

*The Path
to National Suicide*

An Essay on Immigration and Multiculturalism

by Lawrence Auster

The American Immigration Control Foundation

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Monterey, Virginia*

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A Word to the Reader

It has become customary for anyone who wishes to discuss subjects pertaining to ethnicity and race to assure one's audience that one has a compassionate and open attitude, that one respects "diversity." At the outset, this writer wants to make it clear that he appreciates, as much as anyone, the truly amazing and inspiring openness of American society. Historically, that openness has made it possible for people from many different backgrounds not only to come to these shores, but, far more importantly, to acquire a common national citizenship and identity. There is no question that many of today's new immigrants are making valuable contributions to this country and are assimilating into American society. But the recent emergence of unaccustomed and bitter divisions over language and culture—particularly the movement to tear down our national heritage in the name of a vaguely defined "multiculturalism"—is beginning to make many Americans realize something that common sense and forethought might have told them years ago: that America's ability to perform this alchemy of souls is not infinite. To believe that we possess such a limitless capacity is, as the ancient Greeks recognized, to court Nemesis, fate's punishment for those who think they have become as gods.

The theme presented in these pages is one that people will find troubling, and it is meant to be. Our current policy of open and ever-widening immigration, in conjunction with the gathering

forces of cultural radicalism, is leading our country into an unprecedented danger. At a time when increasing racial and ethnic diversity makes the re-affirmation of our common culture more vitally important than ever, we are, under the mounting pressure of that diversity, abandoning the very idea of a common American culture. We are thus imperiling not only our social cohesiveness but, as I will try to show, the very basis of our national existence.

This extraordinary development stems in part from a confusion over the meaning of equality. When the 1965 immigration reformers spoke of equal treatment before the law, they meant it in terms of *individuals*, not in terms of mass migrations that would totally change the country. But today, with the rise of multiculturalism, we have lost the ability to make that basic distinction. The idea of equality has been transferred, in effect, from individuals to entire *cultures*, and along with it, a moralism that brooks no opposition. Under this new dispensation we owe, as it were, an obligation to all the peoples in the world to let them migrate here en masse and recreate American society in their image.

My argument, dealing with such intangibles as cultural identity, is not a simple one to make—especially in this age when any defense of a traditional American culture tends to be automatically condemned as reactionary. Another dangerous hurdle to understanding is modern education, which has left many Americans blind to the fact that there is even such a thing as a distinctive American and Western civilization, and that they themselves, and everything they know and love, are products of it. Increasingly cut off from their cultural roots, many Americans, particularly our younger generations, no longer know who they are, and are easily swayed by ideological currents telling them that their civilization adds up to nothing more than a cloud of “cultural diversity” changing at random from moment to moment.

Some readers may object to this essay because it seems to emphasize a particularist point of view of the American nation. Such a particularist view is seen as violating our universalist political character; worse, it is suspected of boiling down to a cultural or racial particularism. The paradox is that American particularism is thought to be grounded not in an ethnic/cul-

tural identity but in a universalist conception—the natural rights of man, individual freedom and so on. In recent years these core beliefs of liberalism have taken the form of a championing of “diversity,” by which is meant an official recognition and deliberate heightening of racial and culture distinctions. But such diversity means the *demise* of liberalism, which is based on individual rights, not group rights. In other words, too much racial and cultural heterogeneity, brought on by immigration and multiculturalist policies, leads inevitably to an emphasis on group identities which undermines not only our historic cultural heritage (for which many people today seem to feel little affection in any case) but the political order based on individual rights. It follows, paradoxically, that a universalist, liberal order based on the rights of man *qua* man can only survive if Americans remain effectively one people, i.e., culturally “particularist.”

If, in upholding the idea of American commonality, I seem to give insufficient weight to America’s ethnic diversity, that is because we have made such a fetish of “respecting diversity” in recent years that there is an urgent need to redress the imbalance. The spontaneous and voluntary expressions of ethnicity and community in American life can be counted on to take care of themselves, as they always have in the past. But what is threatened, and what we as a society need to be concerned with, are the common cultural and political attachments without which we will cease to be a people.

In what follows, the reader will find an attempt to think through to its logical conclusions, and to see whole, a problem that the experts and policy-makers have dealt with only superficially, if at all. The potential for misunderstanding in exploring such a sensitive and complex subject is vast, and at some points questions may be raised in the reader’s mind which might not be resolved until he has proceeded further. Those who are troubled by the notion that any criticism of open immigration is, ipso facto, racist may want to skip ahead to the chapter on the meaning of racism. I only ask that the reader try to grasp the argument in its entirety before making up his own mind. In the words of André Gide: please do not understand me too quickly.

But one of the first and most leading principles on which the commonwealth and the laws are consecrated, is lest the temporary possessors and life-renters in it, unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity, should act as if they were the entire masters; that they should not think it amongst their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waste on the inheritance, by destroying at their pleasure the whole original fabric of their society; hazarding to leave to those who come after them, a ruin instead of an habitation—and teaching these successors as little to respect their contrivances, as they had themselves respected the institutions of their forefathers. By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer.

Edmund Burke,
*Reflections on the
Revolution in France* (1790)

The dream of universal brotherhood, because it rests on the sentimental fiction that men and women are all the same, cannot survive the discovery that they differ.

Christopher Lasch,
New Oxford Review
(April 1989)

Introduction: Breaking the Silence

I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege of citizenship, but such as would be a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States.

James Madison

There shall be open borders.

Constitutional amendment
proposed by *The Wall Street
Journal*, July 3, 1989

The march of Latin Americans to the United States shouldn't be understood as a wave of anger or revolutionary passion, but more as a peaceful conquest.

Father Florencio M. Rigoni
Mexican Bishops' Conference, 1986

The passage, after an epic five-year battle, of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 demonstrated a national consensus that uncontrolled immigration is a threat to America's future; yet the government's continuing failure to take effective action against illegal immigration, and the ongoing movement to undercut what laws we do have, suggest that our will to meet that threat is close to paralysis. At the same time, it cannot be reasonably said that the issue is confined to illegal immigration, as vitally urgent as that problem is. Even if

all illegal entries were stopped tomorrow, the United States would still be receiving an historically unprecedented and ever-growing influx of legal immigrants from the Third World. Up to 1965, 85 percent of the U.S. population was of European origin; as a result of the 1965 immigration reforms, the U.S. is now receiving a stream of legal immigrants that is 90 percent non-European—twice as many immigrants as are received by all the other countries of the world combined. There are some who ecstatically welcome this multiracial and multicultural influx, seeing it as the beginning of a brave new global society in America, the first “world-nation.”¹ There are others who worry that if the present mass immigration continues, it “would lead not only to a gradual but to a radical mutation in the composition of the American people, and the transformation of the very essence of the present civilization of the United States.”² Nor are such fears limited to white Americans. In *A Turn in the South*, V.S. Naipaul shows that ordinary southern blacks are just as uneasy about the new immigration, and the resulting change in the lineaments of society, as white people are. Whatever opinion we may have about it, the fact of the change itself is undeniable. “We are becoming a different people,” as the New York State Commissioner of Education has put it. Indeed, by the year 2089 America will be in large part a Hispanic and Asian society in which whites will be a minority—a revolution in the nation’s character that will dwarf the changes brought by earlier waves of European immigrants. This ethnic transformation is already being reflected in a multiculturalist ideology aimed at totally recasting our conception of ourselves as a nation.

Surely it behooves all American citizens to consider carefully the profound consequences to our society of such a radical change in population and culture. But current immigration debate is to be noted mainly for its astonishing triviality. The major news media treat the issue as a simple matter of humane generosity and “progress,” devoid of any larger meaning. Attempts in Congress to change widely recognized abuses in the law are limited to incremental tinkering; the 1989 Kennedy-Simpson bill, designed to place a cap on extended-family immigration, was amended—under unprecedented pressure by immigrant

groups—to increase it substantially instead. Free-market conservatives, exhibiting a peculiar kind of tunnel vision, endorse open borders as a source of cheap labor and an endless boon to the economy. Sociologists focus on America's effect on the immigrants, while disregarding the immigrants' effect on America. Even a thoughtful observer like James Fallows of the *Atlantic* ignores his own warnings about the devastating impact of multiculturalism in other countries and blithely assures us that unlimited diversity will be just wonderful for *this* country.³ Few bother to ask: *How many* immigrants are good for this country? What kinds of immigrants? What about the effects of this perpetual influx on our social cohesiveness, our political institutions, our way of life? On these fateful questions, the opinion-makers are mute.

How can we account for this remarkable silence? The answer, as I will try to show, is that when the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 was being considered in Congress, the demographic impact of the bill was misunderstood and downplayed by its sponsors. As a result, the subject of population change was never seriously examined. The lawmakers' stated intention was that the Act should not radically transform America's ethnic character; indeed, it was taken for granted by liberals such as Robert Kennedy that it was in the nation's interest to avoid such a change. But the dramatic ethnic transformation that has *actually occurred* as a result of the 1965 Act has insensibly led to acceptance of that transformation in the form of a new, multicultural vision of American society. Dominating the media and the schools, ritualistically echoed by every politician, enforced in every public institution, this orthodoxy now forbids public criticism of the new path the country has taken. "We are a nation of immigrants," we tell ourselves—and the subject is closed. The consequences of this code of silence are bizarre. One can listen to statesmen and philosophers agonize over the multitudinous causes of our decline, and not hear a single word about the massive immigration from the Third World and the resulting social divisions. Opponents of population growth, whose crusade began in the 1960s out of a concern about the growth rate among resident Americans and its effects on the environment and the quality of life, now studiously ignore the question of

immigration, which accounts for fully half of our population growth.

This curious inhibition stems, of course, from a paralyzing fear of the charge of “racism.” The very manner in which the issue is framed—as a matter of equal rights and the blessings of diversity on one side, versus “racism” on the other—tends to cut off all rational discourse on the subject. One can only wonder what would happen if the proponents of open immigration allowed the issue to be discussed, not as a moralistic dichotomy, but in terms of its *real consequences*. Instead of saying: “We believe in the equal and unlimited right of all people to immigrate to the U.S. and enrich our land with their diversity,” what if they said: “We believe in an immigration policy which must result in a staggering increase in our population, a revolution in our culture and way of life, and the gradual submergence of our current population by Hispanic and Caribbean and Asian peoples.” Such frankness would open up an honest debate between those who favor a radical change in America’s ethnic and cultural identity and those who think this nation should preserve its way of life and its predominant, European-American character. That is the *actual* choice—as distinct from the *theoretical* choice between “equality” and “racism”—that our nation faces. But the tyranny of silence has prevented the American people from freely making that choice.

The United States is in a situation without precedent in the history of the world. A free and great people have embarked on a course which must result in their own total and permanent transformation, without ever having had a serious public debate on whether or not they want to be so transformed. The purpose of this essay is to help open up such a debate. There is a need for the information, ideas and arguments that will make it intellectually and morally respectable to question our current policy and the orthodoxy that upholds it. We need to break free from the paralyzing notion that because “we are all descended from immigrants,” we therefore have no right to make such a fateful choice about our nation’s future. Let us prove our faith in democracy: If the American people truly want to change their historic European-rooted civilization into a Latin-

Caribbean-Asian “multi-culture,” then let them debate and approve that proposition through an informed political process, as befits a free people. And if Americans do not want their society to change in such a revolutionary manner, then let them revise their immigration laws accordingly. *But let the debate occur.*

I.

The 1965 Law: Its Intent, Its Consequences

This is the central problem of immigration today; that the law . . . has not recognized that individuals have rights irrespective of their citizenship. It has not recognized that the relevant community is not merely the nation but all men of good will.

Robert F. Kennedy in 1965

The outstanding trait of the men of our period may seem in retrospect to have been the facility with which they put forth untried conceits as “ideals.”

Irving Babbitt,
Democracy and Leadership (1924)

The first requirement for an informed debate on immigration is an understanding of the existing law. Such knowledge, more than any other factor, can help dispel the strange mental passivity that seems to grip Americans whenever they are confronted with this issue: even when people realize the unimaginable scope of the changes taking place in our country, there is a feeling that those changes are *inevitable*. It is as though the “browning of America,” as *Time* has dubbed it, were a kind of vast natural phenomenon, as far outside of human control as continental drift. There seems to be almost no awareness of the

fact that this alteration of our society is the result, not of an act of God, but of an act of Congress; not of some inviolable provision in the Constitution, but of a law passed in 1965. An examination of the 1965 Act, and of the profound misconceptions entertained by its framers, will show us that they never intended the sea change in American life that is occurring as a result of that law. This understanding is essential if we are to disenthral ourselves from the disabling belief in the “inevitability” of present trends.

Background of the 1965 Act

On October 3, 1965, in a ceremony at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law one of the most far-reaching legislative enactments in our nation’s history, the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. The Act eliminated restrictive national origins quota that had governed immigration policy since the 1920s and extended to the people of every country on earth the equal right to immigrate to the United States.

First passed in 1921, the national origins quota had reduced the great tide of immigration that had been coming in since the late nineteenth century, mainly from southern and eastern Europe. The “new” immigrants, so different in appearance and habits from the earlier Americans, had aroused profound fears of a changed America—fears that were rationalized, though never officially sanctioned, in the form of a racial ideology that viewed the Nordic, or northern European, groups as superior to other Caucasian peoples. By limiting the percentage of immigrants from any country to that nationality’s existing proportion of the U.S. population, the national origins quota was intended to preserve America’s ethnic composition. Renewed under the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, the immigration quota limited annual entries from countries outside the Western Hemisphere to 158,361, 70 percent of which were earmarked for Britain, Ireland and Germany. Asian countries were limited to a token quota of 100 immigrants per year (although thousands more had been admitted as refugees). By the mid-1960s, when Congress was banning discriminatory practices against U.S. citizens on the basis of color, race or national origin, there was a grow-

ing consensus that it was unacceptable to go on excluding foreigners from U.S. citizenship on the same basis. The Immigration Act of 1965 can be best understood as a civil rights bill applied to the world at large.

A similar bill proposed by President Kennedy had failed to get through the previous Congress, but now Lyndon Johnson was firmly in control. The chairman of the Senate subcommittee hearings on the bill, as well as its floor manager, was Edward Kennedy; appearing as a witness before the subcommittee was Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who as Attorney General had been the Kennedy Administration's principal champion of immigration reform. There was little opposition except among southern Democrats and scattered conservative groups with no influence on national opinion. As we shall see, the lack of a strong opposition resulted in a lack of serious debate. Buoyed by a cloud of rhetoric about equal rights, individual worth and family reunification, the bill's sponsors gave little thought to the bill's actual provisions and likely results, while warnings by opponents about long-term effects were ignored amidst the general euphoria.

In his opening remarks, chairman Edward Kennedy dismissed the critics:

What the bill will not do: First, our cities will not be flooded with a million immigrants annually. Under the proposed bill, the present level of immigration remains substantially the same. . . . Secondly, the ethnic mix of this country will not be upset. . . . Contrary to the charges in some quarters, S. 500 will not inundate America with immigrants from any one country or area, or the most populated and economically deprived nations of Africa and Asia. . . . In the final analysis, the ethnic pattern of immigration under the proposed measure is not expected to change as sharply as the critics seem to think.

Kennedy did not merely say the critics were mistaken; he went on to discredit them as bigots—thereby establishing a pattern that the immigration debate has followed ever since. “The charges I have mentioned,” he said, “are highly emotional, irrational, and with little foundation in fact. They

are out of line with the obligations of responsible citizenship. They breed hate of our heritage. . . .”⁴

Senator Kennedy thus defended the immigration reform bill on the ground that it would *not* do the things that its “emotional, irrational, hate-breeding” opponents said it would. Who was right? A perusal of the subcommittee transcripts today—a quarter-century after Kennedy spoke those confident words—uncovers an appalling pattern of self-deception, of reassuring claims grossly contradicted by the bill itself and by subsequent immigration history. In the following discussion, we will need to touch on the sometimes devilish complexities of immigration law. I ask the reader’s careful attention. It is only by taking in these details (including numbers) that we can grasp the full scope of the 1965 lawmakers’ misconceptions.

