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The Costs of Multiculturalism

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THE COSTS OF MULTICULTURALISM

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"Can we live together?"
Rodney King

Introduction:

In 1903 the black sociologist W.E.B. DuBois wrote: "the problem of the 20th century is the color line." Today this prophetic sentence might have to be modified to read: "the problem of the twenty-first century will be multiculturalism **on top of the color line.**" Lebanon, Yugoslavia, the former USSR, Africa, South Africa, India, Belgium, France, England, Spain - the problems of states with populations of mixed backgrounds are glaringly visible. The three most basic questions in all cases are: 1) How much self-determination of culturally different groups must a state allow to conform to universally established standards of human and civil rights? 2) How much fragmentation or separation into cultural lobbies (or political interest groups) can a state take before it becomes unmanageable or, at worst, desintegrates? 3) Should the three branches of government allow politics to be designed along the lines of racial, cultural or ethnic difference? Or, all three questions in a nutshell, how valid is the 18th century political universalism, on which the invention of the American Republic is based, in a fragmented modern world.

The Debate.

"Once America was a microcosm of European nationalities, " says Molefi Asante, chairman of the African-American studies department at Temple University and proponent of an Afrocentric curriculum for blacks, "today America is a microcosm of the world."[1] Does the new global quality of the ethnic diversity in the U.S. make it expedient to supplant the notion of a "failed" melting pot with that of a "new and improved" multicultural society?

Multiculturalism is a relatively vague concept with a set of contradictory hidden agendas; these contradictions multiply when multiculturalism is translated from a theory of pedagogy or of representation into political practice. If a new politics of multiculturalism

would ensure the creation of a more tolerant and democratic world most people would accept it readily. Yet, the historical record of multicultural societies has not been promising, even less that of multiracial societies.[2] The collapse of the "Vielvölkerstaat" Austria-Hungary ushered in a series of wars over nationalist agendas which have continued into the present. The most ethnically diverse contemporary power, the former Soviet Union, is beset by ethnic conflicts as are the new national subunits that are forming after its desintegration. The history of Lebanon, formerly known as the "Switzerland of the Near East," does not augur well for what used to be praised as a model of ethnic coexistence: consociationalism, or, in the current terminology, corporate multiculturalism.[3] And the current strife in Yugoslavia should be a lesson that strong ethnic bonding which is all the rage the world over makes for bad practical politics, particularly when it comes to solving interethnic conflicts. Yet, writes Time magazine in April 1990 in a self-congratulatory mood, America is different; for in the U.S. multiculturalism was created by a (largely) voluntary immigration, a process which has been a source of the country's great strength. That may well be, if we follow Time for a moment in its blatant disregard for the very groups that keep the multicultural agendas in the U.S. alive, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the breakup of the American political will into competing ethnic lobbies across the racial fault line - one result of the "ethnification" of America since 1965 - creates a number of new problems, many of them unintended or unexpected. For one thing the empowerment of discrete ethnic groups has not reduced conflict between them. Interethnic and particularly interracial friction between African Americans, Hispanics, Koreans, Jews and Italians actually seems to be on the rise as the ugly incidents in Washington D.C., in Miami, in New York City's Central Park, in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Houston and Seattle attest. And divisions on American campuses along racial and ethnic lines have hardened, perhaps not to the degree that the media would make us believe, but the climate is bad enough to warrant attention. (The media are not exactly innocent bystanders in the creation of a new acrimonious mood.) The current dispute over the content of education, whether it should pay more attention to an allegedly universal (but primarily Euro-American) core or to the demands of multi-ethnic Americans for instruction in their respective cultures, is for one of the critics of multiculturalism, Diane Ravitch, a symptom that the old motto "E pluribus unum" in danger of becoming "E pluribus plures." Arthur Schlesinger Jr., in a similarly jeremiadic mood, diagnoses in the new multicultural orthodoxy a "disuniting of America," and Robert Hughes suggests that the current "fraying of Ameri-

ca" will create the sort of factions that, in George Washington's words, were the biggest threat to the young republic.[4]

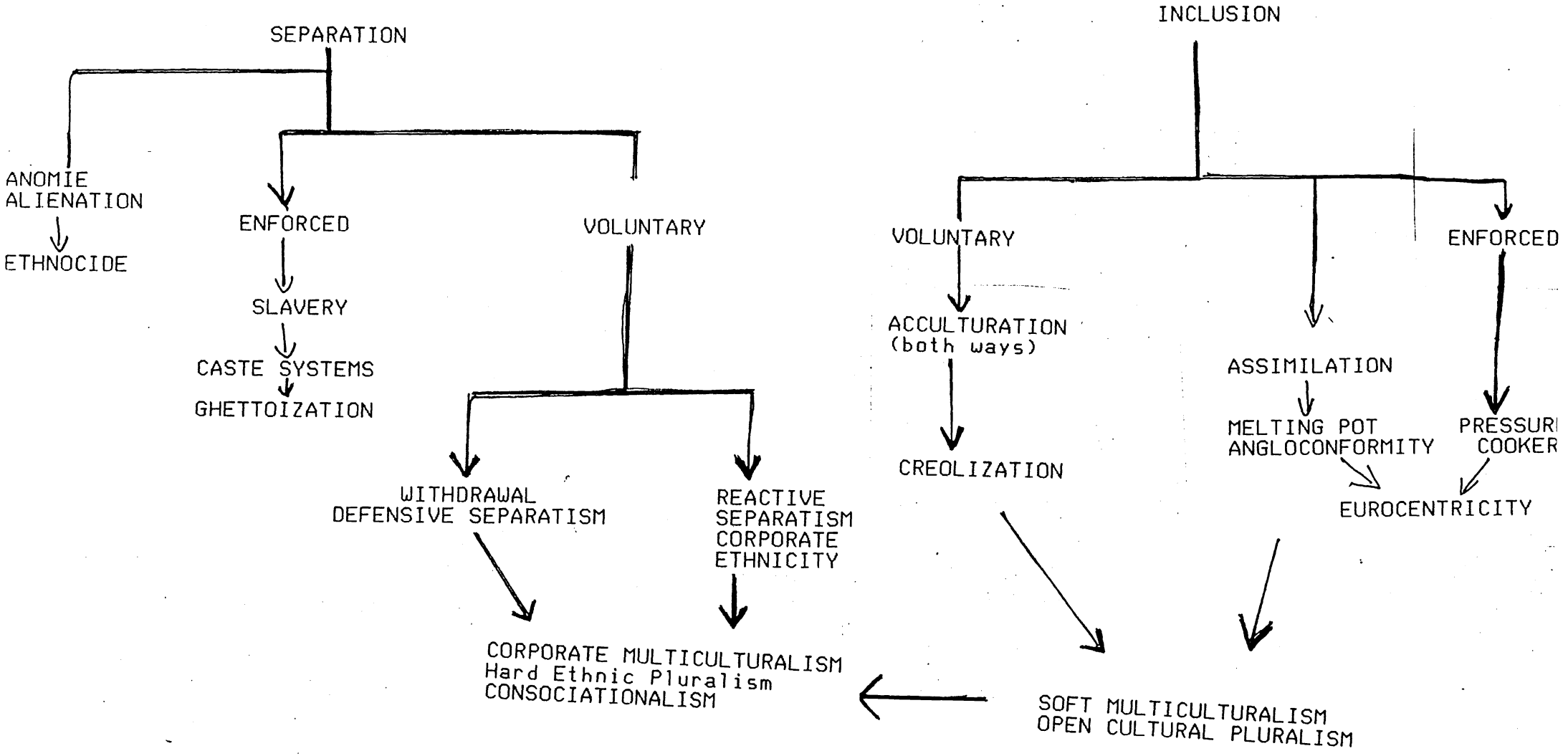
In his book One Nation Divisible Richard Polenberg points to a radical change in the nation's structure of feeling: in the thirties America was characterized by sharp regional contrasts in language, cuisine and lifestyles, yet its population stood unified behind the universalism of the American creed, which found a popular expression in John Steinbeck's novels and Frank Capra's films. By the nineties American everyday culture and landscape with its TV-networked motels, fast food chains and identical suburban shopping malls had become thoroughly homogenized, yet the population was more fragmented than ever along ethnic and ideological lines. In contradiction to the theories of modernization so dear to the fifties and sixties fragmentation along nationalist and ethnic lines has increased as everyday culture became ever more unified. Behind this change lie ideological, economic and demographic shifts, and consequently a realignment of the classic American compromise between the individual, the group, and the polity, a realignment based on a new appreciation of cultural difference.

