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SLOUCHING  
TOWARDS  
GOMORRAH

MODERN LIBERALISM AND  
AMERICAN DECLINE



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## 15

## The Wistful Hope for Fraternity



Where modern liberalism's radical versions of liberty and equality hold sway, there can be no fraternity. From the French Revolution to the Sixties rebellions, radicals who worship liberty and equality also invariably yearn for fraternity, community, brotherhood. They will never achieve it, because the dynamic of radicalism in general and modern liberalism in particular is to shatter society. Talk of fraternity refers only to the rebels; everybody else is despised and to be coerced.

A bourgeois or non-radical society, one that is not politicized in all its departments, can achieve a degree of unity through a common culture. America once had such a culture. Periods of heavy immigration of a wide variety of races and ethnic groups produced evolution in that culture without destroying its essential nature. Assimilating large numbers of persons from very different cultures is difficult but doable, as our experience proves. What may make the task impossible is that the powerful agents of modern liberalism—primarily the universities, high schools, primary schools—are working not only to fracture our culture but to suppress its historic sources of strength. This fracturing does not result from immigration but from ideology. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the cultural unity that is being deliberately destroyed.

From the beginning of our nation, men regarded it as important that America had a single culture. In Federalist No. 2, Publius (John Jay) wrote:

Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country, to one united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs. . . .

This country and this people seem to have been made for each other, and it appears as if it was the design of Providence, that an inheritance so proper and convenient for a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties, should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous and alien sovereignties.

Publius described a land populated by people descended from Englishmen, speaking English, professing Protestantism, attached to principles of self-government, and so, not surprisingly, very similar in their manners and customs. In fact, it would be untrue to say that the culture at America's foundation was European or, as we now say, Eurocentric. It was nowhere near as inclusive as that. It was Protestant English. There were other nationalities, of course, but by far the dominant culture was as Publius stated it. He might have added that our prospects for nationhood under a common culture were enhanced by Americans' common political experiences of living as colonies of England, of the Revolutionary War, and of living together, albeit rather loosely joined, under the Articles of Confederation.

Change came with the initial heavy waves of immigration of other Europeans with different ancestors, different languages, and different religions. Germans came in massive numbers, then Irish, Italians, Slavs, and European and Eastern European Jews, among others. The culture was enriched but did not alter fundamentally. It gradually changed from Anglocentric to Eurocentric, with a new and distinctively American accent. Those who came later were certainly not primarily English Protestants, but they assimilated because they wanted to become Americans and believed that meant adopting the language and many of the attitudes they found here. There were resentments between groups, of course, ethnic

politics, social and religious discrimination, and sizeable pockets of bigotry. But there was certainly no concerted rejection of the dominant culture.

The United States now faces the question of how far a culture can stretch to accommodate more and more ethnic groups and religions and still remain recognizable as a culture rather than an agglomeration of cultures. Which leads to the further question: Can a national identity, something resembling a national community, be maintained when cultural unity is destroyed? We are, after all, no longer one united people, descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, and very similar in our manners and customs. We are no longer a people joined by common political experiences and memories. And with every year that passes, we are less like that.

So far as I know, no multiethnic society has ever been peaceful except when constrained by external force. Ethnicity appears to be so powerful that it can overcome rationality. Canada, for example, one of the five richest countries in the world, is torn and may well be destroyed by what, to the outsider, look like utterly senseless ethnic animosities. Since the United States has more ethnic groups than any other nation, it will pass as a miracle if we maintain a high degree of unity and peace.

Had we been at the Founding a people as diverse and culturally disunited as we are today, there would have been no Founding. A Constitution and Bill of Rights would not have been proposed, and, if proposed, would have provoked political warfare that would have torn the country too deeply for any hope of unity. It was only the momentum of the original cultural unity that carried us forward with a single dominant culture for so long.