The Accidental Revolution

Mostly it was a matter of numbers. The purpose of the bill, Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach told the subcommittee, was *to eliminate the national origins quota system, not to increase immigration*. The overall quota would be raised only slightly, from 158,000 to 166,000, and the maximum for any one country would be 10 percent of that total, or 16,600.⁵

Here we need to clarify a distinction that the senators and administration witnesses tended to ignore. In addition to the limited, quota immigration, there was, and is, unlimited, *non-quota* immigration which includes immediate relatives (spouses children, parents) of recent immigrants as well as, prior to 1965, immigrants from the entire Western Hemisphere.* The numbers used by the bill’s sponsors only referred to that portion of immigration that came under the quota, and did not include the numerically unrestricted, non-quota immigration, which

* Prior to 1965, Western Hemisphere countries were not included under the quota, since immigration from the Americas was still relatively low. Non-quota immigration from the Western Hemisphere in 1964 was 150,000, a far higher number than was coming in under the incompletely filled quota for the Eastern Hemisphere at that time. Following the 1965 Act, a new worldwide quota of 270,000 was established.

could be a far higher number. By glossing over this distinction and not mentioning the non-quota immigrants, the senators made current and projected immigration figures appear far smaller than they really were. For example, at one point Senator Sam Ervin asked Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania: “[D]o you not think there is a certain limit to the capacity of the U.S. to assimilate immigrants into our industrial and into our cultural patterns?” Scott answered: “I think, sir, that this bill has that consideration in mind.” The bill, he said, would only add 8,000 immigrants per year.⁶ What Scott did not say was that the 8,000 figure was only the increase in the *quota* for the *non-Western Hemisphere immigrants*, which was being increased from 158,000 to 166,000. Since the old quota, mainly from Northern Europe, had not been filled for several years prior to 1965, and since the new quota was expected to be 100 percent filled, the expected increase of quota immigrants was substantially higher than the increase of the quota itself. Estimates of this expected increase varied slightly. Robert Kennedy declared that “the net increase in immigration attributable to this bill would be at most 50,000 a year.”⁷ Edward Kennedy mentioned a figure of 62,000; Philip Hart of Michigan said 66,000. Hart to Katzenbach: “[T]he notion was created that 190 million [the 1965 U.S. population] is going to be swallowed up. *None of us would want that, the bill does not seek to do it and the bill could not do it.*” Katzenbach agreed.⁸ Thus the bill’s own supporters affirmed that they did not want or expect the law to result in a huge increase in immigration or in a fundamental change in the U.S. population. But this is exactly what has happened, because they did not take into consideration the vast increase in non-quota, numerically unrestricted immigration that has actually occurred under the 1965 law.

This problem was clarified by an opposition witness, Myra C. Hacker of the New Jersey Coalition. Ms. Hacker pointed out that the bill would not only increase the number of immigrants under the quota by taking places away from countries that were not using their quota and giving them to others, but that further increases in non-quota immigration would lead to an actual increase of 125,000 over the then-current total of

275,000, making a total of 400,000. “However,” she added “the bill offers such broad discretionary powers to the Attorney General that the overall yearly number could well rise to a half million or more. . . . *At the very least, the hidden mathematics of the bill should be made clear to the public.*”⁹

These warnings went unheeded. The bill’s advocates continued using the misleadingly low figures. During both the hearings and the floor debates, they did not speak of the actual increase of hundreds of thousands, but of increases of “8,000” or “60,000.” It was on the basis of these numbers that the bill was approved. But Myra Hacker’s prediction of an increase to “half million or more” immigrants per year has already come true.

Reversing the Preferences

Another kind of hidden mathematics concerned the types of persons admitted under the preference categories designed to emphasize the values of family reunification and individual worth. Once again we must place the rhetoric against the reality. Attorney General Katzenbach stated: “The United States would declare to those who seek admission . . . ‘We don’t care about the place or circumstances of your birth—what we care about is what you can contribute.’”¹⁰ The same sentiment was voiced literally dozens of times during the hearings and floor debates. Surely no belief could come closer to the heart of liberalism—as it was *once* understood—than this recognition of individual worth as distinct from the group one happens to belong to. But the fact is that the 1965 law actually made it harder for people of recognized individual worth (in the form of valuable skills) to gain entry compared with another category of persons, i.e., relatives of recent immigrants. Prior to 1965, the first 50 percent within the quota for each country was earmarked for persons with specialized skills “urgently needed in the U.S.,” the next 30 percent for parents and unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens, and the last 20 percent for spouses or unmarried children of permanent U.S. residents. *The 1965 law reversed this priority and favored rela-*

tives over skilled individuals. First priority would now go to unmarried adult children of citizens, second priority to spouses of resident aliens, and third priority to exceptional and talented immigrants, with additional categories for more distant relatives and people with “needed” skills.

To get an idea of how this emphasis on relatives has worked out in practice, let’s look at the figures for two recent years. In 1985, out of a total of 570,000 legally admitted immigrants (270,000 quota and 300,000 non-quota), only 54,000 were admitted because of their skills, while 420,000 (73 percent of the total) were relatives. Of the 270,000 quota immigrants, 80 percent were relatives. In 1986, *less than four percent* of the 601,708 legal immigrants were granted entry on the basis of occupational skills, while kinship entrants amounted to 443,700, or 74 percent of the total. Relatives dominate both the quota and non-quota rolls, making it very hard for unrelated individuals to be admitted. As Scott McConnell wrote in the May 9, 1988 issue of *Fortune*:

What no legislator voting on the 1965 act envisioned was how quickly family reunification would produce chain immigration. Imagine one immigrant, say an engineering student, who was studying in the U.S. during the 1960s. If he found a job after graduation, he could then bring over his wife [as the spouse of a resident alien], and six years later, after being naturalized, his brothers and sisters [as siblings of a citizen]. They, in turn, could bring their wives, husbands, and children. Within a dozen years, one immigrant entering as a skilled worker could easily generate 25 visas for in-laws, nieces, and nephews.¹¹

This unintended result—virtually unlimited admittance of hundreds of thousands of relatives every year—was even more remarkable when we consider the scope of the actual problem that the family preference categories were meant to solve, that is, the separation of U.S. citizens and residents from their families. Critics of the bill made the point that there was a total of *only five or six thousand cases* of family separation; the number of Asian spouses of American citizens who were not able to get into the U.S. was only 507. Sam Ervin suggested that this lim-

ited number of cases could be handled by special measures short of changing the whole law: “[W]e could cure any such injustice without changing the status of all the countries of the earth.”¹² This suggestion was not followed. Instead, family preference categories were so emphasized that they not only came to dominate the immigration rolls, but continue to expand year after year, with no legal ceiling.

Beyond the obvious inequity, in a law advertised for its fairness, of favoring relatives to the virtual exclusion of all other applicants, the rhetoric of “individual worth” as applied to our immigration law is deceptive on a deeper level. “Worth,” *understood as the value that an immigrant is adding to the U.S.*, has little or nothing to do with a person’s qualification for citizenship. People apply, and if they have the right relatives, or if they fit in the quota and have applied early enough, and if they have no diseases or other disqualifying factors, they are admitted. Where is “worth” in all this? “Worth,” in the Madisonian sense of an immigrant’s contribution to the wealth and strength of the United States, is simply beside the point in our immigration policy, or is at best left to chance, since there is no *positive* value for our country being sought in our choice of immigrants (except for the tiny number admitted with “urgently needed skills”), but only the avoidance of a *negative* value, i.e., discrimination. We prove our moral worth to ourselves and the world by demonstrating compassion and eschewing any trace of national or racial discrimination. *That* is our immigration policy, and the idea of what is good for the people of the United States plays a very small part in it.*

* Canada and Australia, like the U.S., admit immigrants without regard to national origin, but, unlike the U.S., demonstrate some reasonable care for their national interest by favoring applicants on the basis of skills, education, investment capital and knowledge of English. It would seem that America, in placing compassion and equity above all other values, is incapable of even this modest degree of prudence.

A Voice in the Wilderness

But did the 1965 Act actually put an end to discrimination? Sam Ervin of North Carolina, co-chairman of the immigration subcommittee, thought not. In sharp distinction from his colleagues, who seemed ready to launch America into the unknown on the basis of idealistic dreams and falsified numbers, Ervin practiced the Confucian standard of leadership; he used words that corresponded with facts.

Senator Ervin argued that the bill did not eliminate discrimination, as its sponsors claimed, but only exchanged some types of discrimination for others. No matter how you arrange things, he said, you are still going to be discriminating against someone. For example, even under the new law the U.S. would still be discriminating against the hundreds of millions of people who wanted to come but couldn't. Further, said Ervin, "Instead of taking those we talk about when we get oratorical, the tired and the poor and the despised, we take the brilliant."¹³ Of course, this turned out not to be the case, since the law gave higher priority to relatives than to skilled persons. So Ervin should have said: "Instead of taking the tired and the poor, we take those with the right family connections." In any case, all kinds of unexpected forms of discrimination have developed under the 1965 law, yet even a token reform of these practices has become almost impossible because of pressure from groups which are benefiting the most—as the fate of the 1989 Kennedy-Simpson bill makes clear.

Specifically, Ervin contended that the bill did not eliminate national and racial discrimination from our immigration law, but only instituted a new form of discrimination against our traditional immigrant groups. This was a prophetic insight, considering the plight of today's Irish would-be immigrants, who have been effectively barred from the U.S. by countries like the Philippines and Korea monopolizing the quotas through use of the family preference system. In effect, we were replacing a sensible—though admittedly too restrictive—type of discrimination favoring our historic source nations and skilled persons, by a senseless type of discrimination favoring extended families from Third-World countries. Ervin defended

the idea of positive discrimination in favor of certain groups, namely the European peoples who had built America and created its civilization. We do not need to agree with that idea, nor with the restrictive national origins quota that the 1965 bill overturned, to appreciate the underlying principle of Ervin's argument: that our nation has the right to determine its own destiny, and therefore a right to select among prospective immigrants on that basis.

Ervin: That racial and national origin discrimination, I think, is a very important thing for us to pursue. . . . The fact that the McCarran-Walter Act gives a preference . . . to those ethnic groups I have mentioned [northern Europeans], is the objection to it, isn't it?

Secretary of State Rusk: Yes; as opposed to the others all over the world.

Ervin: Mr. Secretary . . . do you know of any people in the world that have contributed more to making America than those particular groups? . . . In other words, you take the English-speaking people, they gave us our language, they gave us our common law, they gave us a large part of our political philosophy. . . . The reason I say this bill is discriminatory against those people is because it puts them on exactly the same plane as the people of Ethiopia are put, where the people of Ethiopia have the same right to come to the United States under this bill as the people from England, the people of France, the people of Germany, the people of Holland, and I don't think . . . I don't know of any contributions that Ethiopia has made to the making of America.

The point I am making is, we discriminate every day in every phase of life, we make discriminations in law, we make them in our personal actions, we discriminate in our opinions . . . we discriminate by the girls we marry, choose one and object to the choice of another, or they object to us.

The only possible charge of discrimination in the McCarran-Walter Act is that it discriminates in favor of the people who made the greatest contribution to America, and this bill puts them on the same plane as everybody else on earth.

Finally:

I do not think you could draft an immigration bill in which you do not discriminate. I think discrimination is ordinarily the exercise of intelligence to make conscious choices. . . . we always discriminate, only the basis of it is different, each of us think[s] our own way is wise and right. . . . I think there is a rational basis and a reasonable basis to give a preference to Holland over Afghanistan, and I hope I am not entertaining a very iniquitous thought when I entertain that honest opinion.¹⁴

No Intention to Transform U.S. Culturally

It is clear that Sam Ervin's preference was to preserve, or at least not depart precipitously from, the existing cultural and ethnic character of the United States. But before we automatically dismiss Ervin as a southern reactionary, we ought to realize that the liberal supporters of the 1965 Act had much the same concerns. Senators and Administration officials repeatedly affirmed that they had no intention to transform the American people but only to bring procedural equity to our immigration law. How modest their expectations were can be seen by an illustration that Robert F. Kennedy gave during his testimony. Supposing, said Kennedy, that all the immigrants under the new law were Italians. That figure, about 166,000, would be less than one tenth of one percent of the 1965 U.S. population. (Note once again the use of the small quota number, 166,000, as though it represented the total number of immigrants.) Italians, said Kennedy, now comprise four percent of the population; by the year 2000 they would comprise six percent. *"Of course,"* Kennedy went on to say, *"S.500 would make no such radical changes. . . . But the extreme case should set to rest any fears that this bill will change the ethnic, political, or economic make-up of the United States."* Here we see the intentions of the lawmakers writ large in the words of one of the law's principal sponsors. In Robert Kennedy's mind, an increase in the size of a single European group from four percent of the population to six percent over a period of 35 years—a 50 percent in-

crease—would be a “radical” change, and he told the committee that *no such thing would happen*.¹⁵

A similar divorce from reality can be seen in the lawmakers’ approach to the question of Asian immigration. Starting in the late 19th century, Asians had been kept out of the U.S. by a series of Asian exclusion acts. The exclusion acts were replaced in 1943 by tiny quotas of about 100 per country. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 placed a ceiling of 2,000 on the entire Asia-Pacific area. Despite various exemptions such as refugee status, under which 119,677 immigrants had been admitted from China, Japan and the Philippines from 1953 to 1963, Asians were still virtually barred from the U.S. In addition, Asians were excluded by race, rather than by country of origin. For example, an ethnic Chinese residing in Latin America could not immigrate to the U.S. despite the lack of quota restrictions for the Western Hemisphere.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk told the subcommittee that the exclusion of Asians was damaging America’s relations with Asian countries. The Asians, Rusk said, “*were not complaining about numbers but about the principle [of total exclusion] which they considered discriminatory.*” Rusk assured the committee that the bill would not result in a massive Asian immigration. In the first five years under the new law, he expected only 5,000 Japanese to enter the U.S.; of the 166,000 worldwide annual total (once again, that misleading quota number), only 10%—16,000 immigrants—would come from the Asian-Pacific Triangle.¹⁶ Robert Kennedy’s estimate was even more conservative: he said that 5,000 Asian immigrants might come the first year (mainly family reunification cases), “after which immigration from that source would virtually disappear.”¹⁷ These low estimates made it easy for the senators to conclude that Asian immigration under the bill would not, in the words of Sen. Hiram Fong of Hawaii, “change the whole cultural pattern of the U.S.” Fong told Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz that under the bill the Asian population would never surpass *one percent* of the U.S. population. “I just want to make this point because the argument that the cultural pattern of the U.S. will change needs to be answered. Our cultural pattern will never be changed as far as America is concerned.”

Secretary Wirtz said, “Right.” Then he added, “It will become more cosmopolitan.” Senator Fong rejoined, “*It will become more cosmopolitan but still there is that fundamental adherence to European culture.*” To this, Secretary Wirtz agreed.¹⁸

It was on the basis of these calming assurances—that the number of Asian immigrants would be too small to change America’s cultural pattern or to remove its “fundamental adherence” to its European roots—that the Immigration Reform Act was passed. But what have been the actual results? Dean Rusk said there would be 16,000 Asian immigrants per year; by the mid-1980s, there were about 250,000 per year—one million Asians every four years. In 1960, the U.S. population of 190 million included 900,000 persons of Asian descent, less than one half of one percent. By 1980, there were 3.3 million Asians, or 1.5 percent of the total, an increase of over 200 percent in 20 years. Hiram Fong had said that the Asian population would never be more than one percent of the total; yet within 15 years of Fong’s prediction, that percentage had already been exceeded. According to one study,¹⁹ if legal immigration continues at mid-1980s rates (600,000 per year), then by 2000, the Asian population will reach 9.85 million, *triple* the 1980 figure and more than double the 1980 Asian percentage of the population (from 1.5 percent in 1980 to 3.5 percent in 2000); this adds up to a 600 percent increase in 35 years, an amazing figure in light of RFK’s pronouncement that a 50 percent increase in the size of one European group over 35 years would be “radical.” Of course, the concentration of Asians in a handful of states as well as their success in higher education and the professions have already made them a far more visible component in society than the current national figures would indicate. For example, Asians made up eight percent of California’s 1988 high school graduating class, yet because of a combination of academic achievement and racial quotas they filled 26 percent of the 1988 freshman class at the University of California at Berkeley; whites comprised 62 percent of the same state-wide high school class but only 39 percent of Berkeley’s freshman class.²⁰ In the New York region between 1980 and 2000 the Chinese population is expected to increase from 160,000 to 450,000; Filipinos from 55,000 to

170,000, Koreans from 40,000 to 162,000, and Indochinese from 7,700 to 43,000—in all, an increase from 262,700 to 825,000 in a mere twenty years.²¹ Thus, instead of the handful of family reunification cases foreseen by the 1965 legislators, we are witnessing the rapid Asianization of the cultural and intellectual centers of America.