INCLUSION, EXCLUSION, AND AMERICAN HISTORY[5]

Let us pause for a moment and ask, what were the historical choices for inclusion or exclusion of ethnic groups in the American polity? What choices were made in treating minority groups or nations within the state? It will be seen that all variants of exclusion and inclusion are still alive, either as historical memory or as political agendas. For practical purposes the following ideal-type-taxonomy will draw most examples from the historical experience of African Americans, of native Americans and of Hispanics in the U.S.A..[6]

EXCLUSION

In American history the dominant group of white, Anglosaxon Protestant men has used all sorts of differential variants to ensure the exclusion of blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and women from power. America began with the massive exclusion of the original population. By settling and taking the land in America white European settlers literally "displaced" the native Americans which in history led to large scale disruption.[7] Many native American groups became alienated both from their own native culture and were kept separate from the dominant cultures, usually by forcible exclusion. In the wake of this historic displacement there is still today a heritage of social marginality, anomic with-


SEPARATION
ANOMIE
ALIENATION
ETHNOCIDE
ENFORCED
SLAVERY
CASTE SYSTEMS
GHETTOIZATION
VOLUNTARY
WITHDRAWAL
DEFENSIVE SEPARATISM
REACTIVE
SEPARATISM
CORPORATE
ETHNICITY
CORPORATE MULTICULTURALISM
Hard Ethnic Pluralism
CONSOCIATIONALISM
INCLUSION
VOLUNTARY
ACCULTURATION
(both ways)
CREOLIZATION
ASSIMILATION
MELTING POT
ANGLOCONFORMITY
EUROCENTRICITY
ENFORCED
PRESSURE
COOKER
SOFT MULTICULTURALISM
OPEN CULTURAL PLURALISM

drawal, and deculturative stress. A current example of such disruption are the socalled triracial isolates who are of mixed African American, Native American and white blood, but who have lost cultural continuity with any one of these groups. Their fate may be called a form of ethnocide, the destruction not of a group, but of most cultural bearings.[8] (Many of these groups are now trying to be recognized as Native Americans and are reconstructing a "heritage" either from scratch or from anthropology books.) The more radical step would lead to genocide: This implied the active destruction of certain groups by straight-forward physical extermination as in the case of some Native American groups, by excessive labor as in South American slavery, by benign neglect as in the case of Native Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries or by a combination of these. That both the fear and the rhetoric of genocide are alive is documented by the leader of the Black Muslims, Louis Farrakhan, who claims that "white" America is using the aids virus for genocidal purposes, a claim believed by a large group of African-Americans.

North-American slavery entailed the enforced spatial, social, and political separation of the cultural groups and their spheres along racial lines on the grounds that enlightenment universalism (Civil Rights) did not apply to inferior races. This legitimation of hegemony was accompanied by a strong belief in cultural or racial hierarchy and evolution. We find this belief persisting after the Civil War, in the creation of the Black Codes, in direct segregation in the South articulated in a system of sharecropping (i.e. economic marginalization), but also in the structural segregation through real-estate-induced ghettoization in the North. The National Association for the Advancement of White People led by David Duke still pursues a politics of racial separation along the lines of white supremacy.

But separation may also be a form of making the best of a bad deal, i.e. as a withdrawal and defensive separatism on the part of the group which is the object of discrimination.[9] Native Americans withdrew to "reservations", a term that expresses both the white and Native American desire for separate spheres though for entirely different reasons. Many blacks had become sceptical of the all-American values of integration and of universalism and of proprietary individualism as distant and unachievable promises. To make up for their frustration of political or social hopes they invested their energies in separate institutions, in the church, in clubs, leisure activities, and street-life.[10] Their cultural tradition is "overdetermined" as a compensatory mechanism to make up for the lack of social and political participation. This is the reason why the church has become the political center of

black life in the South or in some Northern inner cities. Culture heroes (religion, music, sports) become more important and have more credibility than political figures who by virtue of their involvement with the white power structure are considered Uncle Toms or compromisers. This overdetermination of culture is typical of the black rural population, of the black church in the South; and of passive sections of the so-called urban underclass.[11] The second, more militant stage of this voluntary withdrawal has been called a reactive separatism: here we witness active resistance, chiliastic separatism, aggressive nationalism and race consciousness. Now the will to separate along racial lines is encouraged by both sides, and the discriminated group reacts with a conscious rejection of Western universalism as colonial hypocrisy and of Western achievement orientation as pathological. Such radical boundary maintenance may lead to the demand for a separate state/nation/territory and compensation for slavery and slave labour, demands which have surfaced with some regularity in the political scene until today. Variations of this position may be found in all Back-To-Africa-Movements; Markus Garvey; radical Black Cultural Nationalism; the followers of Frantz Fanon and Ron Karenga; the Black Muslims and the active parts of the urban underclass; and in certain current leadership such as Leonard Jeffries, Molefi Asante, Louis Farrakhan, Sonny Carson and others. The black movement has inspired militant Native American movements as well. So much for separatist models.

INCLUSION

The integrative variants begin with assimilation which in its most direct form may be called a form of incorporation: The dominant society simply absorbs and incorporates the minority without changing its own nature. The political and social identity, i.e. Western universalism and the individualism of the American creed, are accepted by the minority without reservations. Anglo-conformity is the goal in the public sphere where the superiority of Western enlightenment culture is acknowledged. There is also a tacit belief in cultural hierarchies, but accompanied by a hope both of liberal whites and blacks for "advancing the race". Biological mergers are accepted. Otherwise ethnic culture, such as there is, is considered largely a private matter nursed on week-ends in cultural enclaves such as little Italies, Southsides and Chinatowns. A slightly more radical version of incorporation has been called the melting pot: the term assumes a willingness on the part of the "other" to "melt into" the mainstream culturally and socially for the price of full citizenship by adding a minor ingredient to the common pot which, however, remains Eurocentric. The dominant political and social system is accepted. There is no attempt to actively maintain

separate spheres or identities along racial lines. Intermarriage is accepted. Full citizenship is more important than culture, hence issues of class come before race and culture. This model was embraced by civil rights fighters such as Martin L. King, the NAACP; the middleclass of the South, the old left, the CPUSA. E. Franklin Frazier's Black Bourgeoisie; Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma; and by many white neoconservatives today.

Some neoconservative blacks such as Thomas Sowell consider the free market to be a sort of pressure cooker. If the goal of minorities is to reach a certain life style then the shedding of that cultural identity which is incompatible with the achievement orientation, so they say, is inevitable. Making it (middle class status) is more important than the warmth of a subculture. This attitude precludes the total acceptance of the American economic system as a social leveler. Culture remains relatively meaningless or marginal unless it can be effectively marketed (as in television). Affirmative action on the basis of "difference" is rejected as counterproductive or demeaning as is the idea of race as a social or economic determinant.[12] Some new black elites who are products of prep schools and private universities would hold this view.

A more sophisticated idea of non-hegemonic acculturation is that of creolization: In the course of American history both an ethnification of Anglo-American culture and an Americanization of ethnic cultures may be observed: this dual process of adjustment results in something native and new, i.e. creole.[13] This process is part of what one might call the "cultural unconscious" which goes on regardless of what people believe in or think they see. An example: most of those white Americans who believe in the primacy of Euro-American culture do not know (or care) that their central traditions of popular music and dance are black-derived. Indeed, even the white followers of David Duke cannot walk, talk, sing or dance without tacitly acknowledging the black heritage. If this "unconscious" process of give and take could be made conscious in a spirit of acceptance, of tolerance and curiosity and if it were actively encouraged by both groups in a spirit of liberal expectancy in an open society, America would be a less conflict-ridden place. This notion rests on the idea of a basic permeability and "instability" of all cultures: hence the cultural canon should be open to challenges, there should be no particular cultural dominance and no boundary maintenance up or down, but instead an active and open debate about these issues. The ideas of cultural hierarchy or of evolution are rejected. The end result is a new hybrid culture. The problem is that though creolization is a historical fact of non-hegemo-

nic and often unconscious cultural exchange, it would not work as social policy. Creolization, precisely because it represents - in Hegelian terms - the "cunning of culture", cannot be consciously enforced. The closest approximation to its goals may be found in the idea of cultural pluralism.

Cultural pluralism, sometimes called "liberal pluralism" or "soft multiculturalism," is inspired and motivated by one central ideal: the tolerance of difference. The coexistence of several cultures is accepted along the lines of racial descent, at same time there is assimilation and mixing in the social, economic and political spheres. A fitting metaphor is that of the salad bowl where different cultural leaves are united by one political dressing to make one meal. In the language of the French revolution a difference is made between the ethnic "homme" and the universal "citoyen." Culture is primarily a private matter, but has relevance as a historical and strategic argument and for consciousness raising; it may also be used to mark areas for the redress of historical discrimination. Ethnic difference is domesticated within a social and political universalism, which is accepted, albeit in a spirit of critical participation and a constant state of alert on the part of the minority. There is only soft boundary maintenance because ethnic boundaries are ignored as an significant marker in the social or political spheres. Bilingualism is accepted as a transitional measure to achieve full citizenship and participation. "Affirmative action" is understood as a temporary and strategic means of achieving parity, but refused as a permanent institution. Equality of chances should be guaranteed by a network of social services, but equality of results is rejected. Cultural Pluralism would acknowledge difference, but in a basically cooperative, tolerant spirit which is guided by a belief in basic civil rights watched over by the Supreme Court. Certain members of the liberal black and white middle-class and a great number of "social democratic" scholars would embrace this political utopia. Cultural pluralism represents the American model evoked by many Europeans involved in the debate.[14] Unfortunately, this social democratic middle ground that Michael Walzer and Richard Rorty stake out for a pluralist civil society is shrinking. The model is in danger of losing support among blacks or whites on either extreme of the current controversy.[15] Its chances for success have been overtaken by recent events in Los Angeles, Houston and Seattle.

