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E Pluribus Unum; or, Matthew Arnold Meets George Orwell in the "Multiculturalism Debate"

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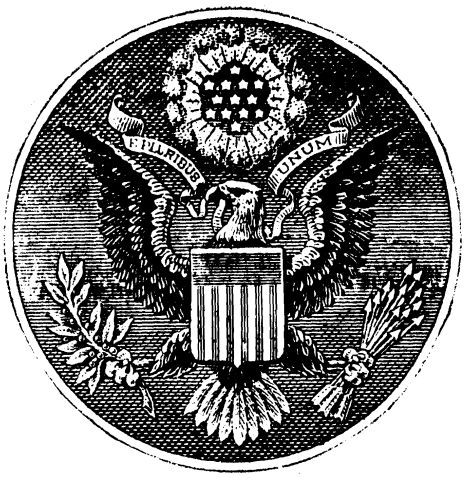

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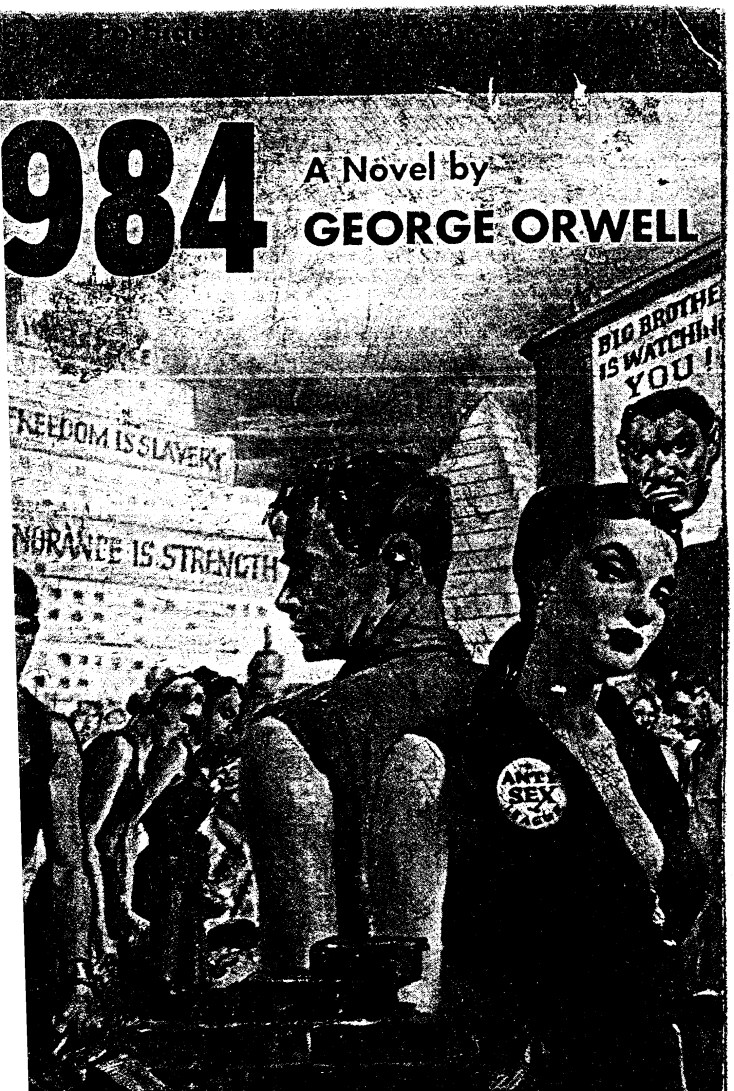

NOTE:

These pages are the notes on which I based a lecture on multiculturalism, delivered at the annual convention of the German American Studies Association in 1992 in Berlin.

Since the conference was exclusively concerned with multiculturalism, my paper did not have to summarize the debate. Instead, I tried to focus on some of features of the debate by drawing on an unusually large number of citations, and by following heterogeneous approaches.

Part I suggests the recent origin of the term and the extent two which multicultural discussions and activities have proliferated in the US. While there seems to be a relative paucity of utopian visions in the debate, ideological elements are pervasive--as has been stressed by others. Part II investigates recurring formal and thematic elements in the multiculturalism debate: the jeremiad and the anecdote; versions of "e pluribus unum;" a sentence by Matthew Arnold; and allusions to Orwell and references to totalitarianism and the Holocaust--are all staples in the debate. Part III focuses narrowly on now largely forgotten social science scholarship on group relations from the 1940s and 1950s--which, formulated shortly after World War II, also incorporated many references to the Holocaust, but arrived at programs and policy recommendations that are largely at odds with current practice.

Since this paper will be rewritten for publication, I shall be grateful for suggestions and comments.

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I. UTOPIAN AND IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF "MULTICULTURALISM"

A. STATISTICS

According to many accounts that are familiar from the press, a debate is going on in the world of American higher education. It is a debate that concerns educational contents, forms of instruction, the changing composition and newsworthy interaction of the student and faculty bodies; and it revolves around such terms as "the canon" and "political correctness," and such policies as "affirmative action." There is said to be a conflict between a "traditional," "conservative" emphasis on keeping established values of liberal arts education and a "radical," "ethnic" and "feminist" demand for such changes as the "diversification" of faculty (more women and nonwhite teachers) and of reading lists. The word that has most galvanized these discussions is "multiculturalism."

It is a word that seems omnipresent now, but has been part of US debates only since about 1987; and it seems to have come into use in the wake of reactions--on the one hand--to the traditionalist assertions by Allan Bloom and William J. Bennett or, somewhat differently, E. D. Hirsch, and--on the other--to the vehement public debate about a modification in the Stanford core curriculum, a substitution, in one of eight tracks, that permitted the inclusion of non-Western literature in a Great Books course.

Most instances of the word that surveys and library data bases have indexed do come from the past few years; the frequency intensified in 1990 (and may have reached its peak by 1991). For example, while a Harvard catalogue keyword search on "multiculturalism" yields no titles for the period before 1977 (and only two entries under "multicultural," neither of which refers to the US), it retrieves more than 100 items for the past fifteen years, and most of them since the mid-1980s. Similar findings can be made in searches in the Modern Language Association and Social Science Citation Indices.

Such statistical surveys do suggest a few general observations:

1) "Multiculturalism" seems most firmly at home in the world of journalism. According to a survey by Itabani Njeri, in the first ten months of 1990 alone the words "multicultural" and "multiculturalism" appeared 452

times in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Washington Post, and Wall Street Journal. Since journalists now often draw on the data bases of other journalists, there may be a technologically stimulated snowball effect in the proliferation of such new buzzwords.