A small irony is that with respect to the secretary of state's concerns about removing discrimination against Asians, such huge numbers were entirely unnecessary. Rusk himself said it was not *numbers* that mattered to the Asians, but eliminating the *principle* of racial exclusion, and he felt his projected figure of 16,000 Asian immigrants per year would fulfill that purpose. Yet we are now, in 1990, admitting over *fifteen times* that number. Let us suppose that Dean Rusk had told the Congress in 1965 that in order to improve our relations with the emerging peoples of Asia, the U.S. had to admit, in perpetuity, 250,000 Asians per year. Whether Congress would have passed such a bill is a question I leave to the reader's imagination.

America's Destiny Revealed

To grasp the full demographic impact of the post-1965 immigration, we need to look several decades into the future. Demographer Leon Bouvier, formerly of the U.S. Congress Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, has made detailed projections, based on several possible rates of immigration and fertility, of the changes in U.S. ethnic make-up between the years 1990 and 2050.²² If the U.S. receives 750,000 immigrants per year including illegals (a very conservative estimate), with fertility rates of all ethnic groups converging at a rate of 1.8 in the year 2050 (also a conservative assumption), then Bouvier projects the ethnic distribution of the American population for the years 2020 and 2050 as shown in the first table.

	1990	2020	2050
White non-Hispanic	75.9 %	64.8%	53.8%
Black	12.2	13.2	13.5
Hispanic	8.7	15.4	22.8
Asian and Other*	3.1	6.7	9.6
Total U.S. population (millions)	253	318	355

Hispanics, having increased from 15 million in 1980 to 22 million in 1990, will increase to 81 million in 2050; Asians and others having increased from 4.5 million in 1980 to 8 million in 1990 will grow to 34 million in 2050. Whites will be just over half of the total U.S. population.

At a higher (and more likely) annual immigration rate of one and a half million, with fertility rates converging in the year 2050 at a rate of 2.2, Bouvier's projections are as follows:

	1990	2020	2050
White non-Hispanic	75.9 %	61.1%	48.9%
Black	12.2	12.4	11.8
Hispanic	8.7	17.5	25.6
Asian and Other	3.1	9.0	13.6
Total U.S. population (millions)	253	355	464

In numbers, Hispanics will increase to *119 million* in 2050; Asians will increase to *63 million* in 2050. Whites will have become an absolute minority. Meanwhile, the total U.S. population will reach 464 million persons—a figure that implies horrendous overcrowding and drastic deterioration in the quality of life in many parts of the country, not to mention the effects on the environment.

* Includes Pacific Islanders and American Indians.

As already indicated, the regional impact of immigration is not evenly distributed; two-thirds of all legal new arrivals are concentrating in only five states: California, New York, Texas, Florida and Illinois. This means that America's most powerful and culturally influential regions will have substantial non-white majorities early in the coming century. According to an earlier study by Bouvier,²³ assuming one million new arrivals per year, of whom 23 percent settle in California, non-Hispanic whites in California will become a minority shortly after the year 2000. By the year 2080, the change in the proportions of the four main groups in California will be as follows:

	1980	2080
White non-Hispanic	66.4%	28.8%
Black	7.7	4.9
Hispanic	19.2	41.4
Asian and Other	6.6	25.0

The total population of California, a state already beginning to choke in its own congestion, will have grown *from 24 million to 56 million*, an increase largely driven by immigration and the higher birthrates of the immigrant groups. New York State, receiving the second greatest number of immigrants, will change as follows:

	1980	2080
White non-Hispanic	74.4%	39.5%
Black	13.7	31.8
Hispanic	9.4	15.4
Asian and Other	2.4	13.3

Another way to understand how America will change, says Bouvier, is to look at immigrants and their descendants as a proportion of the population. In 1980, 27 percent of the U.S. population consisted of post-1880 immigrants and their descendants. Based on the conservative, one-million per year projections for the next century, 36.8 percent of the 2080 population will be post-1880 immigrants and their descendants. The pre-1880 population from northern Europe—the original racial and cultural

base of the U.S.—will have become a vanishing minority. In the next section we will consider some of the effects this demographic revolution is likely to have on America's cultural identity.

II.

The Meaning of Multiculturalism

If someone had told me as a boy: One day you will see your nation vanish from the world, I would have considered it nonsense, something I couldn't possibly imagine. A man knows he is mortal, but he takes it for granted that his nation possesses a kind of eternal life.

Milan Kundera,
*The Book of Laughter
and Forgetting*

In the quest to become a true world nation . . . the United States must break away from its European roots and begin treating Asian history and culture equally with those of the West.

Kotkin and Kishimoto,
The Third Century

They will take the city and the characters of men, as they might a tablet, and first wipe it clean—no easy task.

Plato,
The Republic, Book VI

We have seen that the legislators who passed the 1965 reform had no intention of changing the “ethnic, political or economic make-up of the U.S.” When Hiram Fong asserted that under the new law “the cultural pattern of the U.S. will never be changed,” no one challenged him and said that the

U.S. must become a multicultural country. Clearly, there was an expectation *that the new immigrants would only augment the cosmopolitan mix of minorities in our predominantly white society*; clearly, there was a consensus that the United States had the intention, as well as the *right*, to preserve its “cultural pattern.” Yet today both liberals and conservatives speak the language of cultural diversity, and they seem to look forward with complacency, even eagerness, to the prospect of the U.S. becoming a white-minority country during the coming century. Today, it is unimaginable that any politician, unless he were planning instant retirement, would speak about “preserving the ethnic make-up of the U.S.” What happened to bring about such a reversal in our national consensus since 1965?

In one sense, this revolution can be seen as but the latest stage in the triumph of the philosophical and cultural relativism that has characterized modern thought. “In twentieth-century social science,” Allan Bloom writes in *The Closing of the American Mind*, “the common good disappears and along with it the negative view of minorities. The very idea of majority—now understood to be selfish interest—is done away with in order to protect the minorities . . . and the protection of them emerges as the central function of government.”²⁴ Certainly, this evolving attitude toward minorities has served as a rationale for the large-scale immigration of previously excluded groups; but I would add that the evolving attitude toward minorities is also, in its present, radical form, a *product* of the post-1965 immigration.

The 1965 Act had revolutionary implications that no one, except for a handful of conservative critics like Sam Ervin, understood at the time. The legislators did not see that by extending the principles of equal rights and family reunification—with its unanticipated effect of chain migration—to every country on earth, and by failing to assert any balancing principle of the common good or national self-interest (and reasonable discrimination based on that national interest, as exercised by every other country on earth), they were opening the door to mass Third-World immigration. As a result, when the nation unexpectedly found itself by the mid to late 1970s experiencing unprecedented diversity, it had no remaining legitimate princi-

ple—having abandoned traditional notions of self-interest—except for universal equality and humanitarianism; it therefore had no choice but to turn around and endorse diversity *as an end in itself*. Faced with the seemingly irreversible fact of multiracial change, we gave ourselves a new national myth of diversity to accommodate ourselves to that fact.

Almost overnight, without debate or public awareness of what was happening, mainstream opinion adopted a radical new credo. “We must respect all cultures equally,” “All cultures are equally enriching,” “America’s strength lies in its diversity”—these slogans have become articles of our national faith, without anyone’s thinking too clearly about what they really mean. There is an enormous difference between accommodating ourselves to diversity by saying that the diversity exists, that it presents certain challenges to a liberal order, but that we must deal with it as best we can, and saying that diversity is *the highest good*, to be pursued as an end in itself. The former position leads to a realistic response to the actual circumstances in which we find ourselves; the latter to a search for utopia. Unfortunately, it is the utopian way of thinking that has become dominant. Thus we keep hearing the strange idea that our nation can become “strong” in the pursuit of unlimited diversity. Two thousand years ago, the historian Polybius voiced the traditional wisdom, that “every state relies for its preservation on two fundamental qualities, namely bravery in the face of the enemy, and harmony among its citizens.”²⁵ By contrast, today’s progressives seem to believe that the state relies for its preservation on unconditional accommodation to foreigners and maximum diversity among its citizens. They seem to think that since a moderate degree of ethnic diversity (mainly among European peoples along with a black minority) has been by and large a good thing for America, therefore, an *unlimited* amount of diversity (among all the peoples of the earth) must be *even better*—which is like saying that since a few glasses of water a day will keep you healthy, a hundred gallons a day will make you a superman.

The myth of unlimited diversity tells us that the mass influx from Latin America and Asia represents, not a departure from our history, but its *fulfillment*. “Nor is this [demographic and

cultural] transformation contrary to American tradition,” write Joel Kotkin and Yoriko Kishimoto. “Throughout our history, America’s racial and cultural identity has been in constant flux, reacting to each new wave of immigration. Today’s immigration, primarily from Asia and Latin America, continues that pattern. . . . From its earliest days, the U.S. has always been something of a ‘world nation.’”²⁶ In the same vein, James Fallows of the *Atlantic* assures us: “The glory of American society is its melding of many peoples.”²⁷ What is neatly obscured by these soothing clichés is the fact that until only two decades ago that “world nation,” those “many peoples,” were almost exclusively *European*. A revolutionary mass immigration from every race and nation on earth is thus portrayed (and sanctified) as a mere continuance of an established tradition.

The question needs to be asked: Is America’s entire three hundred and fifty year history up to 1965, during which it drew its people and its civilizational roots predominantly from England and Europe, *totally irrelevant* to a definition of our national character? The multiculturalists say yes. In the words of former California Supreme Court Justice Cruz Reynoso: “America is a *political* union—not a cultural, linguistic, religious or racial union.” Now, while there is some truth in this statement, can it not be carried to extremes? Mr. Reynoso seems to be saying that the United States is nothing but a blank slate—a sort of political abstraction lacking any cultural identity that has a right to be preserved. Since, for example, we are not a “linguistic” union, the English language has no special status; we could turn into a Japanese or Spanish-speaking society tomorrow and, according to Mr. Reynoso, this would in no way change America’s essential character, since, in his view, America *has* no essential character.

The New Cultural Revolution

Among its many sinister potentialities, the myth of a totally open, undefined America provides a sanction for the widening attack on Western culture in our schools. I have written elsewhere about the most recent manifestation of this movement, a

“multicultural” curriculum plan proposed by the New York State Commissioner of Education. The report, entitled “A Curriculum of Inclusion,” opens with the declaration that “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.”²⁸ This oppression consists in the fact that a “systematic bias toward European culture and its derivatives” has “a terribly damaging effect on the psyche of young people of African, Asian, Latino, and Native American descent.” The proposed solution is a totally restructured curriculum for the state’s public schools, in which the “history, achievements, aspirations and concerns of people of all cultures [shall be] made an integral part of all curricula.” What the report’s authors have in mind is not merely greater treatment of the historical experiences of America’s ethnic minorities, since such inclusion, no matter how extensive, “cannot counteract deeply rooted racist traditions in American culture . . . [nor] reverse long established and entrenched policies and practices of that dominant culture.” Rather, children will be taught that all cultures are to be “equally valued”; that the contributions of the American Indian, African, Hispanic (and even *Asian!*) cultures are as important to our civilization’s heritage as the Anglo-Saxon and European contribution. What this “equality” really means is that whites and the West must be consistently vilified. Thus the report recommends that the Age of Exploration shall be portrayed with a view to “negative values and policies that produced aggressive individuals and nations that were ready to ‘discover, invade and conquer’ foreign land because of greed, racism and national egoism.” Meanwhile, the history of African Americans must be presented “so that the heroic struggle for equity waged by African Americans can be an inspiration to all.” Similarly, blacks during the American Revolution were fighting “strictly for freedom,” while whites were only fighting to “protect their economic interests.” My article continues:

But not to worry. To this proposal to divide up the entire student population, every school subject and every idea into official “cultural” designations—with each culture striving for its own piece of the curricular pie—the report has added a reassuring caveat: “Aspects of cooperation and amicability among all cultures should be stressed over conflict and violence.”

But one searches in vain for any sign of amicability in a document that is based on a race-oppression model of intellectual life. “The curriculum in the education systems reflects . . . deep-seated pathologies of racial hatred. . . . Because of the depth of the problem and the tenacity of its hold on the mind, *only the most stringent measures can have significant impact.*” Doesn’t sound very amicable to me. But how could it be otherwise? Since “European American” culture is *by definition* exclusive and oppressive, it obviously cannot co-exist with the oppressed cultures that seek equality with it until it has been stripped of its hypocritical pretensions to universality and legitimacy—i.e., until, as a national culture, it has ceased to exist.

At this point, two questions may have arisen in the reader’s mind: how can the ravings of an extremist clique in New York State represent a threat to civilization, and what, if anything, does this cultural radicalism have to do with *immigration*? Both questions need to be addressed.

First of all, it is understandable that people should not want to take declarations like “A Curriculum of Inclusion” seriously. As philosophy professor Thomas Short of Kenyon College has written, this is a typical response to the cultural diversity movement.

It is a remarkable symptom of the present extraordinary situation in higher education that one segment of the academic community regards such views, so far as they are acquainted with them at all, as sheerest nonsense, and refuses to believe that anyone, least of all any of their colleagues, could take that nonsense seriously, or that it will be taken seriously long enough or by enough people to pose a real threat, while another rapidly growing segment is busily elaborating these ideas and teaching them to their students.²⁹

Far from being a mere fringe movement, the diversity agenda, as education historian Diane Ravitch has written, is spreading like wildfire through the education system. State educational departments, university faculties, elected officials, minority groups and mainstream media have all jumped on the diversity bandwagon, while its opponents within the academy are a besieged and intimidated minority.

On the arts front, the multicultural agenda has been adopted by the chief sources of arts funding in the U.S.: the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. According to Samuel Lipman writing in the May 1990 *Commentary*, these establishment organizations intend to “downgrade and even eliminate support for art based on traditional European sources, and instead will encourage activity by certain approved minorities in the United States and abroad”—the approval being based, of course, on the minorities’ oppressed history and status.

A clue to the deeper implications of the cultural diversity movement can be found in a recent essay by communications professor Neil Postman of New York University. Postman speaks of the “stories, narratives, tales, theories” that serve as moral and intellectual frameworks for individuals and societies.

Human beings require stories to give meaning to the facts of their existence. I am not talking here about those specialized stories that we call novels, plays, and epic poems. I am talking about the more profound stories that people, nations, religions, and disciplines unfold in order to make sense out of the world. For example, ever since we can remember, all of us have been telling ourselves stories about ourselves, composing life-giving autobiographies of which we are the heroes and heroines. . . .

Nations, as well as people, require stories and may die for lack of a believable one. In America we have told ourselves for two hundred years that our experiment in government is part of God’s own plan. That has been a marvelous story, and it accounts for much of the success America has had.³⁰

Over a century ago, the French historian Ernest Renan touched on the same idea. Nationhood, Renan tells us, is not a matter of ethnicity (what he calls “race”), nor of religion, nor of the physical and psychological effects of geography and soil.