Much more problematical is the idea of a radical multiculturalism, sometimes called "corporate or strong pluralism" or "consociationalism". Unfortunately corporate multicultural-

ism is much easier to translate into practice than soft multiculturalism because it enjoys the support of what Claude Lévi-Strauss once called the supreme cultural universal: ethnocentrism. It envisages the permanent coexistence of several, separate cultures along racial and ethnic lines. The consent and voluntarism of a civil society is rejected for the determinism of biological, racial, and ethnic difference, and the hard lines of difference enjoy the protection of law.[16] The maintenance of separate cultural identities is a goal of a separate but equal educational systems. This brings us back to the apartheid legislation of Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1896. One demand, advanced by Hispanics, would call for a maintenance bilingualism, i.e. for a permanently bilingual and bicultural society. In terms of identity there is an extreme boundary maintenance which translates geographically into separate neighborhoods, separate school districts, and a permanent debate as to who belongs to which group; the color, race and ethnic line becomes an important marker for a proportional distribution of assets. At colleges and universities groups demand and get separate programs and housing. Social and political institutions are set up according to cultural determinants. Political participation proceeds by statistical quotas, economic participation by permanent set asides according to groups and cultural aggregates and the end result is not the equality of chances, but an equality of results on the basis of statistical parity. Cultural particularism clearly overrides universalism. There is a fierce rejection of "Euro-American individualism": instead the new bond is ethnic group loyalty.

This sort of consociationalism benefits most of all the ethnic elites, the bureaucrats of multiculturalism, that are necessary to maintain this proportional division of assets. Once these are in office they will do everything in their power to stay. There is a tendency of mutual reinforcement across the racial divide. Leonard Jeffries speaks of the African sun people as being superior to the European ice people, while David Duke believes in the racial inferiority of blacks. This type of radical or corporate multiculturalism which believes in the political maintenance of "intrinsic" cultural difference is of course much more problematical. Its end result would be the sort of immobilism without violence that is characteristic of Belgian politics, or with violence of the Lebanon. What are the chances of such divisive ideologies in the U.S.?

UNIVERSALISM VS PARTICULARISM

On the most fundamental level we witness an old battle over the meaning of culture. The tension in the motto on every dollar bill - e pluribus unum - describes the federeal com-

promise, but it also runs between one universal **political** culture (protected by the constitution and the amendments) and many **different particularistic** cultures.[17] On the one hand there is the unifying concept of one **culture** of "mankind" (the word itself gives rise to some doubt). It is defined as the glorious project of enlightenment, a liberating project designed to lead humanity out of fear, darkness and discrimination, to deliver people from tribalistic, primordial or ancestral bondage and to accept each individual on his/her own merits. This is the essence of an older liberal humanism which inspires what Gunnar Myrdal called the American Creed.[18] On the other hand we find a differentiating concept of **cultures**, of groups and aggregates, that are distinctly separate, but all entitled to mutual recognition and respect.[19] This understanding of culture interprets the difference between, say, Chicanos and blacks as an entitlement not only to be unique in cultural matters, but also to differential treatment in politics. And such differential treatment would not be accorded on the basis of individual merit, but to individuals as members of "racial" or ethnic groups. The idea of "ethnic difference", which under the univeralist credo was considered a matter of the private sphere, has since the 1960s become thoroughly politicized, encouraged by the 60s' slogan that the personal is political. The two concepts (one political culture vs. many ethnic cultures) mark now the two extreme positions in a deep political conflict.[20]

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN NORM

In the first immigration phase between 1830 and 1920, when ethnic difference was associated with cultural inferiority, poverty and bad working conditions, there was a powerful motive to assimilate to the Anglo-American norm of the good life. Many well-meaning progressive reformers quite cheerfully took this norm for granted. Even the ethnic groups themselves contributed to the demise of their own traditions if these stood in the way of economic betterment. The resulting "melting pot" of former immigrants, however, remained white, Eurocentric and therefore "encapsulated in white ethnocentrism".[21] Under the protection of the universal norm that aimed for social and political assimilation a pragmatic cultural pluralism worked moderately well, but only for some groups. "The trouble with American pluralism", Stephen Steinberg writes in The Ethnic Myth. Race, Ethnicity and Class in America, "derives from the fact that it was built upon systematic inequalities .... This was the pitfall - the fatal flaw - that robbed ethnic pluralism of its cultural innocence." To which one might add: "inequalities made more systematic by racial divisions." Whereas the allegedly "color-blind" American Creed swept some white ethnic groups into

its fold, there remained the problem of racism and its baneful social consequences of open or tacit discrimination.[22] Alexis de Tocqueville was prophetic when he wrote in the 1840s that racism when it is removed from the laws withdraws into customs. How does one overcome institutional structures and racist habits of the heart and how does one compensate for the damages of discrimination?

CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE RISE OF ETHNIC CULTURE

It is important to remember that the rise of ethnicity began as a fight to stop the (racist) sins against the universalism of the American Creed.[23] But it was the Civil Rights Movement of black Americans that also set in motion a rethinking of ethnic difference, thus of the relationship between (private) culture and (public) politics. After the Supreme Court decision Brown vs. Board of Education Topeka, Kansas of 1954 established that separate facilities for blacks were "inherently unequal", the notion of racial or cultural difference itself was removed from all legal consideration. To "make a difference" was considered unconstitutional on the grounds that historical experience showed such difference to lead to separate and **unequal** conditions.[24] Federal institutions were called upon to undo differential treatment and to ensure that blacks were given an "equal opportunity" as members of a color-blind political culture. We should not underestimate the impact of the experience of exclusion on the collective consciousness of African Americans. Few blacks could forget that it took America's 18th century political universalism 178 years to recognize them as political equals. By this time the accumulated experience of that exclusion from mainstream universalism had nurtured a special African American Culture which was being recognized and appreciated for the first time on a national level.[25] Indeed, patterns of cultural nationalism and of a defensive black ethnocentrism were deeply inscribed in that culture as a consequence of previous exclusion.[26]

THE VIETNAM TRAUMA

The rise of new ideologies of black cultural nationalism or of white ethnicity at this particular time has a lot to do with the failure of the American Creed, with the decline of a broad middle class ideology after the Vietnam War and Watergate and concurrently with the demise of interethnic "class consciousness" as a factor of social and political orientation. The decline of the older ideological belief in universalist principles that would make Americans into <u>one people</u>, indeed that would turn all mankind into the <u>Family of Man</u> (sic), as a much-visited exhibit of photography was called in the fifties, had a lot to do

with the loss of faith in America subsequent to the Vietnam War. The Vietnam trauma gave rise to a radical rejection of mainstream values and speeded the rise of a counter-culture which fed on the riches of a hitherto repressed black culture. Then radical feminism defined power as masculine and white, and the Watergate scandal reduced executive authority. "AmeriKKKa", it seemed, was a construct of pure repression, the American creed was a sham, the American dream a nightmare. Add to this a growing criticism of the urban capitalist moloch that - with the help of the military-industrial complex - was set upon the destruction of our natural world. At the same time a post-fordist mode of production led to massive deindustrialization which broke the older class solidarity of workers across racial and ethnic lines, created a split labor market and, as Richard Rorty and others have claimed, led to a deepening "secession" between the successful and the down and out during the Reagan era.[27] In this situation of American self-doubt and declining class options the older ethnic memories acquired the glow of a pastoral alternative. Not only ethnic gemeinschaft against a burnt-out anonymous gesellschaft, but feminine, ethnic culture against phallocratic, logocentric, patriarchal power, small-is-beautiful against centralist homogeneity.[28] The sixties saw a general flowering of non-hegemonic sub-communities, into which the "new" ethnicity with its liberationist Herderian ethos fitted like hand in glove.

THE VALORIZATION OF DIFFERENCE

Radical anthropologists had been first in fighting the tacit racist and hierarchical assumptions of evolutionary paradigms ("blacks are not ready yet") by insisting on a decentered, non-hierarchical or decolonialized view of cultures. A new set of scholars in the tradition of Melville Herskovits (The Myth of the Negro Past 1941) pointed out that black culture was not pathological or inferior, but both "beautiful on its own terms" and "historically different." To undo the "marks of oppression" the battle cry "black is beautiful" of black cultural nationalists called for a reversal of attitudes, and indeed certain black ways of dressing, talking and dancing set a new agenda in the, appropriately named, counterculture of white students. This new appreciation of post-colonial cultural forms set the stage for a critique of enlightenment philosophy and ushered in a wave of European discontent with Western civilization. Though this critique had old roots (Las Casas, Montaigne) its last wave was first inspired by Horkheimer & Adorno's Dialectic of Englightenment (1945) and Herbert Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man, but owed more to the work of French deconstructionists. These took their inspiration from Nietzsche and Heidegger,

both critics of the enlightenment project, and the latter a bete noire of the Frankfurt school. What the fighters for Civil Rights had identified as the sins **AGAINST** 18th century enlightenment turned out to be, enlarged by the lenses of French theory, the sin **OF** enlightenment. The sin, its original core, amounted to the exclusion of the colonial Other from "universalistic" world views.