2) "Multiculturalism" as an -ism-word apparently originated in discussions about Australia and Canada. For example, whereas 24 (of 33) entries in the Social Science Citation Index for 1980 to 1985 were devoted to Canada and Australia, especially regarding government policies, only two dealt with the situation in the US. Particularly, the official Canadian government policy introduced by Pierre Trudeau on 8 October 1971, generated some interest south of the border. The program included various features, such as giving "grants to ethnic organizations to help them preserve their culture," with an annual budget that increased from one and a half million dollars in 1971 to 10 million in 1973; and the appointment of a cabinet minister, Dr. Stanley Haidasz, "whose exclusive responsibility was multiculturalism" and who announced that multiculturalism was not "a cynical form of tokenism" but "a permanent government policy" (Glazer and Moynihan 287, 288). John Porter's essay "Ethnic Pluralism in Canada" may have helped transport the new "-ism" into the context of US academics: this contribution to a widely read Ethnicity collection of 1975 contains a section entitled "Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" ((Glazer and Moynihan 284-288) in which Porter outlines Trudeau's policy.

3) "Multiculturalism" came into wider use in the US only in the latter years of the 1980s; and a substantial portion of the academic (nonjournalistic) discussion has taken place in educational journals. The word "multicultural" (which does not appear in Webster's or the Oxford English Dictionary) was thus employed in 1974 by Michael Novak, the propagator of what was then called "the new ethnicity" in the US that, he argued, "stands for a true, real multicultural cosmopolitanism" (Novak 25). But such occasional instances--another, even earlier one of "multiculture" will be discussed later on--were probably rare before the 1980s: then issues were usually debated under the terms "cultural pluralism" (introduced by Horace Kallen in 1924) or "ethnicity" (a coinage by W. Lloyd Warner of 1941 that slowly replaced the older word "race"); occurrences of "multicultural" may also have been generated by the need for synonyms in the often hymnic accounts of the Whitmanian nation of nations that could be

seen as transnational, multiethnic, polyethnic, pluralistic, or multicultural; while studies dedicated to it could be called ethnic, intercultural, or a host of other words.

How relatively recent the term "multiculturalism" has become "normal" can be measured by Rick Simonson and Scott Walker's collection Multicultural Literacy, directed against Allan Bloom (its subtitle and the title of its appendix are Opening the American Mind) and against E.D. Hirsch (the appendix is a list of terms intended to generated multicultural literacy). The list includes the Asian Exclusion Act; Buchenwald, Gulag, Treblinka, and internment camps; Günter Grass, Billie Holiday, and Nelson Mandela; non-linear thinking, potlatch, substance abuse, and many other items; and though the adjectives "multilingual" and "multinational" are there, there is no reference to "multicultural" or "multiculturalism." And in one of the contributions to the volume, entitled "America: The Multinational [not "multicultural"] Society" Ishmael Reed argues that in the US a "blurring of cultural styles occurs in everyday life...to a greater extent than anyone can imagine and is probably more prevalent than the sensational conflict between people of different backgrounds that is played up and often encouraged by the media" (156). Reed even uses the word "monocultural" in a context we shall explore further; but the word "multiculturalism" does not occur in it (see Gleason 83n).

B. "DEFINITIONS"

Now that it exists lexically, what does the word "multiculturalism" mean? Definitions are not always easy to come by and differ widely. For example, in 1990 the Ford Foundation gave 19 grants to universities "to broaden cultural and intellectual diversity in American higher education," reflecting the "rapid demographic changes under way in American society," yet the Foundation spokesman refused to give a definition with the reason that "the Foundation does not define multiculturalism" (Njeri 1990).

Many critical definitions resemble those that the "new ethnicity" received in the 1970s. Charles Krauthammer and Michael Walzer call it "the new tribalism," Isaiah Berlin, "the return of the Volksgeist." Yet the proponents Wahneema Lubiano and Ted Gordon distance "multiculturalism" expressly from "ethnicity"--as well as from "Western culture"--when they

write: "Multiculturalism is not a tourist's eye view of 'ethnicity,' nor is it a paean to the American mythology defining this nation as a collection of diverse and plural groups living happily together and united by their knowledge of, and proper respect for, something called 'Western culture'" (Berman 249).

According to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s book The Disuniting of America, multiculturalism is quite unlike, and much more sinister than, cultural pluralism, for "instead of referring as it should to all cultures, [multiculturalism] has come to refer only to non-Western, nonwhite cultures. The president of the Modern Language even wonders why "we cannot be students of Western culture and multiculturalism at the same time" [as if they were opposites] (40). Lewis Feuer also distinguishes between "multiculturalism" and "cultural pluralism" when he asks: "why was "multiculturalism" chosen to replace the already existing expression "cultural pluralism?" The answer is a simple one. "Cultural pluralism" was invented by supporters of liberal democracy who had a strong faith in American civilization" (Society 19). By contrast, Mortimer Adler, the senior defender of the "Great Books" concept, writes: "Multiculturalism is cultural pluralism," but he advocates a "restricted cultural pluralism" (Aufderheide 64).

According to Molefi Kete Asante, "either you support multiculturalism in American education, or you support the maintenance of white supremacy" (Society 15). Alan Wald sees in "multiculturalism" the cry of non-Europeans "who have learned that assimilation in the U.S. is nothing more than assent to a process of domination" (Njeri 1990).

Roger Kimball, whose book Tenured Radicals sharply criticizes "multiculturalism," perceives it as "an omnibus term for the new academic orthodoxy" that "has provided common cause and something of a common vocabulary for a profession otherwise riven by an allegiance to competing radicalisms" (Berman 64). The term "multiculturalism" is sufficiently ambiguous to contain different and indeed incompatible programs and ideas. Paul Berman, the editor of one of the anthologies that have come out on the debate, arrives at the conclusion that "no three people agree about the meaning of such terms as "multiculturalism": "Every participant carries around his own definitions, the way that on certain American streets every person packs his own gun. . . . The debate is unintelligible. But it is

noisy!" (Berman 6). Larry Yarbrough finds that the debate "may seem as interminable as some faculty meetings" (Change 64).

The debate has taken on an international character, too. Thus Philip Fisher views multiculturalism as an episode of regionalism in American cultural history, a view which Günter Lenz, who subscribes to a much more positive assessment of multiculturalism, has vigorously attacked (Fisher 1991; Lenz 1991). And Adam Yarmolinsky, a provost at the University of Maryland, writes in a recent contribution to the multiculturalism debate: "Willi Paul Adams, professor of American history at the Free University of Berlin, has contrasted the pressures for 'Americanization' at the height of the immigration influx in the century's early decades with his belief that 'Anglo-American political culture is now so securely established that it can afford to let those who wish to cultivate their particular cultural heritage [do so] without feeling un-American.' Yarmolinsky concludes: "Professor Adams may be right, but greater cultural diversity only makes it more difficult to identify the elements of the American tradition" (Change 8).

Finally, there may be a sense of an ending now to the "interminable" debate; at least in conversations with my colleagues I get such an impression. According to Nathan Glazer, a stage of the debate is over in which everyone has had his say. Anthony Appiah finds that opponents to multiculturalism are not in any way systematic conservatives--some are not conservatives at all--but often critics who respond to the absurdities in what they see done in the name of multiculturalism. Sacvan Bercovitch sees is as a matter of vested interests now, accompanied by debates that can be as abstract as those about doctrinal disputes in early church history.