It was still possible to think of the United States as more or less culturally unified into the 1950s. But now we are reversing direction and becoming a chaos of cultures that cannot, or more accurately will not, be unified. What we are discussing are cultural disintegrations in addition to those caused by a number of other groups with feverishly adversarial stances. Radical feminists, race demagogues, homosexual activists, animal rights fanatics, and yet others, play major roles in fracturing the culture. But the phenomenon known as multiculturalism adds a new and powerful

dissolvent. It addresses not a single group, as does feminism, for example, but all groups—other than white, heterosexual males. Each is urged to become or remain a separate tribe.

Some of this was to be expected. No immigrant racial or ethnic group assimilated immediately; typically, newly arrived groups bunched together for a generation or two. Though they assimilated more rapidly than most, German immigrants clustered in Milwaukee and on farms in eastern Pennsylvania. Irish and Italians stayed together in their own urban neighborhoods, as did Jews in areas like the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Chinatowns grew up in a number of American cities. The children and grandchildren of these groups moved out, intermarried, and, though preserving aspects of their original culture, by and large melded into the larger culture.

The arrival of groups of non-European backgrounds would make the task of assimilation much harder in any event, but what bids fair to make it impossible is the recent phenomenon of groups who do not wish to assimilate but to live in America as indigestible lumps in our society. While most immigrants still wish to become Americans, some of them do not learn English and do not apply for American citizenship when they become eligible. These groups are told by ethnic activists and academic leftists that they should not move into the older American culture but should remain separate, preserving their distinctive cultures, no matter how ill-suited to success in this society those cultures are. Hispanics, who will outnumber blacks in the United States by the end of the century, often do not regard this country as their own. During the heated demonstrations against California's law denying various social services to illegal immigrants, a number of the demonstrators waved Mexican flags, apparently, regardless of citizenship, regarding themselves as Mexicans who were here for economic benefits only.

Muslim immigration adds a group whose religion and culture causes some of them to reject much of what we regard as essential features of American culture and government. This "ominous development," as the British political philosopher John Gray calls it, is well under way in Britain, "where a minority of fundamentalist Muslims that is estranged from whatever remains of a common culture, and which rejects the tacit norms of toleration that allow a

civil society to reproduce itself peacefully, has effectively curbed freedom of expression about Islam in Britain today.” Some conservative Muslims in the United States fight assimilation, while the fundamentalists speak of living here “in the depths of corruption and ruin and moral deprivation.” They assert that “Islamic civilization is based upon principles fundamentally opposed to those of Western civilization.” This is, of course, not true of all Muslim immigrants or even most of them, but that it is true of some may well pose a problem. The British experience may not be a guide, since the British, unlike the Americans, have no tradition of welcoming newcomers. It is important, nevertheless, that we do all we can to counter the separationist tendencies of some Muslims, even if there is some truth in their statement that we live in a state of moral deprivation.

Americans of Asian extraction had seemed to be immune to this rejectionist impulse. They had, after all, produced startling rates of achievement in academic endeavors, science, and business. Yet, perhaps feeling that ethnic grievance is necessary to one’s self-respect, Asian-American university students are beginning to act like an ethnic pressure group, demanding the paraphernalia—separate dormitories, courses, etc.—of campus tribalism.

Ethnic separatism and hostility to other ethnic groups may be inbred in mankind, requiring no explanation peculiar to any particular society. Thus, it is possible to question historian Arthur Schlesinger’s proposition that “The rising cult of ethnicity was a symptom of decreasing confidence in the American future.”<sup>3</sup> If the cult of ethnicity is a universal phenomenon—running from Bosnia to Sri Lanka to Liberia to Indonesia, and a dozen or so other places—surely the cause is more general than decreasing confidence in the American future. It seems far more likely that the causal arrow runs the other way: decreasing confidence in the American future is a symptom of the rising cult of ethnicity.