ETHNICITY AND THE DILEMMA OF DIFFERENCE

Most Americans would probably embrace multiculturalism if they could be sure that its implementation would distribute life chances more evenly and make the country more tolerant.[29] This explains why the introduction of affirmative action programs was initially uncontroversial. Most Americans accepted Lyndon B. Johnson's metaphor that a runner who had been chained for three centuries could not compete in the rat race without a "head start." Hence affirmative steps were taken to compensate for the many visible and invisible obstacles which despite the fall of all legal barriers and the introduction of equal opportunity kept blacks out of certain schools and jobs. As Gertrude Ezorsky writes, "we need formal discrimination in favor of blacks to offset the effects of persistent informal discrimination against them."[30]

The combination of factors, first the new appreciation for the legitimacy of black culture and then the policy of affirmative action did much good; today there is a solid black upper middle and middle class which penetrated into many professions that were classically white domains. Many blacks from all social strata have embraced their own traditions with new appreciation as is evidenced in the flowering of film and music. Yet, there were unintended consequences. In order to achieve the promise of the color-blind creed of one universal culture which would treat all Americans regardless of race, religion and national origin, the new social policy had to define on the basis of anthropological criteria of cultural difference who was entitled to "affirmative action", to set-asides and to preferential treatment. The question "who is a minority" became a thoroughly confusing and confused legal issue.[31] Though affirmative action was intended as a short-range remedy to undo long-range social and economic difference, it hardened the ideological and political structures of difference. First it encouraged what Freud has called "the narcissism of small difference" and refined the cult of ethnic sensitivity.[32] The second dilemma was that this desire to implement Civil Rights justice and social equality required a code of legislative criteria of ethnic or racial difference to establish who was "black", thus revitali-

zing the anthropological code of "difference" that had buttressed the old racist system of the South along the color line.[33] The North American color line, as Papa Doc Duvalier noted, marks a somatic "difference" imposed by the racial paranoia of white Anglo-Saxon men. The shrewd former ruler of Haiti once was asked by an American journalist how many people of white blood there were left in Haiti. Papa Doc replied: "About 95%." When the journalist expressed disbelief in view of the nearly all-black population of Haiti, Papa Doc asked how the Americans defined who was black. The journalist replied "anyone with a drop of black blood" and Papa Doc responded: "anyone with a drop of white blood, that's exactly how we define whites."[34] Papa Doc makes visible that the color line is a line of pathological white fear, and that therefore any "affirmative action" based on its somatic norms stabilizes that older somatic divide first institutionalized by "dead white racists."[35]

The new valorization of ethnic difference and its attendant wave of ethnic pride clearly did serve to build a better sense of self. But defensive identity politics also encourages the growth of a new ethnocentrism which in turn leads to a strengthening of ethnic boundaries as a defense not only against the dominant culture, but also against **other** groups. The current black antisemitism is only one indication that identity politics sets in motion an ugly dialectic of "my otherness is more legitimate than your otherness."[36] The right to an ethnocentric view is sometimes justified by the experience of actual social and political discrimination. The argument runs that people who have suffered racism cannot be racists themselves, or, put in other words, black antisemitism is - in the larger context of American race relations - politically legitimate and ought to be accepted by the Jews.[37] Proof of suffering then legitimates ethnochauvinism. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the anti-hegemonic discourse of many ethnic groups reads like an exercize in comparative victimization.[38] The grand recit of America has moved from the successes of the melting pot to the victims of hegemony.

DIFFERENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The legal scholar Martha Minow writes: "How can historical discrimination on the basis of race and gender be overcome if the remedies themselves use the forbidden categories of race and gender? Yet without such remedies, how can historical discrimination and its legacies of segregation and exclusion be transcended?"[39] This is indeed the dilemma of valorizing ethnic difference and of institutionalizing such difference by politics and law. Is

affirmative boundary maintenance any better than negative boundary maintenance? Martha Minow writes: "Solutions to the dilemma of difference cannot work if they redeposit the responsibility for redressing negative meanings of difference on the person who is treated as different." That may well be, but the problem gets infinitely more complicated when negative differences are recoded as positive differences and claimed as an ethnic strength. Then negative ascriptions turn into positive identity politics thus stabilizing the difference, but usually without shedding their negative social consequences within the larger political culture.[40] Is the ethnochauvinism of victims better than the ethnochauvinism of oppressors? Prima facie, yes; in terms of short range goals for the group, yes; but it does not solve the problem of inter-ethnic coexistence in a political culture.

As the attitude towards ethnic difference became more positive during the seventies and eighties, the older grounds for a "negative discrimination" became new grounds for "positive discrimination" by administrative fiat.[41] Consequently ethnic difference, thus ennobled, moved from the realm of private culture or folklore to that of public politics. When other ethnic groups saw that "ethnicity" could be changed from a cultural liability to a political advantage, they cried "me too." Native Americans and Chicanos could also make strong claims on the basis of previous exclusion, hence Red and Brown Power movements followed in the wake of the Black Power movement on the basis of very similar political agendas. A particularly bitter reaction came from a white ethnic working class that had - between 1830 and 1960 - been socialialized into the American racialist system, and who were puzzled that their understanding of how the American system worked (including its racial advantages) no longer held. The extreme swing of classical Democratic voters to the conservative independents (George Wallace) and to Nixon, or the current success of David Duke in Louisiana has a lot to do with this feeling of being ignored. Why were white ethnic workers not recognized as victims of the system? The ensuing revival of white ethnicity (Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans etc.) was interpreted by liberal critics a kneejerk reaction of these white groups to Civil Rights and to the new ethnic politics favoring blacks and Native Americans. But it can also be seen as a a successful attempt to depolarize the black-white conflict by multilateralizing ethnicity.[42] By taking the entitlements of white ethnic groups seriously, government could deflect their anger over preferential treatment of blacks (and soon of Indians and Hispanics). All this led to a surprising revitalization, if not reconstruction of white ethnic consciousness and ethnic affirmation.

Was it a return of the repressed or primordial ethnicity? Were the American ethnics really "unmeltable" as the conservative scholar Michael Novak claimed? Were the Italian-Americans really Italians? Were African Americans really Africans? Were the deculturated "lost" groups such as triracial isolates really lost tribes of Israel or Carthage?[43] Glazer and Moynihan's claim that "the melting pot did not happen" was often misunderstood to mean that the traditional or original cultures had survived immigration. What they meant however, was that the American ethnic group was not a "survival from the age of mass immigration, but a new social form." Milton Gordon argued along similar lines, namely that cultural pluralism would be replaced by a structural assimilation: although people from ethnic groups interacted with their own members more frequently than with others, ethnic languages and cultural markers were fast disappearing giving way to new, i.e. American cultural forms organized along the lines of American voluntary associations.[44] What we have then is not the old "primordial", but a new "ethnic" quality. (The charge by ethnic groups that the dominant American culture is "Eurocentric" strikes European observers as somewhat short of the mark.) As Fredrick Barth argued in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (1969), we should focus on "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses." Or in other words, the cultural stuff need not be "genuine" or "primordial" in order to shape an American ethnic group. For this is their point, in a polity which gives high priority to voluntarism it is as American as cherry pie for people to congregate in ethnic groups. "Ethnicity" then is an American quality which emerges when several groups of different national origin are united in one political system, when many ethnic cultures find their slot in one economic structure.[45]

The voluntaristic quality of white ethnicity is nowhere more evident than in the changed instructions for census takers. The 1980 census ancestry questionnaire instructs the census takers: "Print the ancestry group with which the person identifies."[46] Ethnic self-identification - as the Census Bureau officers warned - allows for a greater degree of flux and choice. Ethnicity is no longer decided on the basis of "hard" historical data of genealogical descent, but of cultural consent which invites a good deal of phantasy.[47] A Greek could conceivably be born again ethnically as an Italian or vice versa, though a black would have a hard time to pass before the eyes of the census taker.[48] However, even people of hopelessley mixed background may thus cleanse themselves of bastardization and reinvent themselves as pure ethnics choosing that ethnic group they would like to be identified with.[49] In the event of too much confusion of ethnic backgrounds the first group

mentioned by the head of the household will be taken for identification. (The Louisiana census for the first time lists about 150 people who self-identify as Aleuts.) What these flight patterns from the melting pot, now encouraged by the census, express may simply be a reaction to that suburban, melting pot anonymity, so compellingly described in David Riesman's The Lonely Crowd. But it also signals a deep phobia against mixing, most radically evidenced in the persistence and renewed maintenance of the racial divide. Perhaps it marks also a powerful reaction to the real historical cultural mixing that has gone on in American society. In one branch of Western philosophy there is a tacit background assumption, which ranks "purity" higher than "mixture"; hence the notion of biological blending (miscegenation!) or cultural mixture (bastardization), which has traditionally inspired the nationalist right wing with outrage,[50] now begins to have a bad press even among the descendants of such processes in America. The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, whose credentials as a defender of liberalism are beyond doubt, nonetheless treats 106 ethnic groups as if they were discrete and separate groups loyal to the notion of biological and cultural purity. Any mixture between the groups, which, unmeltable ethnics notwithstanding, has been rampant in American history, does not receive much attention from the authors of national entries. But mixture is the stuff of American culture. And some of the most significant "American" contributions to world culture have been such mixtures: jazz, pop & youth culture, dance, architecture, everyday consumer culture.[51] Ironically much of the public acknowledgement of ethnic cultures today serves as a symbolic reparation for the alleged damage done to them by the melting pot. Many American ethnic ideologues work on the assumption that their true heritage was destroyed by the hegemonic melting pot and that their renewed ethnicity should restore the real older article. They fail to realize how much ethnic groups have changed what they fight as "the mainstream", how America they have become in the exercize of their rights, and that even their voluntary new ethnicity is an American cultural creation.