C. UTOPIAN ELEMENTS

If the battle is one between "traditionalists" and "radicals," then the image that "multiculturalism" evokes as a promise is particularly important. Henry Giroux, for example, advocates, in the interest of a utopian vision, developing a pedagogy "which refuses to reconcile higher education with inequality" (Gless 139). Such rhetoric of hope is certainly present in the dicsussion. Less strongly pronounced is what Karl Mannheim saw as a feature of utopias, that they function as "wish-images which take

on revolutionary functions" (Mannheim 193). One of the essays which comes closest to such wish-images is Ishmael Reed's "America: The Multinational Society" (1983), which has as its motto a clipping from the New York Times:

> At the annual Lower East Side Jewish festival yesterday, a Chinese woman ate a pizza slice in front of Ty Thuan Duc's Vietnamese grocery store. Beside her a Spanish-speaking family patronized a cart with two signs: "Italian Ices" and "Kosher by Rabbi Alper." And after the pastrami ran out, everybody ate knishes. (Simonson 155)

Reed's essay continues in the same vein:

> On the day before Memorial Day, 1983, a poet called me to describe a city he had just visited. He said that one section included mosques, built by the Islamic people who dwelled there. Attending his reading, he said, were large numbers of Hispanic people, forty thousand of whom lived in the same city. He was not talking about a fabled city located in some mysterious region of the world. The city he'd visited was Detroit. (Simonson 155)

This strategy of making the familiar strange and of highlighting the American experience as a polyethnic and syncretistic give-and-take multiculturalism is, of course, a familiar feature from the traditions of melting pot and pluralist rhetoric; it is also worth remembering that this essay was written before "multiculturalism" had become such a central term. Yet the exciting researches that have been undertaken by scholars who have explored such features of American culture have not been drawn upon much for multicultural utopianism. Berndt Ostendorf, for example, has investigated and theorized the Creolization of American culture; Donald Weber is currently working on the subtle ways in which ethnic difference made itself felt in such national television series as "The Goldbergs;" he cites, for example, a character who said, "America I love you. If I didn't hear an accent every day I'd think I was in a foreign country;" and Chris Newton is studying the linguistic mix in the Italo-American commedia dell arte tradition: the play "Iammo a Connailanda," for example (i.e. "Let's Go to Coney Island") contains such lines as "Ai brecche iu fesse" and a comment on the ridiculous notion that in America femmine are called "uomini" (women) (cited from works-in-progress). The absence or weakness of such visions is illustrated by the fact that Cornel West has to make the following plea in the "multiculturalism" debate: "If you're Afro-American

and you're a victim of the rule of capital, and a European Jewish figure who was born in the Catholic Rhineland and grew up as a Lutheran, by the name of Karl Marx, provides certain analytical tools, then you go there" (Berman 330). Utopian vision seems in decline at this moment in history; and even when a critic articulates a hopeful model, he may add disastrous qualifiers--as does Isaiah Berlin who develops a concept of non-hegemonic pluralism only to conclude: "I admit that at the end of the twentieth century, there is little historical evidence for the realizability of such a vision" (Ostendorf 17). John Higham rightly mentions that the question of whether multiculturalism should present divergence or convergence is rarely addressed in the debate (Higham 1992), which is often backward-looking to various ethnic histories and rarely forward-looking to a polyethnic future. Perhaps one of the last areas for utopian thinking is the belief that "multiculturalism" will increase the "self-esteem" and hence the performance of some students (Gottfredson 4-9), a belief that is also seriously questioned in the literature (Ravitch in Berman 297).

What we are more likely to find in the debate about "multiculturalism" than wish-images evocative of present and future interactions of many cultures and languages are statistical projections according to which in fifty years half of all US citizens would be non-white. Such journalistic estimates, Stephan Thernstrom argues, simply project high birth rates of rural populations into the future. There is, however, reason to expect birthrates to decline in cultural environments where children signal high costs rather than wealth. Thernstrom also points out that such visions of the coming "minority majority" resemble the American "race suicide" predictions in the face of the fertile South and East European immigrants a century ago. He cites one worrier from the past who "calculated that after 200 years 1,000 Harvard men would have left only 50 descendants, while 1,000 Romanian immigrants would have produced 100,000." Yet whereas then such predictions were made in order to argue for immigration restrictions, the current projections "are trotted out as evidence of the need for bigger and better social programs. Don't try to keep Genghis Khan out of the country; just make sure his kids are enrolled in Head Start," Thernstrom comments. (Thernstrom A16.)

Nonetheless, the 1990 census figures show a significant increase in "minority populations" from approximately 20% in 1980 to nearly 25% of the

total population (i.e., from one in five to one in four). In a total resident population of nearly 250 million there are now an estimated

> 30 million blacks (a 13.2% increase over 1980); [12% of the total]
> 22.4 million Hispanics (53% increase); [9% of the total; they may be "nonwhite" or "white" (see Horowitz 90-91)]
> 7.3 million Asians (an astounding increase of 107.8%); [3%] and
> 2 million American Indians (37.9% increase); [0.8%]. (Fred Barringer 1991)

These figures have also been put into the following relationship: "Though the proportion of blacks, Asians and Hispanic people in the country climbed over the past decade, all three were outnumbered by whites claiming English ancestry (32.6 million), German (57.9 million) and Irish (38.7 million)" (Felicity Barringer, May 29, 1992).

According to official census figures, from 1980 to 1990, 8.6 million immigrants came to the US [according to NYT 31/5/92, the total of legal immigration was only 7,338,062]. While this is a figure nearly as high as the previous maximum for the period from 1900 to 1910 (nearly 8.8 million), one also has to remember that the total population in 1910 was 92 million (as opposed nearly 250 million in 1990) (Felicity Barringer, May 29, 1992). This is also true when one compares the number of foreign-born, which was 13.3 million in 1910 (that is, foreign-born <u>whites</u> who made up 1/7th of the total populace), but 19.7 million in 1990 (all foreign-born constitute only 1/13th). (Felicity Barringer, May 31, 1992).

Statistics may not make much of a utopia, but the discussion of the changing composition of the United States, and of US higher education certainly is a factor that has animated the debate. Yet as several observers have also pointed out, such statistics do not translate into an increase in cultural activities: not all ethnic groups are interested in "multiculturalism," and many of the new immigrants have shown restraint in their endorsement of multicultural education (Glazer 1991, 19; Gottfredson 8).

D. IDEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

Whatever may explain the thinness of utopianism in the debate on multiculturalism, there certainly is no paucity of ideological arguments.

The following points recur in various critical assessments.

