the University of London. Prof. Kaufmann is not hostile to whites, but his prescriptions are unlikely to satisfy anyone who truly values Western civilization.

This reviewer's suspicions were aroused from the book's second paragraph: "Whites can no more hold back demography than King Canute could command the tides." Apparently, America's Hart-Celler Act, which did away with national origins quotas, did not result from the free actions of Sen. Philip Hart and Rep. Emanuel Celler; rather, it just sort of rolled onto America's shores like the incoming tide one day in 1965.

Doubly suspicious is that this supposedly inevitable tide failed to operate in all parts of the world, for just a few pages later we read:

In East Asia, automation and guest worker programmes drawing on South-East Asian labour are ensuring that the region's demographic deficit will not produce multicultural nation-states. These nations remain attached to what I call closed ethnic nationalism, in which proscriptive boundaries coexist with immigration policies designed to maintain majority ethnic predominance.

This raises the obvious question of why Americans and Europeans cannot control their own demographic future just as the Japanese and South Koreans are doing. Kaufmann never tells us, but like all who appeal to inevitability, he is in favor of the tendency he wishes his readers to consider inevitable:

I am not arguing that [the West] should adopt the exclusive East Asian model. A better solution is to balance liberal and minority preferences for more immigration with the restrictionism of ethnic-majority conservatives. The key is that the majority be an open rather than a closed ethnic group.

Yet in 537 pages, the author never pauses to explain to readers why the modern West—the most open and universalistic society in the history of the world—is obliged to become still more open and universalistic, while everyone else is fine the way they are. But in this book, as in contemporary politics, such is the assumption throughout.

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## WHITESHIFT

**Populism, Immigration, and the Future of White Majorities**

**Eric Kaufmann**

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The book's title is a misnomer: the only demographic shift presently occurring is one *away* from whiteness. Kaufmann forecasts a greatly increasing rate of racial intermixture:

In a century those of mixed-race will be the largest group in countries like Britain and America. In two centuries, few people living in urban areas of the West will have an unmixed racial background.

He does not argue that such a change is desirable; at this point, we are back to a rhetoric of inevitability. The only freedom he would permit us regards how we respond to this supposedly unavoidable future. He distinguishes four possibilities, which he calls *fight*, *repress*,

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*flee*, and *join*. “Fight” means attempting to avoid the inevitable, as the Japanese have mysteriously been able to do, by maintaining inherited majorities. “Repress” refers to intensified state repression of white opposition to their own dispossession under color of fighting “racism.” “Flee” refers to what has long been known as white flight, with whites colonizing areas where they maintain a supermajority. “Join” refers to a Brazilian-style acceptance of admixture whereby whites would continue to exist as a social category, even as most become mixed to some extent.

Kaufmann’s own preferences are made clear from the first chapter. He wishes to “draw the sting of right-wing populism,” but realizes that repression alone cannot succeed. “Conservative whites need to have a future,” he warns, because “even if [they] don’t win elections, they are in a position to obstruct change, damage social cohesion, and, perhaps, pose a security threat.” His pacification strategy is, firstly, to convince whites that resistance is futile (hence the inevitability tropes) and, secondly, to assure them their mixed-race future won’t really be so bad. Once this is accomplished, the West “can begin to refocus on priorities such as democratization, climate change, economic growth and inequality” (which we are apparently not focused on enough already).

The book’s four parts nominally correspond to the possible responses of fighting, repressing, fleeing, and joining. But *Part 1: Fight*, which occupies over half the book, never seriously tries to imagine what a successful strategy for countering white dispossession would look like. Such an approach might be all right for the Japanese, but Kaufmann is not about to consider it for the West. So what we get instead is largely reportage on the rise of right-wing populism. Two chapters are devoted to the United States: the first summarizes the transition from the country’s original Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural core to its more generally “white” cultural core in the twentieth century; the second narrates the rise of Donald Trump as a movement of resistance by the embattled white majority. The focus then shifts to Britain, narrating the rise and fall of the British National Party and the surprise success of the Brexit campaign. One chapter chronicles the rise of the populist right in mainland Europe, and one more covers developments in Canada and Australia.

In *Part 2: Repress*, Kaufmann devotes two chapters to what he calls left-modernism. This roughly corresponds to the sort of thinking familiar to us from the Southern Poverty Law Center: an authoritarian (if not totalitarian) program of white dispossession accompanied by draconian suppression of any glimmerings of positive white racial identity. To his credit, Kaufmann explicitly recognizes that combining an affirmation of non-white identities with the suppression of white iden-

tity is an indefensible double standard. Coming from a contemporary academic, this is a generous admission.

Also in Part 2, the author attempts to rescue the term “racism” from verbal inflation, an undertaking this reviewer suspects is a fool’s errand. In Kaufmann’s usage, “racism” is an umbrella term for three distinct things he considers morally objectionable: antipathy to racial outgroups, the quest for racial purity, and racial discrimination. His discussion demonstrates, however, that none of these principles are unambiguous.