This ethnic purity potlatch is particularly evident in the current demand for clean speech. Language is the result of historical practice, hence it shows all the impurities of such practice. The demand to cleanse the rhetoric of politics of outrageous discrimination is understandable and reasonable, but the attempt to purge it of all hegemonic residues has a paranoid dimension. Leftist historians and social scientists in particular have a hard time using their professional lexicon at conferences or in class without being challenged by word-watchers. At bottom there is the utopia of eliminating all racist and hegemonic

evil from social intercourse and be left with completely egalitarian, positive thinking. In a pluralist setting this would leave us with a congerie of no fault cultures that would ban Satan effectively from the premises. It is time therefore to think again of the possibility and reality of ethnic and particularly interethnic evil.

Most Americans would probably opt for some sort of soft messy pluralism under the auspices of a reformed 18th century universalism watched over by the Supreme Court, i.e. for some version of what they had before. But the actual political and social implementation of ethnic politics which has emerged in recent years has given rise to some alarm. There seems to be an internal dynamic in ethnic discourse and politics to aim for "pure" or "radical" ethnicity which in turn would require a corporate or consociationalist multiculturalism.[52] In keeping with this dynamic some of the more strident ethnic lobbyists insists on the essentialist, intrinsic or nationalist definition of ethnic difference by stipulating the political priority of primary bonds (blood ties, name, pigmentation) or of collective historical experience (slavery, genocide) while at the same time dismissing any universalism as part of the WASP power structure (whatever that may be these days) and as a scheme to introduce Anglo-conformity and white Euro-American ethnocentrism. In their view the Euro-American political "creed" of the founding fathers was not only falsely and hypocritically labeled "universal," but is to this day irredeemably racist. Few people (excepting unreconstructed conservatives such as Allan Bloom, William J. Bennett and aged heads of English departments) would want to resurrect the hypocritical and narrow universalism of slave holding founding fathers. Clearly, the uncritical acceptance of the older Eurocentric American creed as outlined by Gunnar Myrdal and resurrected by neoconservative critics is not a realistic option in a multiethnic America.[53] Nor is the critique of enlightenment universalism advanced by Heidegger and filtered through French sources into the American academic discourse without merit. If, as Stanley Fish and others have argued, a new meta-universalism of constant hermeneutic and critical debate could be guaranteed that would establish interethnic culture as an unending conversation (Kenneth Burke) then all the better. However, this would require an enormous capacity for self-criticism and sophistication which I do not see emerging from within ethnic group or in interethnic discourse. Yet, as Isaiah Berlin, a staunch defender of a non-hegemonic pluralism in the tradition of Herder and Vico, admits, hopes for such a meta-universalism are dim: "I admit that at the end of the twentieth century, there is little historical evidence for the realizability of such a vision..." and he ends on a chilling (and somewhat unfair) note:

"I am glad to be as old as I am."[54] Although one is tempted at this point to trot out the idea of an American exceptionalism again, the question remains, will it work in the political arena given its current structure, will it work in the judicial arena, will it save constitutional "progress" since the times of Jefferson? Not without a major effort in general education for which there is at the moment no recognizable political will and little concrete evidence.[55]

THE DILEMMA OF PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS

The current decline of a belief in **one** political culture is evidenced in the inability of the Democratic Party to design a national agenda or of Jessie Jackson to get the various ethnic leaders to surrender some of their local ethnic power to the demands of a national rainbow coalition. This situation has made it easier and more expedient for ethnic groups to instrumentalize ethnicity locally which separates rather than unites the body politic. The short-range advantage for each local group may turn into a long-range disadvantage for the "United" states. Could it be that the American method of problemsolving along the lines of middle range pragmatic goals such as "affirmative action" or "bilingualism" or "quotas" transports in its wake long range consequences towards a consociational realignment of political culture that critical members of the American left are only beginning to understand? In a discussion with a college president known for her liberal views I tried to get her to talk about the principles of inclusion and exclusion; she waved my question aside and insisted on setting short range goals such as increasing the number of ethnic faculty or students "by next year."[56]

DISPLACEMENT OF CLASS DISCOURSE

Of the foursome "gender-race-ethnicity-class" (GREC), that graces many titles of articles and workshops in American Studies, the term "class" has become devoid of its older significance and punch. It is particularly alarming that the problem of class divisions within and beyond ethnic groups no longer plays a decisive role and has disappeared from most discourse of ethnicity. Pierre van den Berghe writes: "If the main line of cleavage in a society is ethnicity (or some feature of it, such as religion or language), if the political game is seen primarily as an ethnic balancing act in the allocation of scarce resources, and if there are no glaring disparities in ethnic representation at various class levels, it follows that the significance of class cleavages with each ethny is correspondingly decreased."[57] However, while the discourse of class has grown feeble there is a growing recognition

that America despite the absence of a European class "consciousness" is moving towards a dichotomized stratification which is geared to education and which cuts through the new ethnic fragmentation.[58]

The rise of ethnicity has been a boon for the new ethnic elites; we witness a consociational coexistence of these elites as ethnic spokesmen and -women in the public sphere. It is the strengthening of these new elites and of elite discourses that will in the long run encourage the development of a consociational or corporate multiculturalism. And the division between the class interests of these elites and of the people they speak for is widening. Do we not have here a resurgence of an old problem along the racial fault line, that W.E.B. DuBois diagnosed in 1903 as being America's most persistent problem. We witness the return of a division between what James Madison in Federalist 10 called the realm of passion and the realm of principle, this time compounded by race, class, poverty and a decrepit primary and secondary educational system in the cities. The realm of high principles on which America was founded is abstract, universal, high cultural and **was** - until 1954 - under white, male, middle class control. The deconstruction of dead white male power may have expanded these principles to include "all people", but the enjoyment and the entertainment of these principles is still tied to class, i.e. to the academically trained upper middle class. Political universalism, so claim its black detractors, was mainly observed in the breach and has had a hypocritical history until the Civil Rights legislation of the sixties made blacks full citizens. The realm of popular passions, of warm ethnic feelings may be of a lower order in the evolution of the philosophy of government, but it is simpler, more affective, more low-down, and often it constitutes the only bond blacks in the inner city have left short of what Cornel West identifies as an explosive black nihilism.[59] Is not here a class/cultural difference in the political cultures, between the unenlightened desires and circumscribed aspirations of black populist groups vs. the high universal feelings and experiences of the middle and upper classes most of whom are white, or in the case of the black middle class are perceived by inner city blacks as being close to white.[60] This widening dichotomy between the well-educated upper middle class that can afford to have principles and an undereducated underclass that is not able to cope with material survival translates the soft multiculturalism of enlightened pedagogical theory into a hard political multiculturalism of the streets. Could it be that the new elite discourse of "gender-race-ethnicity" serves to repress a consideration of the more difficult issues of class and poverty which to many Americans, even to some liberals, seem so intractable (and boring).

Could it be that multiculturalism avoids a serious consideration of poverty by favoring a reactive notion of race or ethnic "gemeinschaft"; in short, that it is an instance of an over-determination of culture and a repression of class divisions at the very moment when these begin to hurt. It is indicative for the current ethnic fragmentation of a liberal agenda in the US that it takes a conservative, Kevin Phillips, to point out the new class divisions in his The Politics of Rich and Poor. Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath 1990.