1. Ethnicization

Whether related to the multiculturalism debate or not, there is widespread agreement that racial incidents, and instances of interethnic hostily (as well as of sexual harassment) have increased in the past few years (see United States Commission; de Silva). The notion of ethnos has certainly been reinstated in the process; as Higham points out, ethnic mobilization tends to spread repidly (Higham 1992). Ethnicization also is likely to direct discussions to ethnic origins rather than to a possible polyethnic future--which may be a reason why there seems to be more ideology than utopia in the debate. Humor is at risk, as many jokes are now considered "insensitive." A new flurry of cultural production generates an often shrill debate focusing on the dividing line between permissible "free speech" and what is now called "hate speech," to be banned from college campuses. What are deans to do when student groups announce meetings entitled "Spade Kicks"--an anti-black racial slur--even though it may be identified as a quote from Jack Kerouac (Collison A39); are university administrators entitled to prohibit an appearance by the black rapper Ice Cube whose "Black Korea" on his 1991 album, Death Certificate, includes the following lines:

> Every time I want to go get a fucking brew
> I gotta go down to the store with the two
> Oriental one-penny-counting motherfuckers;
> They make a nigger mad enough to cause a little ruckus. . . .
> So don't follow me up an down your market
> Or your little chop suey ass will be a target
> Of a nationwide boycott.
> Juice with the people, that's what the boy got.
> So pay respect to the black fist
> Or we'll burn your store right down to a crisp.
> And then we'll see ya...
> 'Cause you can't turn the ghetto into black Korea. (Choe 6)

You can imagine that Korean-American student groups will not be pleased by such cultural expression. "Referring to the merchants' backsides as 'chop suey ass[es]' certainly does not help the situation," a student writes and

concludes: "What is necessary is not for the Korean community to 'pay respect to the black fist,' or vice versa. Instead, a Korean hand, extended and ready to embrace, must respect and be respected by a black hand, also ready to embrace" (Choe 8).

The new (or at least, previously unreported) activities that have needed deliberation at Harvard, for example, include the weighing of the "right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom from harassment" in the cases of racially offensive Halloween masks (a white medical student couple going to a party as Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill, and the man is beaten up severely by a black student) (Chafetz); two female graduate students who are leaving the Classics Department because they find their professors insensitive; the university has to reconcile its statutes which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation with the existence of an MIT-based student military training program which silently condones the military's practice of discharging more than 13,000 homosexuals from its ranks in the past ten years (New York Times, May 31, 1992). The areas in which such conflicts erupt have undoubtedly proliferated in the past ten years, and the boards and committees deciding disciplinary matters are busier than ever.

2. Commodification

No matter what one's definition or position on "multiculturalism" may be, it is also an excellent marketing device. Benetton set the tone for multicultural commercials; and the academy has moved closer than ever to the market-place in the context of multiculturalism. too. Upon closer inspection, some battles turn out to involve such serious issues as the choice between two widely marketed literary anthologies for classroom use. Michael Berubé has noted the (by no means rare) mutual endorsements of two prominent cultural conservatives:

> Allan Bloom (apparently thinking that Kimball is working on a major motion picture) heads Kimball's front cover with the line, "All persons serious about education should see it." With uncanny symmetry, Bloom and Kimball now occupy the front covers of each other's books, but Kimball's salute to Bloom is more rigorous: "An unparalleled reflection on today's intellectual climate. . . . That rarest of documents, a genuinely profound book." (Berman 131)

An advertisement for Arthur Schlesinger's book in The New York Times Book Review cites an equally enthusiastic Robert Kimball: "**Trenchant**. . . One of the most devastating and articulate attacks on multiculturalism yet to appear" (March 15, 1992, 20).

The debate itself, however, is a commodity, too. This is certainly true for the recycled articles, including Berubé's own contribution, that are hectically marketed in widely disseminated massmarket paperback collections. Look at the back cover of Paul Berman's collection:

> **WHITE MALE EUROCENTRISM...OR AN ESSENTIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE?**
>
> The debate . . . is the most important discussion in American education today and has grown into a major national controversy raging on the covers of our top magazines and news shows. This provocative anthology gives voice to the top thinkers of our time.
>
> A LAUREL TRADE PAPERBACK DELL PUBLISHING

The public debates themselves, on college campuses, radio, and television, are at least partly also forms of "orchestrated" marketing devices; and marketing may even bridge political differences: "Dinesh D'Souza, the 30-year-old former Reagan White House policy analyst whose book [Illiberal Education] graced the best-seller list for three months last year" was inspired by his lecture agent to invite his intellectual opponent Stanley Fish to join him "in a series of one-to-one debates." They

> put themselves on the market--for a fee of $ 10,000 per debate. On five occasions in the last year the two men appeared before packed houses on college campuses to engage in orchestrated verbal fisticuffs. "He debates issues very energetically and passionately, but without bitterness," says D'Souza. "As a result, we can have a knockdown, drag-out debate and still have a drink afterward." (Begley 50)

The title of the New York Times Magazine essay, "Souped-Up Scholar," from which this information was culled, also suggests stylish commodification, and the essay opens with a photo montage by Burk Uzzle of Stanley Fish, the spines of some of his books, and the front of a red sports car.

Even individual books of the multiculturalism debate have been marketed in unusual ways. Schlesinger's book, for example, was widely cited in the press last year--when it was not yet available in bookstores but only by mail order from Whittle Direct Books in Knoxville TN. Having sent my check for $ 11.95, I was surprised to receive the book by return mail via Federal

Express: opening it I was even more surprised to read a hardback book that was interrupted by nine double-paged color ads for Federal Express which counted for the pagination of the 98-page book and which had such pertinent slogans as "We didn't start an air express service. We started a revolution" (Schlesinger 85).

Whittle Communications, by the way, made headlines recently when Yale President Benno Schmidt stepped down in order to help build up a commercial, national school system with Whittle; and when one of Whittle's managers became an advisor for Ross Perot's media campaign.

3. A New Export Ideology?

Multiculturalism may also be offered and propagated politically as America's new trade mark, now that the end of the Cold War has made democracy and an electoral system so much more widespread. The question "Is Japan open enough to multiculturalism to justify an academic association meeting there" or the notion that American multiculturalism can be (or ought to be) a model for a Europe torn by nationalisms are occasionally voiced. For example, the teachers union president Albert Shanker quoted the Czech leader of the Civic Forum Jan Urban as saying:

> Do you realize that every country in Europe--Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania--is looking at this great miracle, which is the U.S. We cannot understand how different people can live together for hundreds of years and think of themselves as one. We are trying to understand how to emulate you so we can remain unified and not return to the racism, pogroms and wars of the past." (February 23, 1992)

It is, of course, the consensus model of multiculturalism which is usually being exported, not the notion of intensified racial and ethnic tension.

4. Identity Politics

Multiculturalism may reduce participants to self-interested articulators of predictable points; may inhibit not only cross-ethnic critique (as "insensitive") but also intra-ethnic critique (as "Nestbeschmutzung") among creative writers as well as critics and scholars. Many discussions are turned into autobiographies. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes: "At the core of the multicultural agenda lies a commitment to edcuation--and, indeed, culture itself--as primarily the quest for an

acceptable autobiography" (Aufderheide 231); such autobiographic forms may look more like talk shows, Oprah Winfrey confessions that are quickly followed by the next one; and the autobiography itself is often a list of generalized items and clichés; individuals seeem to fall into categories carved out by "corporate pluralism" (Glazer 1975, 106-110; Gordon 1988, 157-166) and feel obliged to assert and express themselves via ethnic identity. Thus the talk about diversity may actually assert a shared frame; there are few unpredictible divisions, but the familiar groupings on grounds of race, gender, and sexual orientation (not politics--which is a theme that a new student right is therefore beginning to claim).