The natural centrifugal tendencies of ethnicity were once counteracted by a public school system that stressed indoctrinating immigrants to be Americans. The schools were agents of cultural unification. They taught patriotism and standards derived from European cultures. Part of our national lore, and glory, is the fact that youngsters speaking not a word of English were placed in public schools where only English was used and very shortly were

proficient in the language. That was crucial to the formation of an American identity. Now, however, the educational system has become the weapon of choice for modern liberals in their project of dismantling American culture. Our egalitarians view every culture (other than European) as equal. They resent and resist attempts to Americanize immigrants, and the crucial battleground is language.

That is the reason for bilingual education. Initially, some well-meaning souls saw bilingual education as a way of easing the immigrant child’s entry into American culture. The child would take courses in English but learn many subjects in his native tongue, usually Spanish. Within two or three years, the argument ran, the child would be able to take all of his courses in English. It is now clear, however, that the program is designed not to facilitate but to delay entry into American culture, and, to the degree possible, make certain that assimilation is never complete.

So many languages are spoken by immigrants that it is impossible to provide bilingual education for all. That is why bilingual education is so often in Spanish, the language most immigrants speak. But that fact gives away the real reason for the programs. Vietnamese and Polish children were put into English-speaking classes and were competent into English long before the Hispanics in bilingual schools.<sup>4</sup> That leaves the partisans of bilingualism only the choice of saying that Hispanic children are not as capable as others or admitting that they, the educators, are driven by hostility to American culture, and the rewards to be had by teachers’ unions and educational bureaucrats. The rewards would not be there, however, if ideology had not created the situation.

Often, the bilingualists do not care whether immigrant children learn English. The key to success for the students is “self-esteem. . . . Children do badly in school because of their feelings of ‘shame’ at belonging to a minority group rather than the ‘dominant group.’ For the children to do better, teachers must ‘consciously challenge the power structure both in their classrooms and schools and in the society at large.’”<sup>5</sup> As Richard Bernstein writes, “Bilingual education . . . is an act of rebellion against white, Anglo cultural domination.” And the “animus against assimilation, is not an implicit part of the emerging educational philosophy. It is explicit, open, out there, a standard belief. ‘The psychological cost

of assimilation has been and continues to be high for many U.S. citizens,' declares the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS), in Washington, D.C., in its 1992 'Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education.' 'It too often demands self-denial, self-hatred, and rejection of family and ethnic ties.'" This pathetic whine is not insignificant since the NCSS is the country's largest organization devoted to social studies education.

Public dissatisfaction with the linguistic fracturing of society has led to calls for an English-only amendment to the Constitution. The frustration is understandable, but there is no need to amend the Constitution to achieve an English-speaking nation. All that need be done is the abolition of bilingual education and the repeal of the Voting Rights Act's requirement of different language ballots. Children from other countries will learn English in public schools as they used to do. Their parents will accept the change once they begin to see its results. Immigrant parents want their children to learn English and become Americans. The opposition to that, manifested in bilingual education, comes from American elites who form an adversarial culture, alienated from the culture of the West and wishing to weaken it.

In 1989, the Commissioner's Task Force on Minorities in New York concluded: "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression that has characterized the culture and institutions of the United States and the European American world for centuries." All young people were being "miseducated" because of a "systematic bias toward European culture and its derivatives." Bernstein asks, rhetorically, "Could the multicultural animus against 'European culture and its derivatives' emerge more clearly than that? Here we have a direct statement that the Western culture is harmful to nonwhite children."

Despite the evidence and the frankness of its advocates, most people, including very astute people, tend to accept the beneficent view of multiculturalism put forth by its less candid partisans. Thus, one can find diametrically opposed views of the phenomenon, one put forward, for example, by Richard Bernstein and another articulated by Conor Cruise O'Brien. Bernstein writes, "Multiculturalism is a movement of the left, emerging from the counterculture of the 1960s. . . . It is a code word for a politi-

cal ambition, a yearning for more power, combined with a genuine, earnest, zealous, self-righteous craving for social improvement. . . ." He says we are "likely to end up in a simmering sort of mutual dislike on the level of everyday unpleasantness. . . ."