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things . . . constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the common possession of a rich legacy of memories; the other is the present consensus, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage that has been received undivided. . . . To have shared glories in the past, a common will in the present, to have done great things together, to want to do them still, these are the essential conditions of a people.³¹

In other words, it is the story shared, from generation to generation, *and the will to continue sharing it*, that makes a people. It is not the ethnic tie in itself that matters, but the will to go on sharing the national idea—an insight that makes Renan’s thought particularly relevant to Americans. *The Columbia History of the World* speaks eloquently of the importance of such a common heritage:

“History” means the conscious and intentional remembrance of things past, in a living tradition transmitted from one generation to another. For this there must be some continuous organization, be it the family of the chieftain in the beginning, or the school today, which has reason to care for the Past of the group and has the capacity for transmitting the historical tradition to future generations. History exists only in a persisting society which needs history to persist.³²

Here we have a key to the fateful significance of the diversity movement. The American people have had a “story” which, despite gradual modifications over the past two centuries, has provided them with a coherent sense of who they are and what their place in history is. Multiculturalism should be understood as an attempt, undertaken in our own schools, to tear down, discredit and destroy the shared story that has made us a

people and impose on us a different story which tells us our civilization and past history are essentially evil. The goal, to put it brutally, is the creation of compliant citizens of a new social order, whose feelings toward the pre-1965 America and its heroes (to the extent they know anything about them at all) will be contempt, guilt or indifference.

As for the other problem mentioned above, the connection between multiculturalism and immigration, it is important to understand that the cultural reformers openly describe their movement as a response to the nation's changing ethnic make-up. In a speech given in October 1989, the godfather of "A Curriculum of Inclusion," New York State Education Commissioner Thomas Sobol, had this to say:

We are becoming a different people. Our country is becoming more ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse. By the year 2000, one out of every three New Yorkers will be an ethnic minority. By the year 2020, one of every two New Yorkers will be an ethnic minority. In New York City today, one child in every four is the offspring of a non-English speaking parent.

Unfortunately, we are not dealing well with this diversity. . . . The old idea was that it didn't matter where you came from, that what mattered was being an American. Decent people didn't talk about race. This was to be truly a new world. The purpose of the schools was the promotion of assimilation, implanting in children the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, law, order and popular government, and awakening in them a reverence for our institutions. This prevented the U.S. from becoming an ethnically Balkanized nation. *The assimilationist ideal worked for ethnic peoples who were white but is not working nearly as well for ethnic peoples of color.* Replacing the old, assimilationist view is a competing ethic—cultural pluralism. *Today we must accommodate not only a diversity of origins but a diversity of views.* [Emphases added.]³³

In making this remarkable admission, that it is the race and ethnicity of the new immigrants, in combination with their numbers, that is forcing us to abandon the assimilationist ideal, Mr. Sobol seems unaware that he is calling for the very Bal-

kanization which, he acknowledges, the old assimilationism *prevented*. The diversity of views that the American people are now called upon to accommodate really means a diversity of cultural identities, stories and value systems which are self-defined as being adversarial to America's historic culture. The irony is that while the multiculturalists fully acknowledge the importance of rapid ethnic change in legitimizing this revolution, those who would defend Western culture have been loath to make that connection, out of fear of being called racist or of admitting that liberal progressivism—including open immigration—must have rational limits.

The absence of rationality, even the contemptuous dismissal of it as a Western bias, is characteristic of the multiculturalist agenda. In a proposal for a huge expansion of bilingual education, the New York State Regents approvingly quote this messianic passage by writer Vincent Harding:

Now, some of us who have been here for thousands of years, as well as some of us who came from Europe and from Asia, from Mexico and India, from Puerto Rico and the wide ranges of Latin America, may join with those children of Africa in the United States . . . together we may stand in the river, transformed and transforming, listening to its laughter and burning with its tears, recognizing in that ancient flow the indelible marks of human blood, yet grounded and buoyed by hope, courage and unfathomable, amazing grace. Keeping the faith, creating new faith, we may enter the terrible and magnificent struggle for the re-creation of America.³⁴

Note how in this fantasy all cultures (including the European, which is now just one minority culture among others) are thrown violently together, mystically transformed. One would hardly know that the United States had ever had a distinct polity and society related to Western civilization. All that is now to be cast aside in a Dionysian trance.

Does American Culture Have a Core?

That establishment institutions could approve these visions of cultural suicide shows how profoundly the rhetoric of diversity has already altered our understanding of ourselves as a nation. Indeed, the exclusive emphasis on our diversity in recent years seems to have blinded us to the principles of our *commonality*. To help restore a more balanced perspective, we turn to sociologist Milton M. Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life*. A liberal mainstream view of assimilation written on the very eve of the 1965 immigration reforms, Gordon's study provides a much-needed counterpoise to the Orwellian myth of diversity that has arisen in the years since those reforms.

Gordon examines the three main theories of assimilation—Anglo conformity, the Melting Pot and cultural pluralism—and he concludes that *cultural assimilation along Anglo-conformity lines is the most important thread in the historic pattern of assimilation*. But cultural assimilation is only one part of the picture; the other is what Gordon calls “structural” assimilation. Cultural assimilation, in an Anglo-conformity context, is the adoption by an ethnic group of the habits, mores, behavior models and values of the “core” white Protestant culture and the partial or complete abandonment of the ethnic group's old cultural identity; structural assimilation is a social blending at the level of primary associations such as family, church, community, clubs and so on.

Of course, today's pluralists, both radical and mainstream, dismiss the very idea of a core culture into which immigrants assimilate; the reputed core, they say, is nothing but the product of successive immigrations. Much depends on how we understand this issue. Does America have a more-or-less persisting historical identity, or is it, as the pluralists insist, a blank slate—to be wiped off and written over afresh by each new generation? What Gordon has to say on this matter is illuminating:

In suggesting the answer to this question, I must once again point to the distinction between the impact of the members of minority groups as individuals making their various contributions to agriculture, industry, the arts, and science in the context of the Anglo-Saxon version (as modified by peculiarly American factors) of the combination of Hebraic,

Christian, and Classical influences which constitutes Western civilization, and the specific impact on the American culture of the minority cultures themselves. The impact of individuals has been so considerable that it is impossible to conceive of what American society or American life would have been like without it. The impact of minority group culture has been of modest dimensions, I would argue, in most areas, and significantly extensive in only one—the area of institutional religion. From a nation overwhelmingly and characteristically Protestant in the late eighteenth century, America has become a national entity of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. . . . For the rest, there have been minor modifications in cuisine, recreational patterns, place names, speech, residential architecture, sources of artistic inspiration, and perhaps a few other areas—*all of which add flavor and piquancy to the totality of the American culture configuration but have scarcely obscured its essential English outlines and content.*

Over the generations, then, the triumph of acculturation in America has been, if not complete, at least numerically and functionally overwhelming. It is with regard to [structural assimilation] that the assimilation process has refused to take the path which the Anglo-conformists, at least by implication, laid out for it. . . . [The picture is of] an American society in which each racial and religious (and to a lesser extent, national origins) group has its own network of cliques, clubs, organizations, and institutions which tend to confine the primary group contacts of its members within the ethnic enclave, while interethnic contacts take place in considerable part only at the secondary group level of employment and the political and civic processes. . . . *To understand, then, that acculturation without massive structural intermingling at primary group levels has been the dominant motif in the American experience of creating and developing a nation out of diverse peoples is to comprehend the most essential sociological fact of that experience.* [Emphases added.]³⁵

The key idea, which I cannot stress too strongly, is Gordon's distinction between structural pluralism and cultural pluralism—a distinction that Americans quite understandably have failed to grasp, since the historic diversity of *ethnicity and*

community in America can be easily confused with the altogether different concept of *cultural* diversity.

In his analysis of the second model of assimilation, the Melting Pot, Gordon continues to stress the importance of Anglo-conformity. In its fullest articulation, the Melting Pot signified an amalgamation of all the European groups through intermarriage, and a consequent blending of all their cultural forms into *a completely new form*. This, says Gordon, has not occurred; “what has actually taken place has been more of transforming of the later immigrants’ specific cultural contributions into the Anglo-Saxon mould.”³⁶ Gordon quotes theologian Will Herberg:

The enthusiasts of the ‘melting pot’ . . . were wrong . . . in regard to the cultural aspect of the assimilative process. They looked forward to a genuine blending of cultures, to which every ethnic strain would make its own contribution and out of which would emerge a new cultural synthesis, no more English than German or Italian and yet in some sense transcending and embracing them all. In certain respects, this has indeed become the case: our American cuisine includes antipasto and spaghetti, frankfurters and pumpernickel, filet mignon and french fried potatoes, borsch, sour cream, and gefüllte fish, on a perfect equality with fried chicken, ham and eggs, and pork and beans. But it would be a mistake to infer from this that the American’s image of himself—and that means the ethnic group member’s image of himself as he becomes American—is a composite or synthesis of the ethnic elements that have gone into the making of the American. It is nothing of the kind: The American’s image of himself is still the Anglo-American ideal it was at the beginning of our independent existence. The “national type” as ideal has always been, and remains, pretty well fixed. It is the *Mayflower*, John Smith, Davy Crockett, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln that define the American’s self-image, and this is true whether the American in question is a descendant of the Pilgrims or the grandson of an immigrant from southeastern Europe.³⁷

If this last remark sounds quaint today, that only proves the extent to which we have lost, in the space of a few decades, the

myths (and the political and moral principles those myths represent) that helped make us a nation. Anyone whose personal memory extends back before 1970 or 1960 will acknowledge the truth of Herberg's observation.

Finally, returning to Gordon's analysis, there is cultural pluralism, the vision of a society in which each ethnic group fully maintains its cultural as well as its structural identity. Horace Kallen compared the pluralistic society to an orchestra, in which "the different instruments, each with its own characteristic timbre and theme, contribute distinct and recognizable parts to the composition. . . ." The various groups would have the same relation that "the Constitution establishes between the States of the Union."³⁸ Despite these attractive sentiments, says Gordon, Kallen failed to show "the specific nature of the communication and interaction which is to exist between the various ethnic communities and between the individuals who compose them in the 'ideal' cultural pluralistic society. . . ."³⁹ (We might add that this incoherency still marks the pluralistic slogans of the 1980s.) Gordon concludes that cultural pluralism is only a *rhetorical ideal* and not a description of, nor serious proposal for, the organization of society. The historical actuality has been "the maintenance of the structurally separate subsocieties of the three major religious and the racial and quasi racial groups, and even vestiges of the nationality groupings, along with a massive trend toward acculturation of all groups—particularly their native-born—to American culture patterns. In our view, then, a more accurate term for the American situation is *structural pluralism* rather than cultural pluralism, although some of the latter also remains."⁴⁰

Two conclusions emerge from Gordon's analysis that will seem heretical in today's climate. The first is that the United States has always been an Anglo-Saxon civilization; the successive waves of immigrants became Americans *in the very act of adopting that civilization* (even after people of Anglo-Saxon descent had started to become a minority). The second conclusion, a corollary of the first, is that the cultural diversity myth is historically and conceptually vacuous. As currently used, stock phrases like "This country was built by diversity" and "All cultures are of equal value to our society"

imply that America has been primarily built, not by individuals from various backgrounds making their contributions *as individuals* to an existing if gradually modified American culture, but by *minority cultures as such*, all joining together in some kind of “equal” mix. As Gordon has shown, this opinion is mistaken. Yet the entire rhetoric of pluralism is based on it. The same goes for the current notion that throughout our history there has been a “constant flux” in America’s cultural identity. “The Ministry of Truth says that American culture was always in flux, which is true,” comments writer John Ney, “but the Ministry does not add that *the flux was contained within a general form.*”⁴¹ [emphasis added]. We should remember, when we hear conservatives as well as liberals saying that diversity is the very essence of this country, that they are embracing a dangerously one-sided view of our history; by disregarding the central importance in the American experience of assimilation to Anglo-American cultural forms, they are, whether they realize it or not, sanctioning any and all demands made in the name of diversity.

A key to this confusion can be found in Thomas Sobol’s comment, quoted earlier, that “Today we must accommodate not only a diversity of origins but a diversity of views.” As we have said, there is little awareness of the fact that “diversity” has these two quite distinct meanings. When most Americans say, “We must respect diversity,” they are really thinking of a diversity of *people*, i.e., the assimilation of people of different national and ethnic backgrounds into a shared American culture. But what the cultural radicals and their mainstream apologists mean by diversity is a diversity of “*views.*” What this signifies is not simply the historical experiences and contributions of various ethnic groups in this country (an interesting area of study which, as we have seen, the radicals reject because it leaves America’s national culture in place), nor simply an appreciation of the variety of ethnic manners, tastes and talents; it means the legitimization and official sponsorship of entirely different, even *incommensurable* concepts of cultural identity, civilizational norms and history.* In

* From this perspective, there would be no apparent reason why the U.S. should not, for example, welcome millions of Iranian Shi’ites as immigrants, since “diversity of views” is a positive good in itself—the more, the better!

other words, it is no longer through knowledge and love of a common heritage that we come to enjoy a viable unity as a people, but rather, as Thomas Sobol has declared (after giving lip service to the importance of Western culture), it is “*only* through understanding our diverse roots and branches . . . *only* by accommodating our differences . . . *only* by exploring our human variations” that we can “become one society.”⁴² [emphases added]. To paraphrase the 1920s critic Irving Babbitt, the difference between the two doctrines described above is of a primary nature and so not subject to mediation. Between the view that unity is achieved by a primary emphasis on our diversity and the view that unity is achieved through a primary emphasis on our cultural commonality, the opposition is one of first principles.⁴³ In any case, the present discussion ought to warn us against these careless testimonials to diversity; we should realize that by prefacing every comment on this subject with obligatory phrases like “We must respect different cultures,” etc., we have already granted the cultural radicals their major premise. Perhaps more than any other factor, it is this imprecision of thought and speech, by liberals and conservatives alike, that has made an ideological time bomb like “A Curriculum of Inclusion” possible.

Beyond these considerations, Gordon’s and Herberg’s insights begin to fill the void in our self-knowledge that has been created by the propaganda and bad education of recent years; they help restore an almost vanished memory of the cultural roots we as Americans share in common—whatever our ancestry may be. In the words of Hungarian-born historian John Lukacs:

This writer, an historian, has no Anglo-Saxon blood in his veins, and he professes no blind admiration for some mythical virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race and its peoples. He must, however, insist on the obvious matter . . . that the English-speaking character of the United States must not be taken for granted. . . . The still extant freedoms of Americans—of all Americans—are inseparable from their English-speaking roots. . . . the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution—and the consequent prosperity and relative stability of the country flowing therefrom—were not abstract liberties but English liberties, dependent on practical as well as sentimental attachments and habits of English laws.⁴⁴

To avoid being too abstract ourselves, it might be useful to try to specify these Anglo-American liberties and traditions to which Lukacs refers. A few examples come to mind:

- The remarkable degree of freedom from external controls—made possible by the Protestant ideal of moral autonomy and self-restraint. Even Michael Novak, a Catholic critic of the WASP “monoculture,” acknowledges the supreme importance of this value in American life. “America is a Protestant country,” he writes. “Its lack of external restraints is one of the blessings for which Catholics are genuinely grateful.”⁴⁵

- The habits of self-reliance and local government, which, as *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming writes, “are largely absent from Eastern Europe, as they have been largely absent from Western European countries, including Sweden.”⁴⁶

- The belief in natural rights, deriving from the classic liberalism of Locke and the Declaration of Independence. The traditional view, says Allan Bloom, is that it is the belief in natural rights that makes one an American:

The old view was that, by recognizing and accepting man’s natural rights, men found a fundamental basis of unity and sameness. Class, race, religion, national origin or culture all disappear or become dim when bathed in the light of natural rights, which give men common interests and make them truly brothers. The immigrant had to put behind him the claims of the Old World in favor of a new and easily acquired education. This did not necessarily mean abandoning old daily habits or religions, but it did mean subordinating them to new principles.⁴⁷

By contrast, the current view, that cultural diversity (and therefore group rights) is the very essence of America, undermines the shared faith in individual rights that historically has been the basis of assimilation and common citizenship.