Such identity politics is intellectually flabby. The term "identity" in connection with "ethnic," which may go back only to Erik Erikson (Gleason 123-149), is omnipresent today. A sense of belonging to a race, ethnic group, or gender is generally permitted, at times even encouraged, to "hypercathect" itself upon all other social categories to which an individual may also belong--a phenomenon George Devereux has analyzed in the extreme case of fascism (De Vos 66-68). Multiculturalism as an educational policy is based on very soft social science (Stanley Lieberson); and it has been criticized for its weak anthropological foundations--for example, in blurring the distinctions between culture and race (Perry)--and for its poor philosophical underpinnings (Searle in Berman 85-123, and Searle 1992). As I shall illustrate later, the multiculturalism debate also shows little awareness of the recent history of American social thought on group relations.

Critiques of these aspects of "multiculturalism" are on the rise. Recently David Hollinger has articulated the need to construct a new, "post-ethnic" universalism that is informed--but not stymied--by the particularist challenges. And, in a similar vein, Anthony Appiah argues:

> The task is not to replace one ethnocentrism with many; not to reject old ideals of truth and impartiality as intrinsically biased. Rather it is to recognise that those ideals have yet to be fully lived up to in our scholarship; that the bias has derived not from scholars who took Western standards (which often turn out to be everybody's standards) of truth for granted, but that they didn't take them seriously enough. (Appiah 6)

5. Die kleine Utopie

The Australian anthropologist Marie de Lepervanche considered the possibility as early as in 1980 "that where racist behavior and ideologies were convenient to ruling class interests one hundred years ago, the apparent opposite--the promotion of ethnicity--performs a similar role today" (Lepervanche 34). In that sense, the distinction between conservatives and radicals may be misleading as two interest groups may be articulating their positions. One does not have to agree with Robert Hughes's general harangue in order to appreciate his point that in cultural matters

> we can hardly claim to have a left and a right anymore. Instead we have something more akin to two puritan sects, one masquerading as conservative, the other posing as revolutionary but using academic complaint as a way of evading engagement in the real world. (Hughes 46)

Instead Hughes portrays one possible background of the multiculturalism debate as the arrival of a new elite: "though élites are never going to go away, the composition of those élites is not necessarily static. The future of American ones, in a globalized economy without a cold war, will rest with people who can think and act with informed grace across ethnic, cultural, linguistic lines" (Hughes 47). Robert Christopher's book, tellingly subtitled "The De-WASPing of America's Power Elite," gives a vivid account of the dramatic changes the United States has undergone and expresses the author's belief that a new American ruling class has emerged "in which with each year that passes ethnicity becomes less and less of a touchstone, and the distinctions between 'them' and 'us' become more and more blurred" (Christopher 283). He views America as "far more inclusionary than most contemporary Americans assume" (Christopher 22). Christopher explicitly includes black Americans in this vision, and his book opens with a chapter significantly entitled "Room at the Top."

The push for multicultural changes, in such a view, does not necessarily come from the populace, but from the top; and what is sometimes noteworthy is a "top down" approach in multicultural education, too: thus the chair of the Institute for Educational Management Arthur Levine gives the following advice to administrators in a pro-multiculturalist, yet conservative-sounding magazine: "Vigorous support must come from the top. Avoid politicization. The effort must be faculty-driven.... Try to avoid a

top-down emphasis, but offer support (moral and fiscal)" (Change 5).

Multiculturalism may be attractive to governments and agencies because it is cheap; as Louis Menand writes, "changing the curriculum is the cheapest social program ever devised" (Aufderheide 233). It is certainly much cheaper than a full social security, medicare and unemployment insurance system in a society that is also increasingly polarized by class: Thus, from 1977 to 1989, pretax income of the rich grew sharply:
In the top 1% it grew by 77% to an average annual income of $ 559,800;
in the top fifth by 29% to $ 109, 400;
in the second fifth by 9% to $47,900;
the income of the third fifth grew by only 4% to $32,700;
that of the fourth fifth sank by 1% to 20,100;
and annual income in the bottom fifth declined by 9% to 8,400. (Nasar, March 5, 1992)

This shift is all the more dramatic since all efforts by other statisticians to deflect from its essentials have failed (Nasar, May 11, 1992); and since philanthropic efforts have also declined very dramatically in the Reagan and Bush years (Felicity Barringer, May 24, 1992).

Multiculturalism may be less expensive than social equalization, but it is by no means "free." While the idea of multiculturalism is often articulated as if it were phrased against the controlling powers of the status quo, it is, in fact, endorsed widely by many presidents of major universities, and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations (whereas Olin, Mobil, Earhart, Smith-Robertson, Sarah Scaife, and Bradley support the "conservatives"). The debate may thus also be a battle of foundations.

Many institutions have assigned large amounts of money to offices, foundations, fellowships and so forth through which efforts are channeled. Neil Rudenstine, the president of Harvard University, for example, declared that nothing is higher on his prority list than diversifying the faculty (Collison A39). And the special 1992 issue of Change magazine devoted to multiculturalism, an issue that was in itself sponsored by a grant from the Ford Foundation, listed some rather startling statistics, according to which more than a third of all US colleges have a multicultural requirement; more than a third offer black, hispanic, Native, or Asian American studies courses; more than half have increased departmental course offerings; half have multicultural advising programs; 60% offer recruitment

and retention programs for multicultural faculty; more than 40% offer faculty development programs focusing on multicultural issues; and more than a third have multicultural institutes or centers (Change 5). Arthur Levine and Jeanette Cureton conclude: "The sheer quantity of multicultural activity . . . belies the belief that the traditional curriculum has been largely impermeable to, or has simply marginalized, diversity. . . . Multiculturalism today touches in varying degrees a majority of the nation's colleges and universities" (Change 29). It may thus constitute a firmly launched, but segmental and top-heavy experience rather than promise a utopian vision for a whole society.

6. A Compromise

Frank-Olaf Radtke has characterized the German advocacy of multiculturalism as a compromise between such extreme options as the return of "foreigners" to "homelands" or the complete assimilation in Germany of minorities; more narrowly multiculturalism can be located between the toleration (or even stimulation) of ghettoization and the offer of double citizenship. At the very center is multiculturalism as the compromise between the need for limitless access to labor and a surrendering of notions of national homogeneity; while more attention is being paid to cultural expression of minorities, their rights as non-citizens can remain curtailed (Radtke 14. 11. 1991).

As John Porter argued nearly twenty years ago, for the United States and Canada the dilemma is between mobility and ethnicity. Hence, "on the one hand if they value and emphasize ethnicity, mobility and opportunity are endangered, on the other hand if they emphasize mobility and opportunity, it will be at the cost of submerging cultural identity" (Glazer 1975, 294).