O'Brien, on the other hand, thinks that multiculturalism and diversity are "actually both a mask for, and perhaps an unconscious mode for achieving, a unity which would be broader-based and to that extent stronger. . . . The real agenda is the enlargement of the American national elite to include groups of persons who have traditionally been excluded from the same, mainly for reasons associated with race and gender. What is in view is the enlargement and diversification of the composition of the future governing class of the United States of America."

I am afraid it is clear that Bernstein has it right and O'Brien has it wrong. Multiculturalism is advertised by its less candid practitioners as opening students to the perspectives and accomplishments of groups that have been largely ignored and undervalued in conventional curriculums. The goal, it is said, is to enrich the student's understanding of the world and to teach him respect for and tolerance of others who are different. It substitutes an ethic of inclusion for the older ethic of exclusion. This is the movement's self-portrait, and O'Brien seems to have accepted it at face value. If there were truth in that advertising, if that were what the goal really is, no one could legitimately object to what is taking place in the American educational system. Unfortunately, there appears to be very little truth in the pretensions of the multiculturalists.

Bernstein took a two-year leave of absence from the *New York Times* to gather the facts of the multicultural ideology and its opponents. His is not an impressionistic book or one based on an ideological predisposition; it is a report of empirical findings. He points, for example, to the remarkable change in attitude towards Christopher Columbus between 1892 and 1992. Though not a single new fact about Columbus's life and exploits had been uncovered, the country's mood swung from one of uncritical adulation to one of loathing and condemnation, at least among the members of the "intellectual" class. The change was accomplished by the aggressive ideology of multiculturalism. The Columbus turnaround is merely a specific instance of more general alterations in our moral landscape.

What it signifies, and what becomes increasingly obvious, is that multiculturalism is a philosophy of antagonism to America and the West. The hostility of the multiculturalists to this nation and its achievements can hardly be overstated. Lynne Cheney, the former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, quotes a professor who is pleased that multiculturalism has the "potential for ideologically disuniting the nation" by stressing America's faults so that students will not think this country deserves their special support."

That multiculturalism is essentially an attack on America, the European-American culture, and the white race, with special emphasis on white males, may be seen from the curriculum it favors. A curriculum designed to foster understanding of other cultures would study those cultures. Multiculturalism does not. Courses are not offered on the cultures of China or India or Brazil or Nigeria, nor does the curriculum require the study of languages without which foreign cultures cannot be fully understood. Instead the focus is on groups that, allegedly, have been subjected to oppression by American and Western civilization—homosexuals, American Indians, blacks, Hispanics, women, and so on. The message is not that all cultures are to be respected but that European culture, which created the dominance of white males, is uniquely evil. Multiculturalism follows the agenda of modern liberalism, and it comes straight from the Sixties counterculture. But now, in American education, it is the dominant culture.

Bernstein catalogues the basic changes multiculturalism has made in the nature of public discourse.

First is the elimination from acceptable discourse of any claim of superiority or even special status for Europe, or any definition of the United States as derived primarily from European civilization.

Second is the attack on the very notion of the individual and the concomitant paramount status accorded group identification. . . .

Third is the triumph of the politics of difference over the politics of equality, that great and still-visionary goal of the civil rights movement. Multiculturalism here is the indictment of one group and the exculpation of all the others. . . .