A real cultural division has emerged between a liberal expectancy of white full citizens that all men are created equal, that a universally legitimated cultural pluralism is possible, that the recognition and tolerance of difference is an educationally feasible goal, that while privately blacks may be different in their cultural preferences, publicly they are the same before the law - all this is part of the classical or reformed liberal American creed - and the experience of a certain black and Hispanic class of daily structural and personal difference in chances or in treatment, a difference between abstract principles of a liberal and comfortable existence and the concrete life experience of the socalled non-coping classes. It articulates the differences within black and Hispanic society, but most forcefully the chasm between a white and black or Hispanic life world. Many blacks maintain that there has been a widening gap between liberal wishful thinking and sociocultural practice. Over the years they discern a subtle and steady reinforcement of boundaries in the relations between black and white Americans which resulted in the steady growth of differences in culture and society, first by apartheid in slavery, then by racism in the laws and customs, finally by a deep and subtle negative ascription through stereotypes in the dominant popular culture which are met by counter-stereotypes. Typecasting began in the Minstrel show, continued in film and on in current TV, codified by the tyranny of expectation on the part of Hollywood trained viewing publics. The difference was stabilized through continued territorialization and ghettoization in the northern cities.[61] And the difference was further buttressed through the economic marginalization of ghetto dwellers in the inner city after deindustrialization took away the income of the black working class.[62] Most recently, educated blacks have made a cultural advantage of a social disadvantage and through a black assertion of ethnicity, of black inner city culture, and of black cultural nationalism, and have begun to recode the negative cultural ascription into a positive one, but, and this again is crucial and articulates the new class division, using the older black **lower** class culture, not the largely invisible new black middle class culture as a common

cultural ground. The revalorization of a black street culture or subculture as a counterweight to white bourgeois culture has had a problematical consequence, namely the negation of an ideological role or a political space for the black middle class. In fact, the concept of "middle class" as it is defined in Robert Bellah's Habits of the Heart itself is considered "white" by many radicals.[63] Black middle class kids report that they have to hide what they learned at College before their inner city friends if they do not want to be taken as "oreo cookies", i.e. as black outside, white inside. Certainly the middle class American lifestyle owes more to white than to black influence, but this fact is part of a repression of the black middle class. There is hope. The black film makers or Rap musicians whose work focuses on lower class black street culture are members of that (largely invisible) black middle class.[64] Indeed, currently we witness an attempt of black middle class artists and intellectuals to define themselves as a "new class."[65] It is to be hoped that the emerging black and Hispanic middle class will be visible evidence that a new, critical universalism across ethnic divides is an attractive possibility for blacks and Hispanics in America. Once this belief finds enough tangible evidence in social reform the Jeffries, Farrakhans and Asantes won't have much of a chance, and the rhetoric of radical multiculturalism will blow by as one of those creedal passions of which the mediatized American public sphere is so inordinately fond.

THE EDUCATION OF AMERICAN ETHNICS

While the nation was trying to overcome the trauma of Vietnam and Watergate the student bodies and faculties of American universities did in fact become more "multicultural." As the universities expanded numerically and ethnically, they went into a recession, and the battle over scarce resources and shrinking opportunities became more intense. It is no accident that the debate over multiculturalism should have arisen at the universities. For it is a battle over access to those educational resources that are required for the only well-paying career tracks left in a post-fordist economy. In the split labour market of the post-fordist American economy, a university degree marks the difference between badly paid unskilled and highly paid skilled jobs, between lucrative work and minimum wage McWork. Lawrence Mishel and David M. Frankel write: "Simply put, it has become increasingly hard for a worker without a college degree to earn a middle-class standard of living. This is very troubling because three-fourth of today's work force (even those 25-34 years old) have not completed college..."[66] In sum, as long as there is no political will for social reform that would benefit not only the "coping strata" of ethnic groups (as did

affirmative action), but the poor across the ethnic spectrum, little will change, and multiculturalism will remain a highly ideological issue with contradictory agendas. One thing is clear: there is a complex of motives at work in the current confusing and confused debate, and despite all the culturological rhetoric most of these motives have a sound economic base.[67]

AN EXCEPTIONALIST POSTCRIPT

Many neoconservative prophets of doom in this debate forget that the crisis (and confusion) of national identity and social purpose is of course as old as the republic and that the American creed thrives on "the promise of disharmony."[68] American identity may have started out as White Anglo-Saxon and Protestant; but soon immigrant Catholics challenged the Protestant definition, then non-Anglo-Saxon groups from Europe questioned the Anglo-Saxon imperative. From the Civil War to the Civil Rights legislation there were a series of challenges to the adjective "white". Concurrently women questioned the male powerstructure. The new debate over the politics of ethnicity belongs to this series of productive challenges of a racialist practice which gave the lie to the original universalist creed, challenges which have resulted in a marked change of the American host society and to constant revisions of that creed in practice. Yet, none of these previous challenges has ever questioned the need of a universalist credo as a basis. Alexis de Tocqueville said two things were remarkable about America, the great changeableness of human behavior and the singular fixity of fundamental principles: "men living in democratic societies... are forever varying, altering and restoring secondary matters, but they are very careful not to touch fundamentals. They love changes, but they dread revolutions."[69] What most neoconservatives, some old and some new radicals worry about, is that the new multiculturalism, proposed by the more radical spokesmen, may not remain a "secondary matter," but that it may erode the necessary universalism of a multiethnic American political culture. More sinister yet are the long range institutional, bureaucratic and therefore political consequences of a however well-meant politics of difference. It is to be hoped that the politics of ethnicity and race will not result in a congerie of competing pockets of ethnocentrism which imitate the worst excesses of a self-congratulatory and parochial American exceptionalism, and that ethnicity will continue to be defined under the incorporative motto: e pluribus unum, with the understanding that the ethnic "pluribus" play second fiddle to the constitutional "unum."[70]

Endnotes:

1.Quoted in William A. Henry III, "Beyond the Melting Pot," Time April 9, 1990, 34-37.

2.Race is a problematical concept. It is the brainchild of "racists" and therefore objectionable, but it remains a divisive fact in the American body politic. However ideological or scientifically unfounded it may be, it is a conceptual legacy of real racism. Daniel N. Robinson argues for its abolition in "Races and Persons," The World & I February 1992, 481-499. "How do you protest a socially imposed categorization, except by organizing around the category," asks Steven Epstein, "Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity..." The Socialist Review May-Aug. 1987, p. 9. See also George M. Frederickson and Dale T. Knobel. "History of Prejudice and Discrimination," Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups ed. Stephan Thernstrom & Ann Orlov. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981, 829-847.

3.Consociationalism means the coexistence of different cultural groups along the lines of a proportional democracy, with separate but equal institutions that would require the allocation of resources on the basis of statistical parity. Pierre van den Berghe. The Ethnic Phenomenon New York, 1981.

4.Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism: A Pluribus Plures," The American Scholar Summer 1990. A. Schlesinger Jr. The Disuniting of America. Reflections on a Multicultural Society Knoxville, Tenn.: Whittle Books, 1991. Robert Hughes in Time, February 3, 1992, 44-49. He writes: "When a nation's diversity breaks into factions, demagogues rush in, false issues cloud debate, and everybody has a grievance...The fundamental temper of America tends toward an existential ideal that can probably never be reached but can never be discarded: equal rights to variety.."

5.Martha Minow. Making all the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law Cornell U. 1990.

6.The multiculturalism currently debated in the U.S.A. is primarily a blanket term for America's problems with African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics, i.e. with the color line. Philip Fisher calls "the mutual projection of white and black identity as an ongoing, ever-reconstruced cultural matter" the central problem of the US. "All other cultural matters imitate the dynamic of this fated American problem of representation." The New American Studies. Essays from Representations Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, xvii.

7. Chief Simon Pokagon whose tribe owned the land on which Chicago was built writes in his novel Queen of the Woods 1899 that he was asked by a woman during the Columbian Exposition of 1893 (which honored the memory of Columbus): "How do you like our country?" Quoted by Werner Sollors. "Konstruktionsversuche nationaler und ethnischer Identität in der amerikanischen Literatur." in Bernhard Giesen, ed. Nationale und Kulturelle Identität Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1991

8. Even marginalized groups have a culture or participate with their own coping strategies in the larger culture. Ralph Ellison's acid review of Myrdal's attempt to create the "American norm" to which blacks should aspire was, can a people survive living on the horns of an American Dilemma. An older anthropology spoke of "deculturation." The very term assumes

a state of cultural wholeness from which one has departed. On the other hand, it would not do to romanticize cultural margins; social anomie or disruption leaves its mark on any culture.

9. Joel Williamson describes the dilemma of self-liberation and self-authentication in The Crucible of Race. Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation New York: Oxford University Press 1984: "There is a paradox in race relations in the South and in America. It is that black people have to get out of white society in order to get into it, and they have to get into it in order to get out. They have to get into the society to get a minimum of those palpable things that people need in order simply to survive - material goods, education, government, a minimum of justice, law, and order. But yet because white people are prejudiced and have the power to manifest their prejudices in a multitude of ways, they have to get out, to withdraw to themselves in some degree, to maintain a sense of worth and self-esteem." p.505.

10.In an essay on the chances of a "civil society" Michael Walzer quotes the Hungarian dissident Gyorgy Konrad who, in his book Anti-Politics "urged his fellow dissidents to reject the very idea of sharing power and to devote their energies to religious, cultural, economic, and professional associations." "Civil Society," Dissent Spring 1991, 301. Blacks in the South have a history of living alongside the white state, but with their back turned toward it. Harlemites used to say that the statue of liberty has her back to Harlem.

11.The term underclass is controversial. Introduced by Ken Auletta and picked up by William Julius Wilson in his book The Truly Disadvantaged 1987 it designates the class of people who do not or cannot cope. Critics on the right blame welfare and deficits in the "black character", critics on the left name several factors from racism to deindustrialization. See William Kornblum. "'Who is the Underclass? Contrasting Approaches, A Grave Problem," and Robert Kuttner. "Notes from Underground. Clashing Theories about the 'Underclass'", in Dissent Spring 1991, 202-217.