- The common law tradition and due process of law.
- The principle against self-incrimination. It is no coincidence that the U.S. and Canada are virtually the only countries in the Americas with clean records on judicial torture.
- The tradition of the loyal opposition and the right to dissent, which stands in such sharp contrast to the power-group war-

fare that obtains in African, Asian and Arab societies. Lawrence Harrison, a close observer of Latin America, has pointed out that Latin Americans have no apt word for the idea of dissent; disagreement with the powers that be is seen as treason or heresy.⁴⁸

- Freedom of speech and the appeal to reason in public discourse. Even the emerging capitalist nations of Asia, such as Singapore, have little understanding of freedom of speech.

- The traditions of honesty and fair dealing. The sense of fair play.

- The high degree of trust and social cooperation made possible by the above, especially as compared with the expectation of dishonesty—and the mistrust of those beyond the family circle—that obtains in Latin American societies.⁴⁹

- And finally, as the result of high moral standards, cooperativeness, trust and freedom—America's extraordinarily rich tradition of voluntary associations and institutions, ranging from pioneer communities to churches to business enterprises to philanthropies to political and scientific societies, operating within the law but otherwise free of the state. In particular, the liberal university that embodies the ideal of the pursuit of truth. (Ironically, *veritas*—truth—is the motto of Harvard University, where professors and students are now being pressured to avoid discussing any idea that may be construed to offend specially designated ethnic groups—a further indication that the official pursuit of cultural diversity is incompatible with a liberal social order.)

As I hope these few examples may suggest, the *facts* of our Anglo-American common heritage should have a far deeper resonance in the American mind than the bromides of cultural pluralism that now fill the air. Yes, there have been modest alterations in the national culture due to minority group influence, as Milton Gordon acknowledges; but that does not alter the main insight that this country has a persisting, historically defined culture into which its immigrants and ethnic minorities—*notwithstanding their enduring structural affiliations*—have traditionally assimilated* And here we come to the most sig-

* The truth of this statement can be verified in the life of every one of us who has experienced friendship—or simply a sense of common citizenship—with people of different ethnic backgrounds from our own. It is

nificant fact of our recent cultural/ethnic history: It is only since the 1960s, with the great increase in the numbers of people from non-European backgrounds, that the battle cry of cultural relativism has become ideologically dominant. In demanding that non-European cultures, as cultures, be given the same importance as the European-American national culture, the multiculturalists are declaring that the non-European groups are unable or unwilling to assimilate as European immigrants have in the past, and that for the sake of these non-assimilating groups American society must be radically transformed. This ethnically and racially based rejection of the common American culture should lead thoughtful Americans to re-evaluate some contemporary assumptions about ethnicity and assimilation.

The Problem of Cultural Identity

The history of assimilation has not been, as our mythology now tells us, a simple, glorious progress. Each wave of immigrants, especially the “new” immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, brought dislocation and conflict as well as new vitality; loss as well as gain. But the important thing was that the “new” immigrants still had much in common with the earlier Americans; the fact that they were of European descent and came from related cultures within Western civilization made it relatively easy for them to assimilate into the common sphere of civic habits and cultural identity that Milton Gordon has described. Americans thus remained a *people*—though obviously not (because of persisting ethnic distinctions) in the same sense that the Japanese, the English or even the French are a people, The relative degree of similarity helped make it possible to stretch America’s cultural fabric without ripping it. For example, it was eastern and southern European immigrants—men like Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Frederick Loewe, Samuel Goldwyn, Louis B. Mayer, Frank Capra, Ernst Lubitsch,

our common ethos and identity as Americans (appreciating but leaving in the background the differences of ethnicity) that make us feel we are one people—not, as Thomas Sobol absurdly imagines, a primary emphasis on our *differences* that makes us one.

Billy Wilder, Michael Curtiz, Ben Hecht—who gave us many of the songs, plays and movies that are our twentieth century popular classics; who, in fact, created Hollywood. There was no insurmountable obstacle preventing these individuals from identifying with, and giving artistic expression to, the Anglo-American archetypes of our common culture; they so deeply identified with the American ideal that they created new and powerful forms of that ideal.

But it is not immediately apparent that people from radically diverse backgrounds and cultural identities—a Central American *indio*, a Cambodian peasant, a Shi'ite Muslim—can feel the same sort of ready identification with American myths and ideal figures. David M. Hwang, author of the racial morality play “M. Butterfly,” pinpoints the psychological dimension of this problem: “Growing up as a person of color, you’re always ambivalent to a certain degree about your own ethnicity. You think it’s great, but there is necessarily a certain amount of self-hatred or confusion at least, which results from the fact that there’s a role model in this society which is basically a Caucasian man, and you don’t measure up to that.”⁵⁰

To the extent that David Hwang’s views on the wounded self-image of racial minorities in predominantly white America are representative (and such views have indeed become commonplace), he may have pointed out a human dilemma that the ideal of cultural assimilation can no longer fully obscure. Generally speaking, human beings most readily identify and feel comfortable with people (and cultural figures) similar to themselves, a fact that explains the successful assimilation of European immigrants into Anglo-American culture. It follows that if the new Americans from Asia and the Third World are to feel truly comfortable as Americans (and if white Americans are to be cured of their own race-consciousness and not experience the massively increasing numbers of Asians and other minorities as a disturbingly alien presence in this society), then America’s role model, its ideal figures and unifying myths, must change, diversify, embrace all the races, ethnic types and cultures on earth. This implies a metamorphosis in our art, our drama, our popular entertainment, our literature, our teaching of history—a mutation of our very identity as a people. And the force

that creates the irresistible demand for this cultural change is—it must be emphasized again—the sea-change in America’s ethnic and racial character. In David Hwang’s words: “Sophisticated American whites realize their group is in the process of changing from an outright majority to just a plurality in the U.S., and are beginning to be ready to hear what the rest of us think”—i.e., admit Asian values, images and cultural idiom into the heart of American culture.⁵¹ Paradoxically, while he admits that “M. Butterfly” is anti-Western, Hwang insists: “But it’s very pro-American, too.” Translation: Hwang is “pro” a future, *multicultural* America—an America that has become “good” by surrendering its historic identity.

Ironically, even as the new pluralism is transforming America’s cultural landscape, there has been a sort of sentimental persistence of the old assimilationist ideal, updated to include all the peoples of the world and not just those of Europe, which continues to deny that ethnic and racial pluralism poses any kind of problem. According to this “post-1965 assimilationism,”—subscribed to by progressive conservatives as well as liberals—it is not just that ethnicity and race are of little importance to a person’s cultural self-identification; they are absolutely *irrelevant*,* hence America’s capacity for the cultural assimilation of peoples of widely diverse races and cultures must be *infinite*; somehow (this wildly hopeful vision tells us), the U.S. population will become ethnically Asian and Latin American *indio*, but America will go on being the same Western society it has always been. To doubt the likelihood of this scenario is not to argue that “race determines culture,” nor is it to deny that cultural adaptation has occurred in a myriad of individual cases, thus demonstrating a certain permeability in ethnic/cultural identities; but surely it is unrealistic to expect such adaptation to continue when (1) the U.S. is receiving a never-ending mass immigration of non-Western peoples, leading inexorably to white-minority status in the coming decades; (2) a race-based cultural diversity move-

* Today, there are both liberals (e.g., paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould) and conservatives (e.g., columnist P.J. O’Rourke) who categorically deny that there is even such a thing as race.

ment is attacking, with almost effortless success, the legitimacy of our Western culture; and (3) American society has lost its intellectual moorings, is no longer passing its cultural tradition and historical memory on to its children, *let alone to immigrants*, and as a practical matter has given up on the assimilationist ideal.

This last point should make it clear that uncontrolled immigration is not the only factor in the suicidal trend I have been describing. Even if there were no immigration at all, America would still be experiencing what can only be called a terrifying social and moral decline. Concerns over mediocrity are hardly a new thing in this country, but surely the attack on the intellect, the decay of family and individual character that have occurred over the past 25 years are phenomena of an entirely different order, posing a very real threat to the freedoms and the high level of civilization this country has enjoyed. The combination of both factors—progressive degeneracy and divisiveness of the existing society on one hand and perpetual mass immigration on the other—must be fatal. History offers many examples of nations that have recovered from overwhelming catastrophe; Ancient Israel recovered more than once from spiritual decadence and conquest; Europe recovered from the death of a third of its population in the Black Plague; the French recovered from the ravages of the French Revolution. Renewal was possible in such cases not least because the national identity of those peoples, and the spiritual spark of their civilizations, remained intact. But if America continues “the slide into apathy, hedonism and moral chaos,” as Christopher Lasch has called it,⁵² and at the same time its present population is replaced by a chaotic mix of peoples from radically diverse, non-European cultures, then there will be no basis for continuation or renewal. Like ancient Greece after the classical Hellenes had dwindled away and the land was repopulated by Slavonic and Turkic peoples, America will have become literally a different country. There will be no American Renaissance—except perhaps as some faceless subdivision of the global shopping mall.

The decisive factor, ignored by almost everyone in our sentimental land, is the sheer force of numbers. The United States

has shown that it has the capacity to absorb a certain number of ethnic minorities into its existing cultural forms. The minorities, so long as there remains a majority culture that believes in itself, have powerful incentives to accept the legitimacy of the prevailing culture even as they add their own variety to it. But as they continue to grow in numbers relative to the whole population, a point of critical mass is reached. The new groups begin to assert an independent peoplehood, and the existing society comes to be seen as illegitimate and oppressive; what was once (granting its flaws) applauded as the most beneficent society in the history of the world, is suddenly, as though by a magician's curse, transformed into an evil racist power. That the point has already been reached can be seen from the following comment which appeared, not in some organ of the far left, but in the *New York Times*:

How can teachers blindly continue to preach the virtues of "our" cultural tradition in classrooms where, in regions such as California, most students are now African-Americans, Latinos, Asians and Native Americans, whose families' main experience of Western civilization has been victimization?⁵³

If it is the sheer *number* of non-Europeans in places like California that obligates us to abandon "our" cultural tradition, is it not an inescapable conclusion that the white majority in this country, if it wishes to preserve that tradition, must place a rational limit on the number of immigrants?

Black Separatism as a Warning

The potential for the breakdown of cultural assimilation can be seen in the increasing ambivalence of black Americans toward the majority culture. It is one of the saddest ironies of recent history that many black people, rather than drawing closer to the mainstream culture now that the legal obstacles to participation in American life have been removed, are increasingly defining themselves in opposition to it. Blacks are among the most vocal members of the multicultural movement.

Many have adopted the fantastic racial myth that Greco-Roman and Western culture were really descended from *black Africa*, that such figures as Socrates, Hannibal and Cleopatra were really black, and that there has been a conspiracy by white historians to cover up these facts. Ironically, far from whetting the interest of blacks in Western culture as a putative close relative of ancient African civilization, these notions merely serve as a pretext for dismissing Western civilization as illegitimate and oppressive. Black educators speak of the psychological harm done to black children when they are taught Western culture. Never mind that the greatest black leaders have been shining products of that culture. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois wrote of his education in white, northern schools that “changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect.”⁵⁴ But today, Jesse Jackson leads the mindless chant, “Hey hey, ho ho, Western culture has got to go,” while Louis Farrakhan urges his followers to find their true identity by rejecting white people and overturning their “evil” society.* A recent television documentary on the 1960s civil rights movement showed a young black man speaking at a rally. “We love this country,” he said, “and we want to be part of it.” But today, in their values and political ideology, even in the names they give their children, more and more black people seem like inhabitants of some new Third World nation. The adoption of the title “African-American” clearly denotes a withdrawal from membership in this society. As one black writer has commented: “‘African-American’ announces a global context for black identity, no longer confined to simply ‘minority’ status in the United States. Most important, *this different world view places African heritage at the center rather than at the margin of experience.*”⁵⁵ [emphasis added]. Now if a significant number of black Americans, who have been (albeit oppressed) members of this Christian, Western society for hundreds of years—who are

* We might also note the support of black political leaders for open immigration. It would seem that their main objective is not their own people’s advancement, which has been manifestly hurt by immigration, but simply the end of the white majority and its cultural dominance.

part of the historical soul of this country—now feel compelled to reject America’s common culture and assert a separate racial/cultural identity with a Third World perspective, is it not reasonable to fear the same thing in the case of many Third World immigrants who have *no* cultural links with Western civilization? Thomas Fleming has remarked:

As a nation, we have barely survived the existence of two separate populations, black and white, and we have a long way to go in working out better relations between those two groups. What shall we do when the whole of America becomes a multiracial Alexandria?⁵⁶

Cultural Reductionism

As suggested earlier, pro-immigration conservatives and liberals deal with the looming threat to national cohesion by imagining that it doesn’t exist; America, they believe, has an infinite capacity for the assimilation of diverse peoples. This astounding conceit can be made credible only at a great cost—that is, by flattening our idea of American society to the most superficial image of consumerism and pop culture. American culture is thus made equally accessible to all—and equally *meaningless*. “The process of assimilation is inexorable,” writes *Time*. “As these students become Americanized, they want to eat hot dogs and hamburgers and pizza. . . . They want designer jeans and bicycles and calculators and digital watches.”⁵⁷ By reducing American culture to the idea of its material accoutrements, *Time* makes the acquisition of that culture seem as quick and easy as an over-the-counter purchase. Similarly, Wall Street “conservatives” and free-market economists reduce America’s essence to the pursuit of maximum activity in the global marketplace. From this point of view it makes no difference whether a person can participate in the culture of this country or even if he speaks English; holding a job and paying taxes become the sole criterion of being a good and useful citizen. The strictures of contemporary debate force even cultural conservatives into the materialist fallacy; thus the lobbying group U.S. English bases its defense of our common lan-

guage on utilitarian grounds, rather than on the ground of the survival of a distinctive American civilization. What all these reductionisms have in common is that they disregard the intangible and affective dimensions of human society. Participation in commerce or science only requires the appropriate human activity and talents, which are, modern thought tells us, equal among all the peoples of the earth. But participation in a particular culture requires a degree of *identification* with that culture, the potential or desire for which is manifestly not equal among all men and nations. “It is the easiest thing in the world,” wrote Arnold Toynbee in a slightly different context, “for commerce to export a new Western technique. It is infinitely harder for a Western poet or saint to kindle in a non-Western soul the spiritual flame that is alight in his own.”⁵⁸ If America is to survive its present decline, it needs to rediscover, and learn to articulate, this spiritual flame of which Toynbee speaks. The answers to our current problems lie within the still-living but neglected roots of our own civilization—not in giving up that civilization for the sake of some utopian global order.

This brings us to yet another kind of reductionism we ought to beware of: the tendency to see our society as a mere abstraction of freedom and human rights. Yes, America stands for, and is based on, certain universal principles; but we must insist that America also happens to be a *country*. Surely the Founding Fathers saw no contradiction between being devoted as philosophers to universal principles of republicanism and the rights of man, and as patriots to a particular nation, a particular people. To ignore our national individuality—in an effort to make America seem instantly accessible to every person and culture on the planet—is to turn our country into the blank slate of which we spoke earlier, on which the social engineers and all the migrating masses of the world can write whatever they please. In other words, America needs to revive the original name and meaning of the Statue of Liberty (now quite forgotten): “Liberty Enlightening the World”—a shining example for other nations to achieve in their own lands and in their own ways what we have achieved here, not simply a mindless invitation for the whole world to *move* here.