This obsession with the themes of cultural domination and

oppression [by whites] justifies one of the most important departures from the principal and essential goal of the civil rights movement, equality of opportunity. Multiculturalism insists on equality of results.<sup>10</sup>

Hence it is that multiculturalists have turned Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream into a nightmare. He asked that his children "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," which, as Bernstein says, is the "essential ideal of liberalism." But multiculturalists say, "Judge me by the color of my skin for therein lies my identity and my place in the world."<sup>11</sup>

Multiculturalism requires the quotas or affirmative action that create group dislike of other groups and self-segregation. There is no other way to ensure that each valued ethnic group is represented in the student body and on the faculty. Of late, educators have begun to speak of diversity instead of multiculturalism, but it is the same thing. University presidents and faculties, secondary and primary school principals and teachers, all chant the diversity mantra. So powerful has this harmful notion become that it not only dictates who is admitted to a school but sometimes determines who may leave.

Students of Asian ancestry, for example, have tried to transfer to public schools whose curriculum was better suited to their ambitions but been denied the transfer on the grounds that their departure would lessen diversity. One father complained that his adopted Korean daughter could contribute no non-western perspective to the school she sought to leave because she had been brought to this country at the age of five months. No matter; she was of the requisite racial group. When the controversy was reported in the newspapers, she was allowed to transfer. But the episode demonstrates that the multiculturalists are sometimes willing to force a person into a cultural identity that person does not have on the grounds of ancestry alone.

The quality of education must necessarily decline as students turn from substantive subjects to ideologically driven resentments, in the case of non-whites, or guilt, in the case of whites. Although white students are often required to study America's "oppressed" subcultures and their allegedly superior qualities, it is regarded as racist to require that non-whites study Western culture. That was

the meaning of the radicals' attack on Stanford's Western Culture program in which students were required to sample the writings of men who had helped shape Western culture—Shakespeare, Dante, Locke, etc. A black student who objected to the program said its message was "Nigger, go home."<sup>13</sup> That exclusionary interpretation is precisely the opposite of the real message of the program, which was "Let us study what we have in common as inheritors of a tradition." The black student's objection follows from the perverse teaching of multiculturalism that those who have been "traditionally excluded" must now reject inclusion.

This has the odd effect of damaging all groups. The insistence on separate ethnic identities means that persons in each group can study their own culture, often in highly flattering and historically inaccurate form. Multiculturalism then means not the study of others but of oneself. The student who immerses himself in multicultural studies, who lives in a dormitory where admission is defined by ethnicity, who socializes only with members of his ethnic group, does not acquire the knowledge and discipline that he might have and does not learn how to deal comfortably with those of other ethnicities. One of the ways in which cultures improve is by borrowing from other cultures. Europe borrowed important aspects of mathematics, for example, from the Arab world. But the essence of multiculturalism is the isolation of groups so that they do not borrow from one another. The result is the relative cultural impoverishment of all groups.

In education at all levels, the substance of the curriculum changes to accommodate multiculturalist pressures. We have already seen this in feminist and Afrocentric studies, but it is everywhere. In New York state it is official educational doctrine that the United States Constitution was heavily influenced by the political arrangements of the Iroquois Confederacy. The official promulgation of this idea was not due to any research that disclosed its truth. Nor has any other state adopted this nonsensical idea. New York adopted it because the Iroquois mounted an intensive lobbying campaign directed at the State Department of Education. Far from this being a beneficial borrowing from another culture, it was a detrimental forcing of a false notion by one culture on another. John Leo notes that the decision "shows that some school authorities, eager to avoid minority group pres-

sure and rage, are now willing to treat the curriculum as a prize in an ethnic spoils system."<sup>13</sup> That it is ideologically driven by guilt and not an attempt to pacify a large bloc of voters is clear from the fact that there are only a little more than 38,000 Indians in New York state, most of whom probably have no interest in the myth of the Iroquois and the Constitution.