12. Martha Minow writes that many women working in competitive New York law firms refuse to take maternal leave: "people who fit within a category of "difference" often choose not to avail themselves of programmes designed for them because they fear the risk of stigma or other negative social attitudes in they identify themselves by the difference." Making All the Difference, p. 91.

13.Berndt Ostendorf, "Creolization and Creoles: The Concepts and their History", in Wolfgang Binder, Hg., La Louisiane francaise. French Louisiana. Würzburg, 1992. The villain in the current morality play, European culture or Western civilization, is of course thoroughly "creolized" and multicultural, Reed Way Dasenbrock, "The Multicultural West," Dissent, Fall 1991, 550-555.

14.Micha Brumlik und Claus Leggewie. "Konturen der Einwanderungsgesellschaft: Nationale Identität, Multikulturalismus und 'Civil Society'." in Klaus Bade, ed., Deutsche im Ausland. Fremde in Deutschland. Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart. München: Beck Verlag, 1992, 430-441. Otto Kallscheuer. "Europa vor der amerikanischen Situation." Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik (Januar 1992), p.110-117. The authors refer to Michael Walzer's idea of a "Civil Society," Dissent Spring 1991, 293-304. For a critique see Frank-Olaf Radtke. "Multikulturell - Das Gesellschaftsdesign der 90er Jahre?" Informationsdienst zur Ausländerarbeit Nr. 4 (1990), p. 27-34 and Alain Finkielkraut. La défaite de la pensée Paris: Gallimard, 1987.

15.Lewis H. Lapham writes in an editorial essay "Who and What is an American," Harper's Magazine (January 1992), 49: "Among all the nations of the earth, America is the one that has come most triumphantly to terms with the mixture of blood and caste, and maybe it is another of history's ironic jokes that we should wish to repudiate our talent for assimilation at precisely the moment in time when so many other nations in the world (in Africa and Western Europe as well as the Soviet Union) look to the promise of the American example." See also Axel Honneth. "Universalismus und kulturelle Differenz. Zu Michael Walzers Modell der Gesellschaftskritik." Merkur Heft 11, 45. Jahrgang, (November 1991), 1049-54.

16.Philip Gleason writes in a short history of the concept minority that "the most import shift in use is that the term has acquired a new, quasi-legal status." "Minorities (Almost) All: The Minority Concept in American Social Thought," American Quarterly Vol 43, No. 3. (September 1991), 404,

17.Nathan Gardels, "Two Concepts of Nationalism: An Interview with Isaiah Berlin," The New York Review of Books November 21 1991, 19-23. Berndt Ostendorf, "Kulturanthropologie und Amerikastudien oder das Reden über Kultur," Amerikastudien Jahrgang 29, Heft 1 (1984), p.5-18.

18.Myrdal's position is brought up to date by Samuel Huntington in "The American Creed and National Identity," American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1981. See also V.S. Naipaul, "Our Universal Civilization," The New York Review of Books, January 31, 1991 or Leszek Kolakowski. "Wo sind die Barbaren? Ein Lob des Eurozentrismus oder Die Illusion des kulturellen Universalismus," Der Monat, 2/ Okt.-Dez. 1980, 70-83.

19. Axel Honneth deconstructs the ambivalence in the liberal discourse of a particularism-within-universalism: "Eine Rhetorik des Partikularismus verhindert die Artikulation der universalistischen Restmotive, auf die gerade derjenige sich heute zu stützen hat, dem die Verteidigung des kulturellen Pluralismus entschieden am Herzen liegt." op. cit. p. 1054.

20.Berndt Ostendorf, "Die amerikanische Definition von Kultur und die Definition der amerikanischen Kultur," in W.P. Adams, E.-O. Czempiel, B. Ostendorf, K. L. Shell, P.B. Spahn, M. Zöller (eds.) Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika 2 vol. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1990, 449-468. See also Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition 1958 on "The Public and the Private Realm."

21.John Higham quoted in Steinberg, The Ethnic Myth. Race, Ethnicity and Class in America, 255.

22.Well into the 20th century the census takes did not consider blacks and Native Americans proper "Americans" despite the allegedly universalist definition of an American "citizen".

23.Indeed, during WWII W. Lloyd Warner introduced the term "ethnicity" to diplace the scientifically questionable concept of race. Literature functioned as a sensitive barometer of these changes. See Berndt Ostendorf "Einleitung", in B. Ostendorf (ed), Amerikanische Ghettoliteratur. Zur Literatur ethnischer, marginaler und unterdrückter Gruppen in Amerika Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983. Cf. Werner Sollors. op. cit.

24.The German historian Reinhart Koselleck charts the history of asymmetry between groups in "Zur historisch-politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe," in Harald Weinrich (ed), Positionen der Negativität. München:Fink Verlag, 1975, p. 65-104.

25.B. Ostendorf, "Black Poetry, Blues, and Folklore. Double Consciousness in Afro-American Oral Culture," Amerikastudien 20 (1975) and "Rediscovering an Invisible Culture," Black Literature in White America. Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982.

26. Isaiah Berlin: "a wounded Volksgeist, so to speak, is like a bent twig, forced down so severely that when released, it lashes back with fury. Nationalism, at least in the West, is created by wounds inflicted by stress." in Gardels, op. cit., p. 19. See also E.J. Hobsbawm. Nations and Nationalism Since 1870. Programme, Myth, Reality Cambridge: CUP, 1990.

27."Intellectuals in Politics." Dissent Fall 1991, 483-490: "the big problem is that white people whose family income is over $ 20 000 a year have come to think of themselves as having nothing in common with the weak and the poor (especially the black and brown poor)." This belief is reflected in the "two-nations" theory of Andrew Hacker. Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal New York: Sribner's 1992. The black-white, rich-poor separation is reflected in the suburban-inner city divide: Daniel Lazare. "Collapse of a City. Growth and Decay of Camden, New Jersey," Dissent Spring 1991, 267-275.

28.Count Gobineau and Robert E. Park used to refer to Africa as the "Lady of the races."

29.Nathan Glazer, author of Affirmative Discrimination and opponent of multicultural agendas, takes a less sanguine view of the problem after helping to forge a compromise on a multicultural canon for New York State. "In Defense of Multiculturalism," The New Republic September 2, 1991,p. 18-22.

30.Racism and Justice: The Case for Affirmative Action. Cornell University Press 1992; reviewed by Andrew Hacker in The New York Review of Books, April 23 1992, 30. Stephen Carter, author of Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby, weighs the pros and cons in "Racism's Victims," The World & I February 1992, 467-479, but comes out in its defense.

31.Philip Gleason. "Minorities (Almost) All: The Minority Concept in American Social Thought," op. cit., 414.

32. Freud writes in "Das Unbehagen in der Kultur" (1930): "Der Vorteil eines kleineren Kulturkreises, daß er dem Trieb einen Ausweg an der Befeindung der Außenstehenden gestattet, ist nicht geringzuschätzen. Es ist immer möglich, eine größere Menge von Menschen in Liebe aneinander zu binden, wenn nur andere für die Äußerung der Aggression übrigbleiben. Ich habe mich einmal mit dem Phänomen beschäftigt, daß gerade benachbarte und einander auch sonst nahestehende Gemeinschaften sich gegenseitig befehden und verspotten, so Spanier und Portugiesen, Nord- und Süddeutsche, Engländer und Schotten usw. Ich gab ihm den Namen 'Narzißmus der kleinen Differenzen', der nicht viel zur Erklärung beiträgt." Fragen der Gesellschaft. Ursprünge der Religion Studienausgabe Bd. IX, Frankfurt 1974, 242-3.

33.Bette Novit-Evans and Ashton Wesley Welch, "Racial and Ethnic Definition as Reflection of Public Policy, Journal of American Studies 17 (1983),3,417-435 remark on the arbitrariness of the color line.

34. The idea of an either-or racial purity is deeply rooted in Northern European popular mythologies. Papa Doc's parable tells us that somatic norms vary from hard to soft to blurred. Immigrants from South and Central America arrive in the U.S. with blurred somatic norms which harden as they assimilate.

35.The current stabilization of the color line has given the fine art of race detection a new lease. One of the oldest racist games down South was to identify people who had passed. Today there is a renewed search for the "touch of the tarbrush" in the creation of what is often dismissed as Western Civ. A black musicologist assured me: "You know of course that Beethoven was black," to which I replied: "How about Hitler?"

36. Jeffrey Alexander & Chaim Seidler-Feller, Cornel West. "Blacks and Jews," Tikkun, January/February 1992, 12-16.

37.A position defended by Stanley Fish on William Buckley's Firing Line on August 28, 1991. Transcript, Southern Educational Communications Organization 1991, p. 31.

38.In an American version of the "Historikerstreit" Ali A. Mazrui argues that African Americans and Native Americans have claims on the term "holocaust". Paul Gray "Whose America?" Time July 8, 1991, 23.

39. Making all the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law, p. 47.

40. op. cit 93.