Here multiculturalism could also work as a compromise: by simultaneously emphasizing ethnicity and visibly incorporating representatives of the most important ethnic groups into elites without having to make changes in the social structure. This way multiculturalism might combine a stress on ethnicity with a symbolic demonstration of mobility--and the two lines come together most plausibly in the biographical format of widely circulating success stories of previously excluded Americans. (One only has to think of Colin Powell and Clarence

Thomas.)

II. THE MULTICULTURALISM DEBATE AS CULTURAL TEXT

The debate about multiculturalism has a limited arsenal of formal strategies and a recurrent set of motifs and themes. Since the rationale for the present conference of the German Society for American Studies included the search for a "meta-level," it is tempting to take the debate as if it were a text and review some of its formal and thematic characteristics.

1. Formal features

Formally, many contributions to the discussion have generic affinities with the jeremiad (Schlesinger, Bloom, Kimball); they tend to be critical or vituperative as Puritan sermons once were, yet end on a note of hope and promise. This affinity is recognized and thematized in the debate itself: Stanley Fish, for example, refers to D'Souza and Kimball as "our modern Jeremiahs" (Begley 52).

The nature of the debate may be responsible for a smaller formal feature that recurs with some frequency: it is the Whitmanian catalogue of ingredients that proponents or opponents tend to ascribe to multiculturalism. Roger Kimball, for example, goes to the MLA and lists the following items he regards as "substitutes for literature":

> Marxism, feminism, what we might call homosexualism, "cultural studies," ethnic studies, and any number of indeterminate mixtures of the above leavened with dollops of deconstructivist or poststructuralist theory--in other words, multiculturalism de luxe. (Berman 66)

[Many Americans probably heard about "deconstruction" for the first time from such negative publicity in the multiculturalism debate.]
The recurrence of such cataloguing has also been noted in the debate. Henry Louis Gates speaks ironically of the "trinity" of race, class, and gender. Barbara Ehrenreich writes: "Too often multiculturalism leads to the notion of politics as a list. Political 'theory' becomes a list of all the groups, issues, and concerns that you must remember to check off lest you offend somebody with no larger perspective connecting them. But a list does not

define a political outlook" (Berman 337).

The smallest defining formal unit of the debate is probably the anecdote, which I shall consider at greater length. With its cultural origins in such champions of anecdotal writing as Franklin and Emerson, its master in the debate on multiculturalism is undoubtedly D'Souza, whose anecdotes of incidents on campuses are often retold, varied, and corrected by other readers. The issues that led to Stephan Thernstrom's decision to discontinue offering a course on "The Peopling of America" have been told and retold in so many fashions since D'Souza highlighted his version of the story, that printed interpretations are beginning to reach the indeterminacy threshold. The problems of assessing variants in interpretating such anecdotes are significant; and only occasionally does one have the advantage of an anecdote based on a text:

Thus D'Souza in his attack on "Visigoths in Tweed" accuses the collection Multi-Cultural Literacy of ignoring "The Tale of the Genji, the Upanishads and Vedas, the Koran and Islamic commentaries. It also ignores such brilliant contemporary authors as Jorge Luis Borges, V.S. Naipaul, Octavio Paz, Naguib Mahfouz, and Wole Soyinka" (Aufderheide 16; see also Berman 32). Yet D'Souza must not have taken the trouble to look at the book; for its section "Opening the American Mind," contains a preliminary list of "the sorts of things not included in" E.D Hirsch's book Cultural Literacy; and there the reader finds the Upanishads, the I Ching and Gilgamesh as well as Borges, Paz, and Soyinka among many other authors, titles, and cultural bits (Simonson 191-200).

Even when there is agreement about (or only one printed source of) an anecdote, interpretations in the context of race and gender may veer into different directions. Let me give you an example of how difficult the imputation of human motives can be at this moment. Shelby Steele, a black opponent to affirmative action, stylizes some episodes in such a way as to show the outline of a world in which race may matter less. He frames a scene in a California supermarket as follows:

> When we [he is speaking of blacks here] first meet, we experience a trapped feeling, as if we had walked into a cage of racial expectations that would rob us of our individuality by reducing us to an exclusively racial dimension. We are a threat, at first, to one another's uniqueness. I have seen the same well-dressed black woman in

> the supermarket for more than a year now. We do not speak, and we usually pretend not to see each other. But, when we turn a corner suddenly and find ourselves staring squarely into each other's eyes, her face freezes and she moves on. I believe she is insisting that both of us be more than black--that we interact only when we have a reason other than the mere fact of our race. Her chilliness enforces a priority I agree with--individuality over group identity. (Steele 22-23)

Yet as one reviewer pointed out, this woman may actually be miles ahead of Steele in the struggle for individuality. She, too, might not be thinking of race at all and only find him to be not likeable enough individually to thaw her chilliness. She might also have recognized him and show her disapproval of his widely publicized political views by snubbing him.

It is good to remember that much of the debate rests on the plausibility of anecdotes that no one can possibly verify completely. This again strenghtens the autobiographical format of the debate.

A variant of the anecdote--which at least purports to be based on facts--is the fable, or parable, which derives its point or moral from an admittedly hypothetical scenario. John Searle used such a "counterfactual situation" in order to review the assumptions of the "traditionalists" and the multicultural challengers:

> Suppose it was discovered by an amazing piece of historical research that the works commonly attributed to Plato and Aristotle were not written by Greek males, but by two Chinese women who were cast ashore on the coast of Attica when a Chinese junk shipwrecked off the Piraeus in the late fifth century B.C. What difference would this make to our assessment of the works of Plato and Aristotle. From the traditionalist point of view, none whatever. It would just be an interesting historical fact. From the challengers' point of view, I think it would make a tremendous difference. Ms. Plato and Ms. Aristotle would now acquire a new authenticity as genuine representatives of a previously underrepresented minority, and the most appropriate faculty to teach their works would be then Chinese women. (Searle 9)

Searle uses this fable to drive home the following moral:

> Implicit in the traditional assumptions . . . is the view that the faculty member does not have to exemplify the texts that he or she

> teaches. They assume that the works of Marx can be taught by someone who is not a Marxist, just as Aquinas can be taught by someone who is not a Catholic, and Plato by someone who is not a Platonist. But the challengers assume, for example, that women's studies should be taught by feminist women, Chicano studies by Chicanos committed to a certain set of values, etc. (Searle 9)

On the borderline between formal and thematic features is a repeated syllable in the present discussion. Whereas a Rhyming Dictionary from 1936 (Wood 368) lists only ten words rhyming with -centric, our own age is so much richer for poets who want to rhyme words ending with -centric and -centrism. The fashion may actually be going back to William Graham Sumner's coinage "ethnocentrism" of 1906. For Sumner, "ethnocentrism" is

> the technical name for [a] view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. . . .
>
> ethnocentrism leads a people to exaggerate and intensify everything in their own folkways which is peculiar and which differentiates them from others. It therefore strengthens the folkways. (Sumner 13)

Now "-centric" is attached to many words and can have positive as well as negative meanings: Afrocentric or Eurocentric. Most recently, the catalogue has been further enriched by Amero- or Ameri-centric. Thus Diane Ravitch writes: "American education is not centered on anything, is centered on itself. It is 'Americentric.' Most American students know very little about Europe, and even less about the rest of the world. . . . When the Berlin Wall was opened in the fall of 1989, journalists discovered that most American teenagers had no idea what it was, nor why its opening was such a big deal. Eurocentrism provides a better target than Americentrism" (Berman 289).