This sort of thing is happening across the country as various ethnic groups and feminists demand that history be rewritten according to their party lines. This not only debases history but pits the various groups against one another as they struggle for space in the textbooks. New York's "interest in history is not as an intellectual discipline," Schlesinger writes, "but rather as social and psychological therapy whose primary purpose is to raise the self-esteem of children from minority groups."<sup>14</sup>

Those who have traditionally been excluded because of race or gender are not helped by multiculturalists who teach them that European culture and standards are the cause of their difficulties and may be jettisoned, that history has no content aside from its ideological usefulness, that there are different ways of knowing, that linear thinking is a white male stratagem to oppress those who are not white or male, that standard English is no better than a variety of dialects such as "black English." To the extent the traditionally excluded believe any of this, they are additionally handicapped in life, and further excluded. To the extent they are taught that self-esteem comes before achievement and leads to achievement, they are lied to and held back.

In confidence games, there is a strategy called "cooling out the mark." One of the con men, not known to be such by the victim, stays behind to sympathize, to point out that being taken wasn't his fault, and generally to console and calm him so that he will be less likely to go to the police or pursue those who cheated him. Intentionally or not, multiculturalism is like that. It consoles low achievers by telling them that achievement has been falsely defined by white male, Eurocentric standards so that there is really no need to try to meet those standards. The result will be more failure, but the cooled-out minority student will have the consolation of knowing it was not his fault. There could be no strategy better suited to prevent what O'Brien thinks is the purpose of multiculturalism: "the enlargement and diversification of the com-

position of the future governing class of the United States of America." If there were a conspiracy by white males to consolidate their hegemony, they would find multiculturalism one of their best methods of oppression.

The adverse consequences of the multiculturalist relativism do not end there. If members of one ethnic group succeed more often in particular lines of work than members of other cultures, then, according to the multiculturalist philosophy, the reason must be discrimination; it could not be that some cultures are superior to others in preparing people for success in the modern world. If overt discrimination cannot be found, as is often the case because it does not exist, then discrimination must be built into our institutions and standards. These are said to be Eurocentric, as indeed they are. They are also said to be designed to buttress the hegemony of white, heterosexual males. Multiculturalism, therefore, necessarily requires affirmative action. If the standards are rigged against some groups, the solution is to use group membership as the basis for advancement. Thus, the multiculturalists have arranged matters so that our diversity does not enrich but festers.

Multiculturalism, or diversity, also requires "sensitivity." We cannot, after all, value another person's culture and outlook equally with our own unless we are sensitive to that which might offend him. Sensitivity, in turn, requires small tyrannies and personal humiliations, or worse. Worse is the destruction of careers and reputations. The only people ordered to take sensitivity training, so far as I am aware, are whites.

If anyone accused of insensitivity objects that he does not have racist or sexist attitudes, the sensitivity guru, sometimes genially, sometimes accusingly, is likely to respond that everyone, himself included, is a racist and a sexist. There is no way to argue with that. If someone insists that you have attitudes that you yourself are not aware of, it will be impossible for you to prove a negative. You might as well tell a psychoanalyst that you are sure you have no Oedipus complex. He knows better. "By its very nature," Bernstein writes, sensitivity training "thrusts the concepts of 'racism' and 'sexism' and the various other isms to the forefront, turning them from ugly aberrations into the central elements of American life and implicitly branding anyone who does not share that assumption to be guilty of the very isms that he feels do not lie in

his heart."<sup>15</sup> It is as if a prisoner pleading not guilty to a charge of armed robbery merely by denying his guilt became eligible for five to ten years in the penitentiary.

Only some groups have the right to demand sensitivity of others. Hispanics, Asians, blacks, American Indians, Aleuts, Pacific Islanders, homosexuals, and women have that right; heterosexual white males alone do not. So strong is the claim of such groups to sensitivity that it excuses them in the commission of what would otherwise be crimes. There was the notorious instance at the University of Pennsylvania when black and Hispanic students stole every copy of the student newspaper because a conservative columnist had criticized affirmative action. Penn's president, Sheldon Hackney, whom President Clinton soon appointed to head the National Endowment for the Humanities, did not discipline the students but reprimanded campus police who had tried to stop the theft. One can imagine what would have happened had the students been whites stealing a black student newspaper. They would have been expelled or suspended and police would have been fired if they did *not* try to stop the theft.