Summing Up

The argument presented in these pages is that the combined forces of open immigration and multiculturalism constitute a mortal threat to American civilization. At a time when unprecedented ethnic diversity makes the affirmation of a common American culture more important than ever, we are, under the pressure of that diversity, abandoning the very idea of a common culture. “We are asking America to open its linguistic frontiers,” one multiculturalist spokesman has said, “and to accept an expanded idea of what it means to be an American”—a standard that, in terms of immigration and language policies, seem to include everyone in the universe.⁵⁹ Whether we consider America’s porous borders; or the disappearing standards for naturalization; or the growth of official multilingualism; or the new “diversity” curricula aimed at destroying the basis of common citizenship; or the extension of virtually all the rights and protections of citizenship to legal *and* illegal aliens; or the automatic granting of citizenship to children of illegals; the tendency is clear: we have in effect redefined the nation to the point where there is no remaining criterion of American identity other than the physical fact of one’s being here. It is, to quote Alexander Hamilton, “an attempt to break down every pale which has been erected for the preservation of a national spirit and a national character.”⁶⁰

The irony is that most Americans support immigration as “liberal” policy. That is, they want America to remain open and to help people, and they also expect that the new immigrants will assimilate into our existing society. It was on this basis that the opening of America’s doors to every country on earth was approved in 1965 and continues to enjoy unassailable political support. But we are beginning to see, simply as a practical, human matter, that the successful assimilation of such huge numbers of widely diverse peoples into a single people and viable polity is a pipe dream. It is at this point that multiculturalism comes along and says: “That’s not a problem. We don’t want to assimilate into this oppressive, Eurocentered mold. We want to reconstruct America as a multicultural society.” And this radical pluralist view gains acceptance by retaining the

moral legitimacy, the patina of humanitarianism, that properly belonged to the older liberalism which it has supplanted. We have thus observed the progress, largely unperceived by the American people, from the liberal assimilationist view, which endorses open immigration because it naively believes that our civilization can survive unlimited diversity, to radical multiculturalism, which endorses open immigration because it wants our civilization to end.

Diversity—or Imperialism?

What has been said so far will doubtless offend those who see unlimited diversity not as a threat to our society, but as a glorious enhancement of it. I do not deny that there are many apparently positive things associated with our expanding demographic character: the stimulus of the boundless human variety in our big cities; the satisfaction of welcoming people from every country in the world and seeing them do well here; the heady sense that we are moving into a New Age in which all barriers between people will disappear and humanity will truly be one. But the question must be asked: is all this excitement about a New Age, this fascination with the incredible changes occurring before our eyes, a sound basis for determining our national destiny? Is all this idealism without its dark side? Is it not to be feared—if the lessons of history are any guide—that the “terrible and magnificent struggle” to recreate America is leading us, not to the post-imperialist age of peace and love the cultural pluralists dream of, but to a new and more terrible age of ethnic imperialism?

Americans are being told that to redeem themselves from their past sins, they must give way to, and even merge with, the cultures they have oppressed or excluded in the past. But for a culture to deny its own “false” legitimacy, as America is now called upon to do, does not create a society free of false legitimacy; it simply means creating a vacuum of legitimacy—and thus a vacuum of power—into which other cultures, replete with their own “imperialistic lies,” will move. Training Hispanic and other immigrant children in American public

schools to have their primary loyalty to their native cultures is not to create a new kind of bicultural, cosmopolitan citizenry; it is to systematically downgrade our national culture while raising the status and power of other cultures. As James Burnham has shown in *The Machiavellians*, we need to see the *real* meaning (a concern with power) that is concealed behind the *formal* meaning of various idealistic slogans. The *formal* meaning of “diversity,” “cultural equity,” “gorgeous mosaic” and so on is a society in which many different cultures will live together in perfect equality and peace (i.e., a society that has never existed and never will exist); the *real* meaning of these slogans is that the power of the existing mainstream society to determine its own destiny shall be drastically reduced while the power of other groups, formerly marginal or external to that society, will be increased. In other words the U.S. must, in the name of diversity, abandon *its* particularity while the very groups making that demand shall hold on to *theirs*.

Thus understood, cultural pluralism is not the innocent expansion of our human sympathies it pretends to be, but a kind of inverse colonialism. *Time*, in a special issue put together by its Hispanic staff writers, speaks buoyantly of the coming “convergence” of American and Hispanic cultures, a convergence that Americans should welcome “unconditionally” as an enrichment of their own society and as an opening up of their “restricted” identity. “We come bearing gifts,” *Time* says on behalf of the growing Hispanic presence in the United States.⁶¹ But, stripped of its sentimentality, isn’t this what colonial powers have always said? The only difference is that, in the Age of Imperialism, it was the strong powers that took over the weak; in today’s Age of Diversity, it is the weak who are taking over the strong, with the strong’s invitation and blessing.

An additional irony is that the call for cultural pluralism is often accompanied by a call for *globalism*—which would obviously tend to weaken *national* diversity. If diversity has a true and positive meaning (as distinguished from its Burnhamite meaning), it is that each nation maintains its own identity. If different societies blend together, or if one of them, through mass migration or cultural imperialism, imposes its identity on another, the result is a loss of national identity and there-

fore a loss of diversity. As John Ney has observed: “In any objective study of cultural dynamics, is not cultural co-existence a myth? Does not one culture or the other triumph, or merge in a synthesis in which neither (or none) survives intact?”⁶² If it is diversity we really want, we should preserve our own and each other’s distinct national identities. But if the relationship we desire between foreign cultures and our own is “convergence” (*Time’s* upbeat motto for the Latin American invasion), then we should recognize that this means the end of American civilization as we know it.*

The Loss of Cultural Identity

To picture the spiritual impact that the multicultural revolution will have on our society would require an act of historical imagination that is frankly beyond the power of this writer. Indeed, it is this inability to “imagine” our own cultural heritage and what its loss would mean to us—largely a result of several generations of relativist education and the triumph of pop culture—that makes it hard for us to articulate or defend that heritage. As John Lukacs has written: “It is a problem of existing cultural essences and assets that cannot be quantified or computerized. . . . What is threatened is not just our nation’s body, but its soul.”⁶³ Perhaps I can illustrate what I mean through the example of art. When we look at an ancient Greek sculpture, or a Renaissance painting showing a group of people gathered around the Christ child, or, for that matter, a Hollywood classic from the thirties, we are seeing profoundly resonant images of our own civilization and culture, images that have made us what we are. Looking at the Renaissance painting or the Greek sculpture, we realize that we are partakers of the same Classical, Judeo-Christian, Western heritage,

* “Americans are precisely what we are not, and what we don’t want to be,” Canadian novelist Robertson Davies recently declared in *Harper’s*. I think most Americans would sympathize with Mr. Davies’ concerns about American dominance of Canada. But if we recognize Canada’s right to preserve its own culture against American intrusion (in the form of the mass exportation of culture), doesn’t America have the same right vis-à-vis intrusion from Latin America and Asia (in the form of the mass exportation of people)?

actors in the same drama. This vital communication of one generation, one age with another is the soul of civilization. From it we derive the sense of being part of a continuum which stretches back to the ancient past and forward to the future. From that vital intercourse with the past each generation renews itself.

But now this continuum, which is the body of our civilization extending through time, is about to be broken forever. Under the pressure of multiculturalism, Americans will be denied their own heritage and prevented from handing it on to succeeding generations. Because that entire cultural heritage, which (before the opening up of massive Third-World immigration) was taken for granted as “our” heritage, is now considered to be merely an exclusive, “white” heritage and therefore *illegitimate*. Deprived of its *good conscience*, American/Western culture will lose the ability to defend itself and will be progressively downgraded to accommodate a bewildering array of other cultures.* “In its Third Century,” Kotkin and Kishimoto write, “American culture may no longer be based predominantly on European themes. Its motifs may be as much Latin or Asian as traditional Anglo-American.”⁶⁴ As the image of our civilization, as expressed in the arts and literature, changes to a multiracial, multicultural image, what kind of art will result? Movies and plays, instead of portraying the relationships of individuals within a community or family, as drama has done time out of mind, must focus self-consciously on race relations. Established literary works that have formed a living bridge between one generation of Americans and the next will fall into oblivion, to be replaced by works on minority, Hispanic and Asian issues. The religious paintings of the multiculturalist society, instead of portraying a group of individuals chosen from the artists’ imagination, would follow a statistical formula; the figures gathered around the Christ child would have to be x percent brown, x percent black, yellow, white and so on, all chosen on the basis of racial balance

* According to the May 2, 1989, *New York Times*, the University of California at Berkeley now requires students to take ethnic studies courses on four American ethnic groups, with European-Americans added to the list at the last moment. The trend is not hard to guess: eventually, the entire Western heritage will be reduced to European-American “ethnic studies.”

rather than their individual character. Diversity would so overwhelm unity that the idea of diversity within unity would be lost. If you think this is an absurd prediction about the future of art and of society, just look at any television show or advertisement. The formulaic racial balance imposes itself everywhere, even to the point of inventing multiracial families on television that don't exist in the real world. It is the new image of America, popularized by *Time* covers and ABC News graphics—a brown, mixed people, painted in a heroic, proletarian style that might be called Multiracialist Realism.

The Political Consequences

(1) *Homogeneity and Assimilation*

Apart from the spiritual dislocation—the catastrophe—implied in such profound changes in art, literature and drama, we have barely begun to think about the effects that a radically diverse population will have on our political institutions. The first of these is a loss of that social cohesion, that practicable homogeneity without which, history teaches us, a free society based on individual rights cannot survive. The Founding Fathers understood this danger very well. Alexander Hamilton wrote in 1802:

The safety of a republic depends essentially on the energy of a common national sentiment; on a uniformity of principles and habits; on the exemption of the citizens from foreign bias, and prejudice; and on that love of country which will almost invariably be found to be closely connected with birth, education, and family.

The opinion . . . is correct, that foreigners will generally be apt to bring with them attachments to the persons they have left behind; to the country of their nativity, and to its particular customs and manners. . . . The influx of foreigners must, therefore, tend to produce a heterogeneous compound; to change and corrupt the national spirit; to complicate and confound public opinion; to introduce foreign propensities.⁶⁵

Thomas Jefferson also worried about the impact of non-assimilable immigrants:

In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its directions, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass. . . . Suppose 20 millions of republican Americans thrown all of a sudden into France, what would be the condition of that kingdom? If it would be more turbulent, less happy, less strong, we believe that the addition of half a million foreigners to our present numbers would produce a similar effect here.⁶⁶

During the anti-immigration movement in the early twentieth century, the president of Harvard University, A. Lawrence Lowell, wrote:

It is, indeed, largely a perception of the need of homogeneity, as a basis for popular government and the public opinion on which it rests, that justifies democracies in resisting the influx of great numbers of a widely different race.⁶⁷

Of course, it is commonly believed today that the anti-immigration sentiment in the past, particularly in the post-World War I years, discredits similar concerns in the present; that is, just as the earlier fears of an unassimilable mass of immigrants proved to be unwarranted, so will the present fears. But this argument ignores the fact that the great wave of the “new” immigration was brought to a halt in 1922. This reduction in immigration vastly eased the assimilation process in the following decades and led to a dramatic decrease in the nativist fears that had been the prime motive for the 1920s legislation. “Somewhere, in the mid-1930’s,” writes immigration historian Oscar Handlin, “there was a turn. Americans ceased to believe in race, the hate movements [against the European immigrants] began to disintegrate, and discrimination increasingly took on the aspect of an anachronistic survival from the past, rather than a pattern valid for the future. . . . In the face of those changes, it might well have been asked: ‘What happened to race?’”⁶⁸ It is revealing that, among the explanations Handlin offers for this sudden and welcome drop in the nativist fever, he says nothing about the most obvious cause: the fact that immigration had been drastically lowered by the 1920s legislation (and later completely stopped by the Depression); such ac-

knowledge would undercut Handlin's own moralistic criticism of the restrictive 1920s laws. Whatever we may think of those restrictions from a humanitarian point of view, their importance in advancing the assimilation of white ethnics in the mid-twentieth century cannot be denied. Certainly, the United States would not have been nearly so strong and united a society as it was from the beginning of the Second World War until the 1960s if the country had received, as had been feared, two million immigrants per year during the 1920s and beyond.

It ought also to be mentioned, in light of the present habit of blaming everything on racism, that the Founders were concerned about the divisive effect of white Europeans from monarchical societies, who they feared would resist American republican principles. Similarly, the anti-Irish feeling in the mid-nineteenth century had nothing to do with race.⁶⁹ It was only with the rise of the new immigration from southern and eastern Europe in the 1880s, along with the Chinese and Japanese immigrations, that the fear of unassimilability began to focus on race. The concern common to all the historical stages of anti-immigrant sentiment was not race as such but the need for a harmonious citizenry holding to the same values and political principles and having something of the same spirit. Now, certainly, our experience with cultural assimilation in the twentieth century has widened our sense of the ethnic parameters of a viable polity far beyond what either the Founding Fathers or the 20th century nativists thought possible; but the question we forget at our peril is, how far can those parameters be expanded while still maintaining a viable cultural and political homogeneity? The importance of harmony, of a "radius of identification and trust," is still paramount for a free society.⁷⁰

(2) *Unlimited Diversity—A Threat to Equality*

As diversity continues to expand beyond the point where genuine assimilation is possible, the ideal of equality will also recede. "Iceland's population of 240,000 is a notably homogeneous society," writes the *New York Times*. "Like these other well-off homogeneous nations [i.e., Scandinavia and Japan] Iceland's wealth is evenly distributed and its society is remarkably egalitarian."⁷¹ Even liberals seem to recognize the cor-

relation between homogeneity and equality—for every country that is, except the United States, where we have conceived the fantastic notion that we can achieve equality *and* unlimited diversity at the same time. A far more likely result is a devolution of society into permanent class divisions based on ethnicity, a weakening of the sense of common citizenship, and a growing disparity between islands of private wealth and oceans of public squalor. America’s effort to create a society that is both multicultural and equal may end by destroying forever the age-old hope of equality.

(3) *Unlimited Diversity—A Threat to Liberty*

Finally, unlimited diversity threatens liberty itself. The inequality, the absence of common norms and loyalties, and the social conflict stemming from increased diversity require a growing state apparatus to mediate the conflict. The disappearance of voluntary social harmony requires that harmony be imposed by force. As historian Robert Nisbet has argued, the demand in this century for ever more innovative forms of equality has already resulted in a vast enlargement of the state.⁷² Radical pluralism raises to a new level this threat to our liberty, since now the state will be called upon to overcome, not just the inequality of individuals, but the inequality of *cultures*. The inherent vastness and endlessness of such an enterprise matches the intrusiveness of the state power that must be exercised to achieve it. The signs of this new despotism are all around us:

- the de jure and de facto repression of speech dealing with racially sensitive subjects;⁷³
- the official classification and extension of privileges to people according to ethnic affiliation;
- the expansion of judicial and bureaucratic power to enforce racial quotas in more and more areas of society;
- the subjection of the American people to an unceasing barrage of propaganda telling us we are all brothers, that we must “respect all cultures,” etc., even while government policies are unleashing a wave of cultural diversity and ethnic chauvinism that is making spontaneous brotherly feeling a receding dream. In other words, the “family” that Governor Mario Cuomo keeps telling us we all belong to is really—the *state*.

The End of American Civilization

I have been attempting in these pages to suggest a few of the myriad potential effects of mass immigration and multiculturalism on this country's future. There are darker scenarios I have not explored—the spread of Third-World conditions in parts of our country; the collapse of civic order (nightmarishly portrayed in Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities*), or the disintegration of the United States along regional and ethnic lines. Whatever the future America may look like, it will not be a country that we—or our forebears whose legacy we are so carelessly throwing away—would be able to recognize.

In the years and decades to come, as the present American people and their descendants begin to understand what is happening to their country; as they see their civilization disappearing piece by piece, city by city, state by state, from before their eyes, and that nothing can be done to stop it, they will suffer the same collapse of spirit that occurs to any people when its way of life, its historical identity, is taken away from it. Beneath all the hopeful names they will try to find for these changes—diversity, world-nation, global oneness—there will be the repressed knowledge that America is becoming an utterly different country from what it has been, and that this means the end of their world. But the pain will not last for long. As the clerics of diversity indoctrinate new generations into the Orwellian official history, even the memory of what America once was will be lost.