41.Nathan Glazer, "Affirmative Discrimination: For and Against," Ethnic Dilemmas, Harvard 1983, 159-181.

42.Cf. Pierre L. van den Berghe. The Ethnic Phenomenon New York, 1981, 212.

43.Renate Bartl analyzes the myths of origin of triracial isolates in Origins, History, Settlement Areas and Ethnic Identity of Groups of Native American, African American and European Descent München diss. Dr. phil. (in progress).

44.Milton Gordon, "Models of Pluralism: The New American Dilemma," in "America As A Multicultural Society", special edition, The Annals of the American Academy of Political And Social Sciences (March 1981), vol 454, 178-188.

45.See also Berndt Ostendorf, "What Makes Ethnic Literature 'Ethnic'", in Monique Lecomte & Claudine Thomas (eds), Le facteur ethnique aux Etats Unis et au Canada Lille 1983 and "Einleitung" in Ostendorf, ed., Amerikanische Gettoliteratur. Zur Literatur ethnischer, marginaler und unterdrückter Gruppen in Amerika Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1983.

46.Mary C. Waters. Ethnic Options. Choosing Identities in America Berkeley: U. of California Press 1990, p.9: The Census Bureaus introduced this question on pressure from white ethnic organizations. Waters' research among white ethnics concluded that "ethnicity is increasingly a personal choice of whether to be ethnic at all... it matters only in voluntary ways...First, I believe it stems from two contradictory desires in the American character: a quest for community on the one hand and a desire for individuality on the other. Second, symbolic ethnicity persists because of its ideological "fit" with racist beliefs" p. 147. William A. Schambra, ghostwriter for Secretary Louis Sullivan, proposes a Republican platform on the basis of small communities. "The Quest for Community in Twentieth-Century America," The World and I, vol. 5., no. 10. (October 1990), 489-499.

47. What linguists have called "structural amnesia," a process of selective forgetting, is strongly evident in oral and genealogical memory. Cf. Ostendorf, "Black Poetry..." op. cit.

Ernest Renan's dictum "getting its history wrong is part of being a nation" might be expanded to include ethnicity. Qu'est que c'est une nation? Paris, 1882, 7-8. Cf. Werner Sollors, ed., The Invention of Ethnicity. New York, 1989 and Beyond Ethnicity. Consent and Descent in American Culture New York, 1986.

48. George Frederickson and Dale Knobel write: "If history is any guide, one might be inclined to predict that strong prejudice will survive so long as the black community remains an involuntary racial group rather than a voluntary ethnic community..." op. cit., 847.

49.Dan Foot, "American Indians in the 1990s," American Demographics, December 1991, p. 26-34. "Today, for reasons of ethnic pride part Indians may tell the Census Bureau they are Indian." p. 34.

50. Jean-Marie Le Pen writes: "I radically reject the idea of a global melting pot both for humans and for dogs or horses. The purpose of each civilization is to maintain, increase and refine the diversity of the species." Les Francais d'abord Paris 1984, p. 185. Cf. Tzvetan Todorov. "Rassismus und Moral," Lettre International (Herbst, 1990), 96.

51. Reed Way Dasenbrock, "The Multicultural West," Dissent, Fall 1991, 550-555: "Our current models of culture all seem to be either/or (eurocentric vs. afrocentric, Western vs. non-Western, monocultural vs. multicultural), but culture itself is both/and, not either/or. Multiculturalism is simply the standard human condition." (553.) Dasenbrock takes both sides to task and attacks the Bennetts and Blooms for their "clean" idea of European culture: "we need to adopt a good deal of the multiculturalist agenda precisely because it is in keeping with the best and most important aspects of Western and American culture... Neither side perceives the world in which we live" (554-5).

52. Racial gerrymandering has been an effective strategy to keep minorities away from power by distributing them over several voting districts. The opposite tendency, affirmative gerrymandering, is not much better; for it envisages the redrawing of voting districts along racial lines which would immobilize the racial power differential.David C. Saffell. "Affirmative Gerrymandering:Rationale and Application," State Government 56:4 (1983). See also Jim Sleeper, The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York N.Y. Norton 1990. Review: John Alt in Telos No. 87 (Summer 1991), 173-185. "Cultural Conflict in New York City," Reconstruction Vol. 1. No. 4. 1992, 142-146

53.Werner Sollors writes: "Once America thinks of itself as the only place of grace, once true human universalism is narrowly compacted into the American Dream, it becomes an obstacle to its own selfdeclared transcendent ends." Beyond Ethnicity, p. 261. See also Alan Trachtenberg. Between Quarrel and Gratitude: Culture, Democracy, America Berlin: John F. Kennedy Institute Working Paper 44/1992 and Sacvan Bercovitch. Discovering "America". A Cross-Cultural Perspective Berlin: John F. Kennedy Institute Working Paper 36/1991.

54. op. cit. 21-3. Ironically, the "Austro-Hungarian model of political and economic uniformity and cultural variety" is an object of nostalgia for Isaiah Berlin and other proponents of the ideal multicultural society.

55.Christopher Jencks shares that doubt: Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty and the Underclass. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. Michael Geyer and Miriam Hansen make an impassioned plea for the reform of general education: "Varieties of Multiculturalism and the Politics of the Curriculum." Lecture at the Continuing Education Conference, University of Chicago, Nov. 1991.

56.See Johan Galtung's pithy comments on the American penchant for short-range problem solving "methods" as opposed to the Germanic belief in long range Theorie: "Struktur, Kultur und intellektueller Stil. Ein vergleichender Essay über sachsonische, teutonische, gallische und nipponische Wissenschaft," Leviathan (1983), 303-338. Paul Berman blames the American pragmatic "misreading" of French theory of differance for some of the foolish excesses of PC: "PC's History," Tikkun January/February 1992, 53-58.

57.Pierre van den Berghe. The Ethnic Phenomenon, p. 188.

58. One of the most intriguing publications on the realignment of an American class structure comes from an unexpected quarter: target group research and advertizing. Michael Weiss. The Clustering of America (A vivid portrait of the nation's 40 neighborhood types...). New York: Harper & Row, 1988. See Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "The Tide is Turning: A New Political Cycle in the 1990s", Challenge November/December 1991, 9-14 on the paucity of social policy.

59. Cornel West, "Nihilism in Black America," Dissent Spring 1991: 221-226. See also the influential book by William Julius Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

60. "Race On Campus" The New Republic Feb. 18, 1991, 29.

61. Martin Kilson and Clement Cottingham argue that "American whites (regardless of religious and ethnic attributes) have a psychocultural investment in the racial-caste demarcation," "Thinking About Race Relations. How Far Are We Still From Integration," Dissent (Fall 1991), 520.

62. In a comparison between Japanese, European and American capitalism Lester Thurow gives the "Anglo-American" model bad grades for maximizing the riches of individual shareholders rather than investing profits in the "social" infrastructure. Europe gets good grade for protecting its manufactures from being dismantled and thus keeping the working class skilled, The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America. New York: Morrow, 1992.

63. When asked why he did not interview blacks in his book Bellah identified the middle class norm as a white creation in which blacks are included.

64. Spike Lee & Henry Louis Gates Jr.. "Final Cut: Spike Lee and Henry Louis Gates Jr. Rap on Race, Politics, and Black Cinema," Transition 52 (1991), 176-204.

65. Roy L. Brooks, "Defense of the Concept: The African American Middle Class", Rethinking the American Race Problem. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, 142-149. Also Martin Kilson & Clement Cottingham, "Thinking About Race Relations..." op. cit.

66. Lawrence Mishel and David M. Frankel. "Hard Times for Working America," Dissent Spring 1991, 284. See also David Harvey. "From Fordism to flexible accumulation," The Condition of Postmodernity London: Basil Blackwell, 1989. The concentration of the debate on multiculturalism at the universities is also a symptom of the "academization" of the public sphere, particularly of its liberal branch. This development has increased the town-gown dichotomy in liberal, leftist discourse. See George Packer. "Class Interest, Liberal Style. A Social Conflict in Massachusetts," Dissent (A Special Issue: Labor's Future in the United States), Winter 1992, 51-56.

67. See the furor over it in: "Special Focus: PC in our Time," Tikkun Vol. 6, No 4, (July-August 1991), pp. 35-62. Both the opponents and defenders of PC or multiculturalism seem confused. More to the point is the response by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Self-Interest of Multiculturalism."

68. Samuel Huntington. American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

69. "Why Revolutions Will Become More Rare," Democracy in America Vol 2. ed. Phillips Bradley, Vintage Book 1945, 269-270.

70. It may be a symptom of a pervasive Angst over the return of global primoridalism that Hans Küng, a liberal professor of Catholic theology, urged the United Nations to pass a "Universal World Ethics Declaration" to ensure the survival of basic universals such as tolerance and civil rights, Süddeutsche Zeitung Nr. 265, Nov. 16-7, 1991, 111. And it may be a reassuring sign that Lyotard while dismissing consensus or universalism as "outmoded and suspect" admits in an aside that universal justice is "neither outmoded nor suspect." The Postmodern Condition. Manchester, 1984, p. 66.

(Ms. completed May 9, 1992).