More recently, at DePaul University in Chicago, the school newspaper ran a front-page story about a dance party sponsored by a black student publication that was broken up by police responding to a disturbance complaint. The article quoted a police report that identified some of the disruptive partyers as black males. Black students claimed insensitivity and demanded a front-page apology; when they got none, a group of them destroyed all the copies of the paper they could find. A supporter said, "If you're going to have freedom of speech then it should be correct freedom of speech."

DePaul's president reprimanded those who mismanaged the party but also said that university departments were to respond with "sensitivity and diversity programs for staff," a "university-wide diversity awareness program," and enhancement of "multicultural staffing initiatives." Not satisfied, a month later twenty to thirty black students seized the offices of the student newspaper, demanding the resignation of the article's author and the paper's faculty adviser, that the paper's staff attend sensitivity sessions, and that at least one issue a year and one page each week be devoted to minority issues. The president told the paper it could not pub-

lish until it met some of these demands. He agreed, among other things, to give the occupiers amnesty, provide tutoring to make up for the classes they missed during their ten-day occupation, increase the number of minorities on the faculty, establish a Diversity Council, and recruit and retain more minority students. The protest leader proclaimed an "almost complete victory" that gave them more than they expected.<sup>16</sup>

Minority students should, of course, be held accountable for their actions in precisely the same way and to the same degree as white students. That said, it must also be said that minority students are only partially to blame for their behavior on campuses. The faculties and administrations who encourage that behavior in immature students are to blame. It is easy to see why the message of multiculturalism appeals to the minority student. If he comes from an ethnic or racial enclave, the university will be his first intense experience of pluralism. Even if he comes from a middle-class home in an integrated environment, entry into a university will be, as it is for most students, a somewhat disorienting experience. As Peter Berger points out, the opening of choices about values and vocations produces a process of individuation, which may then produce a backlash of de-individuation.<sup>17</sup>

A youngster faced with a bewildering variety of choices and no longer embedded in the certainties of the culture and family from which he came becomes more individualistic but is also more inclined to feel lost and unhappy without those certainties. The multiculturalists on the faculty, in the administration, and in the student body come to the rescue by offering the lonesome and unhappy student the companionship and comfort of his ethnic group. All that is asked in return is that his primary loyalty be to that group. Group identity is the road to de-individuation. Henceforth, the student is not an individual but only a representative. The individual cannot easily reject an ethnic identity for an American identity, not only because of the anger of his or her group which will say the person is "acting white," but because so many rewards, including friendship, depend upon insisting upon one's ethnic identity.

So powerful has the fantasy world of multiculturalism become that many of us have accepted the myth that only a minority person can understand the thoughts and emotions of a person of the

same minority. That is a denial of the universality of human qualities. If that were true, a common culture and a peaceful society would be impossible. The multiculturalists, albeit inadvertently, make the case for a highly restrictive immigration policy, one that admits only people of European descent.

A white academic feminist is even prepared to concede that she cannot adequately interpret black literature because it is set within a history of racial oppression. The white scholar's perspective is said to be utterly foreign to the culture from which the black literature issued.<sup>18</sup> It would seem to follow that black scholars cannot adequately interpret literature issuing from white culture and should not be allowed to teach it. Why should one of the oppressed be better able to interpret the literature of the oppressor race than the other way around? There is no reason, merely the fact that multiculturalism always sees the victim as uniquely insightful and comprehending.