The author’s principal example of “antipathy to racial outgroups” is “attacking Muslims,” by which he means criticizing them. He claims that forbidding immigration by Muslims as a class would injure them by generating hostility toward them and threatening their safety. One really does not know where to begin: we might point out that Muslims are not a racial group, of course, or that antipathy is distinct from criticism (which is distinct from “attacking”). Furthermore, forbidding the immigration of a group need not imply antipathy to that group: I might forbid sick people from entering my home to keep my family healthy and not out of any irrational antipathy toward the sick. But Kaufmann speaks as if America were bound to allow the immigration of at least one resident of the Cannibal Coast in order to avoid generating hostility toward cannibals. This is one of those principles that only appears to apply to Western nations, however; Kaufmann nowhere criticizes the limitation of Israel’s Law of Return to Jews, nor demands that Christians be made welcome in Saudi Arabia.

The author also rejects any concern for what he calls “racial purity,” saying that it “results in outgroups being viewed as pollutants, which leads to ill-treatment of minorities and carries an enhanced risk of genocide.” But just what sort of person counts as a racial purist? Madison Grant, who thought anyone with a 1,024th part African ancestry should be considered “black,” is an obvious candidate. But how about the conservative after the manner of Russell Kirk, who feels “affection for the proliferating variety...of human existence,” (*The Conservative Mind*, 8) and fears something valuable would be lost in a perfectly blended humanity? Or the ordinary guy who doesn’t want his daughter marrying one of “those people?” Any of these attitudes, different as they are, *might* be described as racial purism, and Kaufmann offers us no rule for determining which are illicit (“racist”) and which acceptable. He does say, however, that his principle forbids Western nations from defining themselves as either white or Christian. Once again, no word on how or whether the same principle applies to nonwestern countries. Does Liberia’s Law of Citizenship, which restricts naturalization to persons of Black African descent, result in other races being viewed as pollutants, or increase the risk of their genocide?

Even the condemnation of racial discrimination can be problematic, as Kaufmann admits: should French restaurants have the right to hire only French waiters? Should a black singer be free to hire only black backing musicians in order to create an all-black “look” on stage?

We are forced to conclude that the author has not succeeded in providing a useful or workable definition for “racism.” But then neither has anybody else.

Kaufmann devotes just one chapter to *Part 3: Flee*. Whites have a measurable tendency to move to places whiter than they left. The author mentions that the only ethnic group in the Greater London area to become *more* segregated from others during the first decade of this century was the white British! They are hunkering down in the areas which remain reassuringly British, while nonwhites rub shoulders with one another in superdiverse areas from which whites are increasingly absent.



Eric Kaufmann, author of *Whiteshift*

White flight does not correlate well with political preferences; much of it involves those with progressive views, whereas more conservative whites have a stronger attachment to the neighborhoods where they live, even amid demographic change. And all whites, regardless of location or political views, maintain disproportionately white social networks. With the browning of suburbia, any continuation of the white flight strategy will increasingly require recolonizing rural areas.

*Part 4, Join* outlines the manner in which Kaufmann would like to see the West evolve, through mixed mar-

riages and an expanded concept of “whiteness.” Unlike many champions of racial mixture, he understands all hope of “solving” the race problem once and for all through perfect panmixia is a utopian fantasy. The actual result of continuing intermixture will be what we observe in Brazil: a more complicated social reality with fuzzier boundaries, but one in which people still identify by race, and such identification continues to “matter” in all sorts of ways.

The author notes that people’s understanding of their own ancestry is inevitably an oversimplification. Turks, e.g., like to imagine themselves as coming from Central Asia, since this is where the Turkish language originated; in fact, most of their ancestry is local to Anatolia. The Greeks have “absorbed massive demographic incursions” of Slavs and others over the centuries, but still think of themselves as descended from the ancient Hellenes. Many similar examples could be cited.

Some Americans of mixed ancestry already identify with the American mainstream; indeed, polling indicates that minority Republicans are more attached to the white tradition of American nationhood than white Democrats. Kaufman expects that the future mixed-race population of a Brazilianized West will continue, in an analogous way, to identify culturally with Europe. He calls this “an open form of white identity,” writing hopefully that “when the majority sees itself as having a largely mixed-race future, it may become more open to immigration.” It thus appears that whites’ reward for accepting admixture will be getting hit with even greater admixture in the future. Unmixed whites can be expected to survive for a time in ever-shrinking rural areas, rather as Gaelic speakers persist in remote corners of Ireland, but they will be more like museum specimens than a civilization.

A writer’s deepest convictions often emerge less from his explicit arguments than in casual, throw-away remarks, and a particularly revealing one pops up on page 451 of *Whiteshift*: “The American state can work with almost any ethnic or religious configuration, adopt any official language, and still function pretty well.”

Kaufmann does not believe that institutions reflect the specific character of the people who created them; he thinks race only matters insofar as people suppose it does. It follows that the West will survive by some people continuing to “identify” with it. This may allow us some hope for civil peace and reduced racial tension in the future, which is the author’s primary concern, but it does not bode well for the survival of the uniquely inventive and dynamic societies Europeans have historically created. ■