Finally, if we want to consider “cultural equity,” there seems to be an extraordinary kind of *inequity* in the proposition that the United States must lose its identity, must become the “speechless, meaningless country” that Allan Bloom has foreseen, while the countries that the new immigrants are coming from are free to preserve *their* identities. In a hundred years, the United States will have become in large part an Hispanic nation, while Latin America will still be what it has always been; Mexico has strict immigration laws even against other Latin Americans. China, Korea, the Philippines and India will still have their historic cultures intact after having exported millions of their people to America, while America's historic culture will have vanished. If the situation were reversed and North Americans were colonizing Latin

America and Asia, it would be denounced as racist imperialism. Why, then, does every other country in the world have the right to preserve its identity but the United States has not? The answer, as I've tried to show, is that the end of multiculturalism is not some utopian, "equal" society, but simply the end of American civilization.

So much for America; if other Western nations continue *their* openness to Third World immigration, we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of Western civilization as a whole. And this defeat of the West will have been accomplished, not by the superior strength or civilization of the newcomers, not by the "forces of history," but simply by the feckless generosity and moral cowardice of the West itself. In the prophetic words of social psychologist William McDougall:

As I watch the American nation speeding gaily, with invincible optimism down the road to destruction, I seem to be contemplating the greatest tragedy in the history of mankind.⁷⁴

III.

On the Meaning of Racism

Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.
Rousseau

There is, of course, one inevitable and supposedly crushing rebuff to everything I have said so far about the danger posed by unrestricted immigration—that the very idea of such a danger is “racist.” Since it is the fear of this charge that prevents the American people and their leaders from even touching the issue in a serious way, this essay will not be complete without examining the question of racism with some care. As we all know by now, racism, like witchcraft, is a difficult accusation to defend oneself against. The reason is that the word no longer has a defined meaning. I was first struck by this phenomenon several years ago when New York City’s closing of a hospital in Harlem, as part of an economy move, was ferociously denounced as “racist” by black leaders. This was a new and startling use of a highly charged word that I had associated mainly with race hatred. “Racism” now apparently meant anything that, in the view of black people, hurt their interests or offended them or, indeed, anything they did not approve of. In recent years, this limitless definition has come to include the entire structure of our predominantly white society, as well as all white people. As reported by Robert R. Detlefsen in the April 10,

1989, issue of the *New Republic*, a speaker at a recent “racism awareness” seminar at Harvard said that 85 percent of white Americans are subtle racists and the remaining 15 percent are overt racists. The speaker mentioned the following examples of racist attitudes even among compassionate whites: they prefer the company of other white people, they are more likely to make positive assumptions about members of their own group, etc. The *New Republic* went on to say that the audience, “like a religious congregation . . . consisted entirely of the already converted; when told of their manifest racism, they nodded in agreement. During the question period that followed the speech, no one rose to challenge [the speaker’s] contention that we are all guilty of racism.”

What we have here is an Orwellian version of Original Sin, complete with a new class of racism-awareness priests who will absolve us of the sin of racism if we show a penitent attitude, utter the required formulae, and—last but not least—*give in to all their demands*. America, whose whole past is racist, can only become “good” to the extent it overcomes the evil of racism. But since America is *inherently* racist, it can never succeed in doing that. It follows that America can only become a good country when it ceases to exist, i.e., when its European-rooted civilization is dismantled.

It does not take a genius to realize that in America today, “racism” is much more than a word; it has become an instrument of thought control—even of terror. If we are to free ourselves from the resulting intellectual paralysis, we must insist that the word be defined. One of the duties of leadership, Irving Babbitt observed, is the responsible use of words:

Confucius, when asked what would be his first concern if the reins of government were put into his hands, replied that his first concern would be to define his terms and make words correspond with things. If our modern revolutionaries have suffered disillusionments of almost unparalleled severity, it is too often because they have given their imagination to words, without making sure that these words corresponded with things; and so they have felt that they were bound for the promised land when they were in reality only swimming in a sea of conceit.⁷⁵

Since “racism” has become the most highly charged and carelessly spoken word in our political vocabulary, no word is more in need of careful definition. I am not a sociologist or historian, and what follows is merely an attempt at a common-sense, provisional definition. But at least this will give us a term we can test against reality and thus use responsibly.

According to *Webster’s*, racism is “a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.” It is thus not a belief in the existence of racial differences as such, but the belief that those differences produce an inherent racial superiority, that constitutes racism. On this basis, for example, we could describe as racist certain racial theories, current in the early 20th century, which classified every observable *ethnic* trait or behavior as an immutable *racial* characteristic, and on that basis determined that the Nordic race is inherently superior to other races.⁷⁶

So far, *Webster’s* definition is helpful, but it only deals with racism as an intellectual theory. Explicit racist doctrines—except among groups such as the Nation of Islam—have notably declined in the last fifty years, and today we think of racism more as a matter of attitude and behavior than as a formal ideology. As an attitude, we may say that racism is contempt for members of a particular racial group because of their alleged inferiority or badness in relation to one’s own group, or that racism consists in the inability to see any member of the other group as a fellow human being. As action (and speech), racism consists of systematic oppression, violent acts, the stirring up of hatred, and so on.

I would say further that the racist belief in another group’s inferiority concerns their inherent worth as human beings, not a mere difference in some particular trait or talent. Otherwise, the distinction between an opinion regarding racial differences and a belief in racial superiority is lost. We may observe, for example, that Japanese are more disciplined and hardworking than Samoans, or that Negroes on average have longer limbs than Caucasians, without denying anyone’s humanity. Depending on tone and context, such comparisons might or might not

be invidious, but they are not inherently racist.

The virtue of this provisional definition is that it attempts to provide a clear and reasonable standard that distinguishes genuinely racist behavior from behavior which cannot be said to be racist by any reasonable standard but which is now routinely labelled as such. A well-known recent instance will show what I mean. When a television sports commentator named Jimmy (“the Greek”) Snyder remarked, in a chat with a reporter, that black athletes run faster than their white counterparts because as slaves blacks “were bred to have longer legs,” his network promptly fired him, declaring it “would not tolerate racism.” I think we would all agree that Snyder’s comment was offensive and insulting, as well as incorrect. But how in the world was it racist? The network did not bother to say. It was simply understood by everyone that the remark concerned race, that it was offensive, and that people (white people, that is) are not supposed to talk openly in today’s society about racial differences; therefore it was “racist.” Since he expressed no racial animosity or idea of inferiority, but had only talked about what he perceived as a physical difference, it is hard to comprehend how the remark could be racist, unless we conclude (1) that any statement that members of a particular racial group find offensive is, for that reason alone, racist, or (2) that the very idea that there are physically distinct races of mankind is itself racist. The first of these ideas was a theme of the Harvard conference mentioned above. Participants were told that professors teaching a class should “never introduce any sort of thing that might hurt a group”—a prescription for the massive repression of speech. As for the second idea, it’s simply absurd; if there were not these plainly discernible physical groupings of the human family, we would not even have a concept of race.

“Structural” Racism

Apart from such ridiculous but common usages of “racism”—which I think any sensible person ought to reject—there is today the widely accepted idea of “institutional racism,” which

we need to consider. In *Portraits of White Racism*, David T. Wellman argued that the traditional definition of racism as prejudice—defined as “a combination of *hostility* toward and *faulty generalizations* about racial groups”—was inadequate to account for America’s racial attitudes. Although the sentiments of many white Americans regarding racial issues “may not be prejudiced,” Wellman wrote, “they justify arrangements that *in effect, if not in intent*, maintain the status quo and thereby keep blacks in subordinate positions.”⁷⁷ [emphasis added]. Wellman wanted racism to be seen not as a psychological attitude, but as institutionally generated inequality, as structural superiority. “The subordination of people of color is functional to the operation of American society as we know it. . . . Racism is a structural relationship based on the subordination of one racial group by another.” Racism, then, is not a psychological or moral flaw, and thus an *exception* to the rule; it *is* the rule.

What Wellman saw as the advantage of this social definition of racism (its transcendence of the idea of individual bias) is precisely, I would suggest, its fatal drawback. By transferring a word connoting the deepest moral evil to an entire society, while divorcing that word from the idea of *intent*, the structural definition of racism destroys the idea of individual moral responsibility while at the same time making *everyone* guilty. It is a perversion of language that lends itself to exactly the kind of vicious generalization that it condemns. Though formulated in the neutral language of the social sciences, the structural definition inevitably leads—in the name of ending race hatred—to a new, more virulent (because ostensibly justified) race hatred. Thus the black filmmaker Spike Lee could make, with impunity, the remark that white people see blacks in only two ways: as celebrities, or as “niggers.” Such statements, we are told, are not racist. As Lee told an interviewer: “Black people are not racist. If I call you a white m-----r, that’s not racist; that’s prejudiced name-calling. But when you’re in a position of power to affect my life and economic reality and you abuse that power, that’s racism.”⁷⁸ And, of course, what “abusing that power” means in practice is

to fail to conform to any item of the black agenda, to doubt the veracity of Tawana Brawley, and so on. Meanwhile, actual expressions of hatred, as well as vicious generalizations (about whites), are, according to Spike Lee, mere “prejudiced name calling.”

Race hatred, which denies the humanity of an entire class of people because of their race, is a real evil. I think it is essential that we confine the word racism to behaviors and beliefs that are discrete and identifiable. If we extend it to include this hopelessly vague notion of structural discrimination, which becomes, in effect, a denial of the humanity of all white people, then “*racism*” *itself becomes a hate word*, and the real racism escapes blame. As for the “systemic institutional practices” that allegedly deny blacks *qua* blacks equal access to social resources, we simply need a more precise—and less volatile—word to describe such phenomena. “Racism” will no longer do.

Immigration and the Meaning of Racism

There is one more meaning of racism we need to consider. We commented earlier that the very concept of race arises from the fact that there are physically distinct groups of the human family. The differences among racial and ethnic groups—which is a common-sense observation, not a theory to which we need attach any “ism” or any idea of racial superiority—is connected with another common-sense observation about human nature: the preference that human beings have for people who are similar to themselves. This tendency is observed in people’s choices of their mates, in the growth of families, communities and cultures, and in the myths and literature and art of those cultures; it is a fact of life clearly observable in all human experience (and proven in the American case by the persistence of structural pluralism). Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn has written:

As human beings we have two tendencies: one that is “identitarian” and prompts us to seek the company of persons belong-

ing to our own ethnic group, race, class . . . [and] another that seeks diversity: we like to travel, to meet people with different backgrounds, to experience unfamiliar music, art, architecture, food. The first impulse seeks comfort and safety; the second, adventure and excitement.⁷⁹

In itself, the identitarian impulse toward comfort and safety is a positive and unconscious discrimination, a discrimination “in favor of.” It is a component of the “radius of identification and trust” that Lawrence Harrison identifies as the basis of a happy community. No ideology of racial superiority need be attributed to it. Xenophobic hatred is a secondary phenomenon arising from territorial or economic conflict. We do not normally equate a healthy sense of pride, in oneself or one’s community, with hatred of others. Nor do we accuse a black man of bigotry for marrying a black woman or belonging to an all-black church.

Yet today, most people would describe this simple preference for one’s own—stated plainly as it is here—as racist or xenophobic (if we are speaking about *white people*, that is); and all the powers of the state are directed toward its elimination. Because if people prefer to associate with members of their own group, then it follows that they will also seek to exclude and put down other groups. And this is what our modern conscience cannot allow. It is at this point that the concept of racism as it is currently used (in the sense of positive ethnic or racial preference) begins to break down as a result of its own inflation. *The very idea of racism implies a human norm that is not racist, and from which racism, by definition, would be a departure.* But in what does this norm consist? Where in the world are there families and communities that are *not* based on this mutual preference for people who are similar? The answer is that, outside of marginal and cosmopolitan exceptions, the preference for one’s own is the universal tendency. Since, then, there is no “*non-racist*” norm, from which racism would be a deviation, is it not clear that “racism,” in its contemporary inflated sense, has no meaning at all? It has no more meaning than calling people with noses “nosists.”

We begin to see the absurdity that results from allowing an un-

defined word to run riot. Racism is understood in such a broad, unreal sense that its theoretical opposite—a “non-racist” human nature—*must also be unreal*. “Man is born free of racism, and everywhere he is racist,” say our modern Rousseauists. The difference between this formulation and Rousseau’s famous dictum is that instead of starting with the imaginary state of nature, in which man is “free,” and on the basis of that imaginary idea determining that the world we see around us is unfree and corrupt, our racial Rousseauism starts from the perception of the present “racist corruption” and on that basis assumes an idyllic, non-existent, non-racist human nature; all we see around us is “racist,” and since racism is by definition a deviation from human nature, there must therefore be a non-racist norm of human nature and society, which we can only attain overturning the world we see around us.

In any case, the political attempt to reach that chimerical promised land where there is no “racism” must involve us in the ultimate totalitarian project: to change human nature by force. Since racial differences are the very source of racial preferences, the only way the nations of the earth could truly cease being racist would be to institute a world-wide exchange of populations, creating an identical racial mix in every country, followed by several generations of scientifically planned and state-controlled intermarriages, resulting in a single perfectly blended human race. We may see, in the current efforts of government to enforce statistical racial balance in every area of life (based on the assumption that the absence of such balance must be due to racism), the beginnings of just such a global experiment. Here, truly, is the ultimate opportunity for the egalitarian social engineers.

Of course, no one actually believes in such a project. What we have rather is a rhetorical tendency toward an undefined racial utopia that governs all discourse. And it is not all the nations of the earth that are subject to this utopian standard, but only one: the United States. No one questions the right of Arabs to have an Arab nation; of China to be a Chinese nation; of the Africans to preserve their cultures. But the United States, which has never been limited to a single ethnic nationality but has instead—until 1965—drawn most of its people from the na-

tions of Europe, is to be denied even this conglomerate, but still distinct, identity. We must absorb all the peoples of the world into our society and submerge our historic character as a predominantly Caucasian, Western society.

To criticize this multiracial utopianism is not to favor its opposite, i.e., an ideology of racial inequality. It is to see that racial equality, if taken as an *absolute principle* that supercedes all other values, destroys human liberty. In the words of Gaetano Mosca:

The absolute preponderance of a single political force, the predominance of any over-simplified concept in the organization of the state, the strictly logical application of any single principle in all public law are the essential elements in any type of despotism. . . . It has been necessary, nay indispensable, that there should be a multiplicity of political forces [in order to maintain liberty].⁸⁰

Mosca is telling us to look for the multiplicity that is indispensable to liberty not just in a pluralism of political forces (what James Madison called factions and what we call interest groups), but in the ideas and principles that form the basis of the state. Rule by a single, overweening *principle* is as despotic as rule by a single, lawless *man*.

An immigration law which is based solely on utopian ideas of multiethnicism, and which excludes all other values, is just the kind of “strictly logical application of [a] single principle in public law” that Mosca criticizes as the essence of despotism. There are other interests which deserve to be taken into account along with equality, namely the general welfare and the quality of life of the people who already live here, and the preservation of our society’s political and cultural identity. We have already seen that the 1965 legislators implicitly understood this problem. When they spoke of equal treatment before the law, they meant it in terms of *individuals*, not in terms of mass migrations that would totally change the country. But today we have lost the ability to make that vital distinction. The idea of equality has been transferred, in effect, from individuals to entire *peoples*, and

along with it, a moralism that brooks no opposition. Under this new dispensation we owe, as it were, an obligation to all the peoples in the world to let them migrate here en masse and recreate American society in their image. And no one can question this project for fear of being called a racist. Liberalism has thus overthrown its professed devotion to *political* pluralism by turning *cultural* pluralism into an absolute.

Paradoxically, many liberals declare that race is irrelevant, yet at the same time they support the movement among people of color aggressively to assert their own racial or national identity, which has allegedly been denied them by white racism. It is asserted by all opponents of white imperialism that societies have the right to maintain their cultural identities. In the interests of fairness, I would say that the United States of America also has this right. Now, in trying to ascertain the cultural identity of any community, we would not ignore its ethnic and racial character any more than we would ignore its political traditions, its way of life, its language, its religion. Merely to make this common-sense observation does not mean we are repeating the race-idolization of the 19th century racial theorists—or the romantic nationalism that elevates particularity into an absolute. But we also seek to avoid the potentially fatal error of classical liberalism, which, in emphasizing the abstract rights of all men, totally ignores their cultural and ethnic particularities.