2. Motifs and Themes

Some recurrent thematic elements in the multiculturalism debate also deserve attention. There is, for example, a decided preference for the term "discontents," often an allusion to Freud's Unbehagen in der Kultur. We find panels and essays on "multiculturalism and its discontents" (e.g. in Chris Wilson's panel at the 1992 New England American Studies Assocation

Convention in Boston, or the workshop "Theorizing the 'Other': Das Unbehagen zwischen den Kulturen" at the present meeting of the German Society for American Studies in Berlin); and the word is used even when one might think that others might fit better. Thus Catharine Stimpson writes: "Obviously, our multiculturalism has many antagonistic discontents. . . . Even though multiculturalism has . . . discontents, it is a great, defining feature of our historical moment" (Change 77, 78). Interestingly, recent critics of the multiculturalism debate like Berndt Ostendorf and Marshall Sahlins have been drawn to Freud's work for the term "narcissism of minor differences," which Freud applied to the "phenomenon that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and ridiculing each other--like the Spaniards and the Portuguese, for instance, the North Germans and the South Germans, the English and Scotch, and so on" (Freud 1930, 114; see also Freud 1918, 199; and Freud 1921, 101).

Sahlins asserts that Freud was concerned about Balkanization when he spoke of this particular narcissism; and Balkanization is another thematic cluster that traverses the multiculturalism debate. Shelby Steele feels that as "racial, ethnic, and gender differences become forms of sovereignty, campuses become balkanized" (Steele 132). D'Souza's opinion of the new university politics (characterized by affirmative action) is summed up in it: "I think this is a formula for racial division, for Balkanization, and ultimately for racial hostility" (D'Souza in Berman 35). And: "Schlesinger and other critics see [multiculturalism] as a kind of tribalism, a dangerous balkanization of American society" (Njeri), Todd Gitlin finds in "group narcissism" "a perfect recipe for a home-grown Yugoslavia" (Aufderheide 190).

There is also a widespread desire to explore the semantic possibilities of a word like "canon" through repeated punning. Thus we read of "loose canons" (Todd Gitlin, Adam Yarmolinsky and Henry Louis Gates); canons of the past simply become "canon-fodder" of the present (Irving Louis Horowitz); and there is talk of firing the canon (Bryan Wolf).

3. E pluribus unum

Probably no phrase is used as much in the multiculturalism debate as "E pluribus unum"--out of many one. It has been connected with the discussion

of American diversity for some time, for example, in Arthur Mann's book The One and the Many (1979). Schlesinger's book contains a long meditation on this theme:

> The national ideal had once been e pluribus unum. Are we now to belittle unum and glorify pluribus? Will the center hold? or will the melting pot yield to the Tower of Babel? (Schlesinger 2)
>
> The question poses itself: how to restore the balance between unum and pluribus? (Schlesinger 80)

Yet Schlesinger has no monopoly on wordplays with e pluribus unum. Diane Ravitch gave her essay on multiculturalism the subtitle "E pluribus plures" (Berman 271-298). "More pluribus, more unum" a New York Times editorial (June 23, 1991) followed suit. "E pluribus what?" the American Studies Newsletter asked. "E Pluribus nihil," Midge Decter answered (Commentary 92, Sept. 1991, 25), followed most recently by Stanley Schmidt's editorial "E pluribus zero" (Analog Science Fiction & Fact 112, April 1992, 4). Or the other way around: "Ex uno, plus" as the National Review editorial puts it (July 29, 1991, 16). In this company, the title of one of Albert Shanker's recent ad-columns in the New York Times (February 23, 1992) sounds modest as it only adds a question mark and asks: "E Pluribus Unum?"

The group relations specialist Robert McIver had written as early as 1945:

> take a coin out of your pocket and look at it. What do you see? E Pluribus Unum, one out of many, one built out of many, one nation born of many--of many what? Of many groups, tongues, religions, races. That . . . is the promise of America, one nation made of many. . . (MacIver 4-5)

Given the large circulation which the phrase "e pluribus unum" enjoys in multiculturalism, it is regrettable that its origins have been largely neglected. To my knowledge, no participant in the current debate on "multiculturalism"--with the exception of the internationally pitched American Studies Newsletter (33)--has paid attention to the source of this saying, which used to appear on coins (in MacIver's days) and is now immortalized on the back of each dollar bill, reproducing the Great Seal of the United States. The motto was, as Kenneth Silverman writes, part of the original proposal for the Seal that a committee (including Franklin, Jefferson, Paine, and Adams) had proposed on August 20, 1776. In 1782

Congress adopted a design by William Barton, who "made the central image of the seal a large eagle displaying a reduced shield of thirteen stripes on its chest. In its talons the eagle would grip an olive branch and a bundle of arrows. In its beak would be a scroll reading E Pluribus Unum. Above the eagle would hover a cloud shrouding a constellation of thirteen stars." (Silverman 417)

The "one" was clearly meant to signify the confederation, the "many" its united thirteen colonies; but how and where did the founders find this neat Latin phrase? The most plausible source is the title page of the popular London Gentleman's Magazine where e pluribus unum promised "a variety of literary texts" under one cover (Silverman 658); a poem of 1734 explained:

To your motto most true, for our monthly inspection,

You mix various rich sweets in one fragrant collection. (Deutsch 392)

In turn it had been copied from the Gentleman's Journal or the Monthly Miscellany, originally edited by the Huguenot refugee Pierre Antoine Motteux from 1691 to 1694 (Deutsch 392).

Ultimately, it goes back to Horace's Epistle to Florus (ca. 20 B.C.) or to the poem Moretum, ascribed to Vergil. Horace's exhortative epistle asks at the end: "Do you grow gentler and better, as old age draws near? What good does it do you to pluck out a single one of many thorns? If you know not how to live aright make way for those who do" (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough). (Lenior et melior fis accedente senecta? quid te exempta iuvat spinis de pluribus una. vivere se recte nescis, decede peritis) (Epistles II, 211-213).

Horace was the motto of Spectator for August 20, 1711; but Horace meant "one selected from many," not "one composed of many" (Deutsch 391).