Multiculturalism is a lie, or rather a series of lies: the lie that European-American culture is uniquely oppressive; the lie that culture has been formed to preserve the dominance of heterosexual white males; and the lie that other cultures are equal to the culture of the West. What needs to be said is that no other culture in the history of the world has offered the individual as much freedom, as much opportunity to advance; no other culture has permitted homosexuals, non-whites, and women to play ever-increasing roles in the economy, in politics, in scholarship, in government. What needs to be said is that American culture is Eurocentric, and it must remain Eurocentric or collapse into meaninglessness. Standards of European and American origin are the only possible standards that can hold our society together and keep us a competent nation. If the legitimacy of Eurocentric standards is denied, there is nothing else. There are no standards from any other quarter of the globe that we can agree upon. Islam cannot provide standards for us, nor can Africa or the Far East. Yet a single set of standards is essential to a sense of what authority is legitimate, what ideals must be maintained. The alternative to Eurocentrism, then, is fragmentation and chaos.

The attack on Eurocentrism is ignorant and perverse in an additional way. Europe made the modern world. Europe and America made the world that people from around the globe des-

perately desire to enter. It is insane to say that they should enter this world in order to reject the culture that made it. European-American culture is the best the world has to offer, if one judges by where the people of the world want to immigrate. It is not hard to see what makes this culture superior. Europe was the originator of individualism, representative democracy, free-market capitalism, the rule of law, theoretical and experimental science, applied science or advanced technology, and so on through a list of achievements that have made the life of mankind much more free and prosperous. The static societies of Asia and Africa finally achieved dynamism, or varying degrees of it, only under the influence of European culture.

Today's revolt against European standards is probably merely a continuation of the revolt against bourgeois rationalism that has marked this century. Ortega y Gasset characterized the phenomenon:

Europe had created a system of standards whose efficiency and productiveness the centuries have proved. . . . Now, the mass-peoples have decided to consider as bankrupt that system of standards which European civilisation implies, but as they are incapable of creating others, they do not know what to do, and to pass the time they kick up their heels and stand on their heads.<sup>19</sup>

Standing on your head is not a bad description of multiculturalism. Unfortunately, it involves standing a civilization on its head. Fascism and Naziism were both romantic, anti-bourgeois movements. Communism, while pretending to scientific certainty, was clearly a religious movement impervious to rational argument. Perhaps hostility to rational, bourgeois culture reflects an irrationality in humans, a desire to escape rationality and firm standards. Sixties radicalism was acutely anti-bourgeois and romantic. Its family resemblance to fascism has already been noted. At a weaker, less fanatical level, the hostility to rationality is evidenced by American fascination with such farcical subjects as psychics, astrology, channeling, UFOs, and so on. Multiculturalism, as well as all of modern liberalism, belongs to this family of anti-rationalistic enterprises.

Is there hope that multiculturalism will fade as other passions

have? The best guess is that it will not. We have started down the road that other societies have taken, societies that are now riven with ethnic violence, and ethnic violence seems to cease only when a stronger force imposes peace. The center of the agitation in America is the educational system, and particularly the universities. Will they abandon the multiculturalist enterprise? Some think so. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., is one of the optimists: "The situation in our universities, I am confident, will soon right itself once the great silent majority of professors cry 'enough' and challenge what they know to be vogueish nonsense."<sup>20</sup> Well, they have had thirty years to cry "enough" to vogueish and pernicious nonsense and haven't done so yet. This silent majority seems to be like the previous ones we have heard about, permanently silent. That is what Morson's Law would predict.

We are, then, entering a period of tribal hostilities. Some of what we may expect includes a rise in interethnic violence, a slowing of economic productivity, a vulgarization of scholarship (which is already well under way), and increasing government intrusion into our lives in the name of producing greater equality and ethnic peace, which will, predictably, produce still greater polarization and fractiousness. Since multiculturalism is a movement of the left and a yearning for more power, which is necessarily government power, its spread and entrenchment also bodes ill for the institutions of capitalism.

As Ortega y Gasset said, "Civilisation is before all, the will to live in common. . . . Barbarism is the tendency to disassociation. Accordingly, all barbarous epochs have been times of human scattering, of the pullulation of tiny groups, separate from and hostile to one another."<sup>21</sup> Multiculturalism is barbarism, and it is bringing us to a barbarous epoch.

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