To take a simple example, it would be hard to imagine the French apart from their ethnic character, as a mixture of the Germanic, Celtic and Iberian peoples of western Europe. If in some experiment in mass migration 50 million Chinese exchanged places with 50 million French—and even if the Chinese learned the French language and immersed themselves in French culture—the new society they formed would no longer be France in any recognizable sense. France, as we know it, would have ceased to exist. But the equalitarian creed, in reducing all humanity to a universal, rational and interchangeable standard (we are all “persons” with equal rights) ignores these qualitative differences that exist among men, nations and cultures. Lockean natural rights philosophy does not exhaust the definition of society or of man. A Chinese person is not merely a locus of

abstract legal and human rights identical and interchangeable with all other persons in the world. This ethnic and racial dimension of human identity is an obvious fact that everyone intuitively recognizes, yet which is censored by our equalitarian ideology. (Or rather, it is censored when whites are asserting their rights, but it is insisted on when people of color are asserting theirs.)

Now, a critic would say my hypothetical case is absurd. Who could imagine 50 million Chinese moving to France? I will grant that even pro-immigration liberals or free-market globalists might want to slow this migration somewhat on economic or other purely practical grounds. But for the true believer, these would only be contingent, technical concerns, at best a necessary evil; the liberal would have no *morally justifiable principle* by which to oppose the racial transformation of France or China, since the only moral principle he recognizes is universal equality.

Robert Kennedy said in 1965: “This is the central problem of immigration today; that the law . . . has not recognized that one people is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another people.”⁸¹ But Kennedy was wrong. The paramount moral issue the United States faces is not racial superiority but self-preservation. At the 1965 Senate hearings, Sam Ervin said:

I do not think that belief in a national origin quota system indicates that one believes that one foreigner is better than another. As I see it, it really indicates that on the basis of our experience, we know that some foreigners are more readily assimilable than others and thus contribute to the requirements of the bedrock of our survival.⁸²

During the Senate floor debate, Strom Thurmond used a common sense analogy to make the same point:

The wish to preserve one’s own identity and the identity of one’s nation requires no justification and no belief in racial or national superiority any more than the wish to have one’s own children, and to continue one’s own family through them, need be justified or rationalized by a belief that they are superior to the children of others.⁸³

This, finally, is the question on which all else depends. Does the United States, does any nation have the moral right to preserve its identity? If our answer is yes, then we have the right to open up this issue and re-evaluate our immigration law without fear of the crippling charge of racism. If our answer is no, then we shall simply continue on our present path to national suicide.

IV.

Further Reflections on America's Folly

Why should such a set of people be put in motion, on such a scale and with such an air of being equipped for a profitable journey, only to break down without an accident, to stretch themselves in the wayside dust without a reason?

Henry James,
The Wings of the Dove

One day President Roosevelt told me that he was asking publicly for suggestions about what the war should be called. I said at once "The Unnecessary War."

Winston Churchill,
The Second World War

It may seem that the unquestioning acceptance of current open immigration policy is readily explained by such factors as our immigrant tradition, the heritage of the civil rights movement, our national commitments to compassion, racial equality and opportunity, and so on. But to my mind, these familiar ideas fail to explain our country's amazing lack of serious concern about this issue. How is it that America can launch itself so casually on these uncharted waters of multiracialism and multiculturalism? What is the source of America's apparent confidence that a social scheme that has never existed before in

history, and that most other countries in the world would try to avoid at all costs, will work here? And what motivates this frenzied rush to transform our country *in the absence of any compelling need to do it?*

The very nature of these questions indicates that there may be no satisfactory answer. That a free and great people should show such eagerness to allow itself to be undone is a mystery that would seem to defy rational analysis. Perhaps the answer lies not on the historical plane, but within America's collective psyche. What follows is an attempt to offer some speculative approaches to this problem for those who may be as mystified by it as I am.

Idolizing Ourselves as “A Nation of Immigrants”

Part of the explanation for our present course may lie in the insight that we are indeed not pursuing a practical future goal but rather a chimera from our past. Arnold Toynbee, in *A Study of History*, speaks of the tendency of a successful society to “rest on its oars” and fail to meet new challenges because it is worshipping its own past success. “A fatuous passivity towards the present,” says Toynbee, “springs from an infatuation with the past, and this infatuation is the sin of idolatry.” Thus ancient Athens was idolizing itself as the “Education of Hellas” at the very moment when its imperial arrogance had brought upon itself the war that would wreck it; similarly, the ancient Greeks' idolization of their greatest political achievement, the city-state, prevented them from forming a national federation. The city-states then tore each other to pieces in an interminable series of wars until Greece was eventually taken over by Rome.⁸⁴

Toynbee's idea casts light on our present situation. Just as the ancient Greeks were guilty of the sin of pride regarding their own past accomplishments and so failed to respond in new ways to new conditions, so America, in idolizing its own past self as “a nation of immigrants,” is refusing to recognize new facts that require new responses. In our immigration policy, far from pursuing any rational end, we are merely trying to fulfill a glorified self-image. Like Shakespeare's Timon, we are vain

about our own *goodness*, and our exercise of that goodness ignores rational self-interest (as well as the real interests of those we think we are helping). To a bemused world that cannot understand our mindless generosity, we say, like Timon,

You mistake my love;
I gave it freely ever, and there's none
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.

Because America has been so singularly blessed in the past, we have come to regard ourselves as a chosen people. No disaster can befall us. Therefore, we disregard the common-sense precautions that every other country in the world is most careful to take. And, like Timon, we may be headed for a fall, when the very people we have so carelessly benefited shall turn against us and rend us.

Global Moralism and Individual Morality

Robert Nisbet has argued that a streak of moralism in the American character, a tendency to frame both foreign and domestic issues in millennialist imagery and eternal absolutes, has led the nation into unrealistic policies over and over in our history. In foreign relations, President Kennedy's promise "to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship . . . to assure the success and survival of liberty" led us into the Vietnam quagmire without our forming a realistic strategy or rationale for that war. In domestic race relations, we can see the same moralism at work in the excesses of affirmative action and racial quotas. It didn't matter that forced school desegregation or open admissions were destroying the very school systems they were meant to improve. The hypnotizing rightness of the cause of equality blinded policy makers and federal judges to all other considerations.

A similar moralistic blindness now informs our public attitudes toward immigration and multiculturalism. As I have said earlier, the idea of our equality and responsibility, not just to our fellow citizens, but to every person and culture in the world, has become a kind of absolute. In the light of that abso-

lute, all other values become irrelevant.

The global conception of morality results, I would argue, in a distortion of morality rather than its fulfillment. Ethics could be defined as a sense of responsibility toward other human beings and the consequent willingness to put restraints on one's own behavior. As a personal development, a sense of ethics normally originates in the family and among those we are close to and then is extended outward in widening circles to other human beings. The distortion of this *natural basis of morality* is brought about when it is applied in the abstract to collectivities of human beings, or even to the human race as a whole. Even thoughtful liberals are beginning to realize the impossible burden such an obligation places on human nature. As Christopher Lasch has written:

My study of the family suggested . . . that the capacity for loyalty is stretched too thin when it tries to attach itself to the hypothetical solidarity of the whole human race. It needs to attach itself to specific people and places, not to an abstract ideal of universal human rights. We love particular men and women, not humanity in general. The dream of universal brotherhood, because it rests on the sentimental fiction that men and women are all the same, cannot survive the discovery that they differ.⁸⁵

This sentimental fiction arises, I think, when we take our own personal experience of love or ethical responsibility and say: "Because I feel this for one or a few people, and because this feeling is good, I must feel the same way toward everyone, I must act on the same basis toward the entire human race as a collective whole." Once people have taken this stand, and especially if they try to convert it into *public policy*, all rational limits of common sense or self-interest are thrown out the window. Ultimately, this obligation must be imposed by political force, since no one can actually love the whole human race. What starts, then, as a personal sense of compassion and responsibility for *individuals* ends as a collectivized ethics which compels men to love the foreigner (not just the individual foreigner, but all foreigners) more than their own.

Examples of this manipulation of compassion abound. A 1988

NBC News special on immigration, hosted by Tom Brokaw, told about some citizens of Lowell, Massachusetts, who were so moved by the plight of a recently arrived Cambodian girl that they helped her whole family enter the U.S. and settle in Massachusetts. On the face of it, it was simply the story of a generous, humane response to people in need. But it was, in fact, pure propaganda, enveloping the issue of refugee assistance in a veil of quasi-religious emotions. In this compassion play, the Cambodians were portrayed less as actual human beings than as *sacred objects*, while the Americans, in the act of helping them, experienced “redemption.” The few locals who expressed unhappiness about the Cambodian influx into Lowell were portrayed as backwoods bigots. The not-so-subtle message was that Americans owe a moral obligation of refuge to *everyone in the world*—and that anyone who disagrees with that proposition is less than human. Thus the story of a voluntary act of compassion became an exercise in collective moral blackmail.

National Suicide as an Escape from Self-Knowledge

It is here, with this idea of an ill-conceived but powerfully felt and ideologically enforced moral duty, that we may have found part of the answer to our earlier question: where do people get the unquestioning confidence that a scheme which goes against all human experience will work so well here? The truth, I suspect, is that people know deep in their own minds that it will not work; but their moral ideology and the fierce social sanctions supporting it forbid them to think or utter this truth. To admit that their global morality is mistaken would mean admitting that they are, *by their own standards*, “racist”—the very worst thing that anyone can be by those standards. Consequently they repress the knowledge of the disaster their policies are leading to by, paradoxically, rushing ever more fervently toward it. It is like a man in the grip of an addiction. To abstain and thus face himself would be unbearable, it would cause too much anxiety; so to flee from that anxiety that is the price of self-knowledge and freedom, he plunges with ever more abandon toward the very thing that he knows will destroy him. The only difference is that in America’s case the object

of the addiction is not a harmful drug, but a confused morality which tells us that it is “racist” to preserve our own society.

Hybris and Nemesis

This infantile belief that we can somehow save the world (or at least our own souls) by allowing the whole world to move here, this inflated idealism that sees America, much as the French revolutionists saw France, as the “Christ of Nations,” is bound up with a classic flaw in human nature: the unwillingness to accept rational limits. Irving Babbitt’s analysis of this age-old moral failing has profound implication for us today:

Man’s expansive conceit, as the Greeks saw, produces insolent excess (*hybris*) and this begets blindness (*âte*) which in turn brings on Nemesis. Expansive conceit tempered by Nemesis—this is a definition of an essential aspect of human nature that finds considerable support in the facts of history. Man never rushes forward so confidently, it would sometimes seem, as when he is on the very brink of the abyss.⁸⁶

V. *What To Do*

Where, then, is the virtuous pride that once distinguished Americans? where the indignant spirit, which, in defence of principle, hazarded a revolution to attain that independence now *insidiously* attacked?

Alexander Hamilton

Once we recognize the truth, that America has the moral right to control immigration on the basis of its own cultural—and environmental—self-preservation, we can begin to address the issue of meaningful immigration reform. It is not within the scope of this essay to go into details on such a complex question. For the present, I only want to suggest the outlines of a policy that will avoid national suicide.

(1) We need to reduce the number of legal immigrants in absolute terms, to the point where their sheer numbers will no longer overwhelm our society and culture or produce a disastrous swelling of our population. In place of our present system, which has a floor (quota immigration) with no ceiling above it (unlimited non-quota immigration and refugees), we must have a ceiling on total immigration. A limit of perhaps 200,000 per year would be reasonable. This would still leave us, by the way, with the most generous immigration policy on earth.

(2) The government needs to do whatever is necessary to stop illegal immigration. Despite the widespread belief that illegal

immigration is uncontrollable, the fact is that the federal government has not been serious about this problem so far. If the government treated the problem seriously, it could stop illegal immigration overnight. Also, as Peter H. Schuck and Rogers M. Smith of Yale University have argued in *Citizenship Without Consent*, we need to change our current interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment which gives citizenship automatically to children of illegal aliens—a practice that undermines the consensual basis of citizenship and rewards lawbreaking.

It should be recognized that these proposals do not mean a return to the national and racial restrictions of the 1920s legislation; they do not mean exclusion of non-Europeans; but they do mean a rejection of radical multiculturalism and the visionary idea that the U.S. should become the “Mirror of the World.” We will be signaling to prospective immigrants that resettlement in the United States indicates a readiness to adopt the civilization of this country, including its common language. Immigrants should understand that they cannot expect to treat the U.S. as a mere extension of their home countries.

It should be made clear that these reforms are not aimed at non-European peoples as such, but at the huge numbers of immigrants that are altering the very composition—and destiny—of our nation. The rights and opportunities of new American citizens are not threatened by such changes in the law as are suggested here. But our recent immigrants and ethnic minorities should understand, as I’ve tried to show in this essay, that the endless continuation of uncontrolled immigration can only lead to the destruction of the very society that they supposedly want so much to be part of. By slowing immigration, we will give recent immigrants the opportunity and time to assimilate, much as the slow-down of immigration from 1921 to 1965 led to a diminution of anti-foreign prejudice and helped assimilation to occur.

There must be a middle ground that recognizes the rights of minorities and appreciates the values of a cosmopolitan mix in society at the same time that it affirms the historic character of our culture and America’s right to preserve that character. As columnist Samuel Francis has written, the survival of American culture requires “a new myth of the nation as a dis-

tinctive cultural and political force that cannot be universalized for the rest of the planet or digested by the globalist regime.”⁸⁷ What is proposed here is not a reactionary restoration of some vanished American past, but a reaffirmation of traditional principles in light of present realities. Our national self-concept *is* complex. The point is to prevent it from becoming so complex that it disintegrates. There must be room in our national mythos both for ethnic variety and the reaffirmation of our historic civilizational character.

If genuine reforms are thought to be impossible because of opposition by minority groups, I would like the reader to consider how much more difficult *all* political decisions are going to be in the future when every issue will have to pass a minefield of ethnic and racial blocs. That is why it is vital that we act now while there is still time—if there is still time. *Action requires that the great mass of Americans, whatever their color, who care for this civilization and want it to be preserved, make their voices heard in a bloc, in the same way that highly motivated minority groups act when their interests are at stake.* It is not enough merely to express *concerns* about immigration. People are doing that all the time, and it accomplishes little in the way of waking the nation up from its hypnotic passivity on this issue. On the contrary, the mere venting of anxieties and resentments only strengthens the open-borders orthodoxy by enabling it to dismiss all those who are concerned about immigration as xenophobes. It is time, rather, *for the American people to legitimize the idea of meaningful immigration reform* and then to enact fair and substantive changes in the law along the lines I have suggested here. All that is lacking, as the result of a quarter-century of orchestrated guilt, is the conviction that it is morally right—and the will to do it.

In any case, something must be done, and soon. The disdain felt by many Americans today for the 1920s nativists, for restricting immigration too tightly, will be nothing compared with the curses that future generations of Americans, mired in a divided and decaying society, will pile on *our* heads for erring too far in the opposite direction.

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Originally published by the American Immigration Control Foundation in 1990, *The Path to National Suicide* represented the first sustained attempt to show that the post-1965 immigration, by transforming America's historic ethnic and racial composition, was the main driving force behind multiculturalism and the dismemberment of America.

Mr. Auster's argument helped make the cultural consequences of non-Western immigration a topic of mainstream debate. His appearance on CNN's "Crossfire" in 1991 marked the first time the cultural impact of immigration was critically discussed on national television. His April 1992 article in *National Review*, "The Forbidden Topic," was the first article in any mainstream national magazine that criticized immigration for its impact on America's ethnic and cultural identity. The cultural argument has helped turn many former immigration supporters into immigration restrictionists. Mr. Auster's subsequent booklets on immigration have been *Huddled Clichés: Exposing the Fraudulent Arguments that Have Opened America's Borders to the World*, and *Erasing America: The Politics of the Borderless Nation*, both available from American Immigration Control Foundation (www.aicfoundation.com).

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