The Moretum (or "Ploughman's Lunch") is a short poem about the farmer (perhaps ex-slave) Simulus who, with some help by the African woman Scybale, prepares a meal, a dumpling made of something resembling pesto; or according to another reader, a salad (Rand 59-60). Having added hard cheese, salt, and herbs, and having mashed the garlic, he pounds everything:

Round and round went his hand; gradually the original ingredients lost their own properties and one colour emerged from several, not wholly green, since the milky fragments held out, nor shining milk-white,

being variegated by all the herbs. (Trans. E. J. Kenney)

(it manus in gyrum: paulatim singula uires
deperdunt proprias, color est e pluribus unus,
nec totus uiridis, quia lactea frusta repugnant,
nec de lacte nitens, quia tot uariatur ab herbis. [100-104])

Monroe Deutsch's conclusion of 1929 deserves to be cited: "And so a Frenchman adapted and published on the title-page of a magazine issued in England a group of three Latin words which became the national motto of this composite people, the United States of America" (Deutsch 406)

It is ironical that "e pluribus unus," one source of e pluribus unum comes from the same metaphoric realm as do such alternatives to the melting pot as stew or salad bowl. (The whole reception might also be interesting as a series of misreadings held together by gaps which the historian finds difficult to bridge but which might delight a critic like Stanley Fish.--It should now be apparent that I am placing this essay into a context by choosing its clichéd title and drawing on anecdotes.)

4. Matthew Arnold

Henry A. Giroux writes in the course of his democratic critique of canons:

> The liberal arts curriculum, composed of the "best" that had been said or written, was intended, as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has observed, "to provide selected individuals with a collective history, culture, and epistemology so that they could run the world effectively" (Gless 131).

The phrasing, "the best that has been said or written," is favored by many contributors to the multiculturalism debate, and goes back, of course, to Matthew Arnold.

Here is D'Souza: "I'm in favor of a multicultural curriculum that emphasizes what Matthew Arnold called the best that has been thought and said" (Berman 31). Kimball thinks that Arnold "had looked to the preservation and transmission of the best that had been thought and written as a means of rescuing culture from anarchy in a democratic society" (Berman 134). And Gertrude Himmelfarb also describes a better past, when

> it was considered the function of the university to . . . liberate [students] intellectually and spiritually by exposing them, as the English poet Matthew Arnold put it, to "the best which has been thought

and said in the world." (Gless 163)

Alexander Nehamas responded by calling attention to an inaccuracy in such uses of Arnold: "Nostalgia has colored . . . Professor Himmelfarb's . . . recollection of Arnold, who actually wrote that the 'business' of criticism is 'to know the best that is known and thought in the world.' . . . Himmelfarb's replacement of Arnold's present-tense 'is' by the perfect tense 'has been'. . . allows her to appeal to Arnold's authority in order to insinuate, if not to argue outright, that the university's concern is with the past and that the present, at least in connection with the humanities, lies largely outside the scope of its function" (Gless 164-165).

Some advocates of multiculturalism have criticized conservative uses of Arnold more generally by declaring him irrelevant to democratic education or to the electronic age. John Searle observes that what were once undisputed educational platitudes have now become contested, e.g. the demand that students should, "in Matthew Arnold's overquoted words, 'know the best that is known and thought in the world.'" (Berman 88)

To my knowledge the multicultural "left" has not yet claimed and defended Matthew Arnold against his "conservative" admirers who have appropriated him; yet a look at Arnold's "platitude" could actually be helpful at this moment. (Morris Dickstein has recently written a brief for Arnold's radicalism that I shall relate a little later.) In his essay "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," first published in 1864, Matthew Arnold distinguishes a practical, "English" tradition from a "French" world that cherishes ideas. He takes up the demand for critical "disinterestedness" (perhaps derived from Goethe's term Uneigennützigkeit in Dichtung und Wahrheit, used to characterize Spinoza; see Arnold 1962, 477). Criticism can show this "by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a

current of true and fresh ideas" (Arnold 1962, 270).

Arnold repeats the famous phrase when he praises the Revue des Deux Mondes as an organ that--unlike the practical and partisan English journals--has chosen "for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world" (Arnold 1962, 270); Baudelaire's Fleurs du mal had appeared there a few years earlier. Arnold chastises the notion "that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life," a notion advocated by critics who seem to proclaim: "We are all terrae filii, all Philistines together" (Arnold 1962, 276).

Encouraging a broader view, Arnold points out that "as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought cannot be of English growth" (Arnold 1962, 282); hence Arnold demands that the "English critic of literature must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him" (Arnold 1962, 282-283).

When Arnold put the essay into his collection, he added a passage addressing the reader's possible complaint that his observations lacked practical use and were not enough devoted to "the current English literature of the day" (Arnold 1962, 283). His response:

> I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism: a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world. How much of current English literature comes into this "best that is known and thought in the world?" Not very much, I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France and Germany. (Arnold 1962, 284)

He concludes with his vision of a contemporary criticism that transcends national boundaries and "regards Europe as being, for intellectual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another" (Arnold 1962, 284).

It deserves attention that Arnold's "overquoted" phrase (overused even by Arnold himself) comes from a context that is not irrelevant to the

multicultural discussions of today, as Arnold was concerned here not with a static canon of the past, as his conservative adherents claim, but with the open exploration of fresh ideas in a cosmopolitan spirit of disinterestedness that went beyond predictable parti pris positions and national boundaries. Hence he could be cited to strengthen calls for reading "the best that is known and thought in the world," with a stress on world, and not just the works of one country.

Arnold used his expression several more times in Culture and Anarchy, drawn from lectures he had given in 1866 and 1867; once he demands that we get to know "whether through reading, observing, or thinking, the best that can at present be known in the world" (Arnold 1965, 191); and, in fairness to Gertrude Himmelfarb, when he added a preface for the book publication in 1869, Arnold wrote:

> The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world. (Arnold 1965, 233)

Yet, again, this does not make Arnold play a cultural past against the present; thus he explicates later in the preface: "If a man without books or reading, or reading nothing but his letters and the newspapers, gets nevertheless a fresh and free play of the best thoughts upon his stock notions and habits, he has got culture" (Arnold 1965, 529). And when he uses the familiar phrasing again in the "Sweetness and Light" section of Culture and Anarchy, it is to express his view that it must be the aim of culture "to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere." Hence the great men of culture carry, "from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time" (Arnold 1965, 113), with a distinct focus on the contemporary context.

It is ironic that Arnold had provoked American wrath (including Mark Twain's) for his observations on Civilization in the United States. Arnold had viewed the United States as the embodiment of Philistinism; and found that the "absence of truth and soberness in [American newspapers], the poverty in serious interest, the personality and sensationmongering, are beyond belief" (Arnold 1900, 177-178). American journalism was, to Arnold,

an exaggeration of everything he found deplorable in English criticism.

Finally, it is also noteworthy that for twentieth-century American Jewish intellectuals who moved into the Humanities, Matthew Arnold was a central subject of interest. Thus Horace M. Kallen, Ludwig Lewisohn, and Lionel Trilling chose Arnold as an important topic for their reflections (Kallen 1932, 8-9; Lewisohn 31-36; Trilling 203-206; see Klingenstein 43-45, 161-178). Inspired by Trilling, Morris Dickstein has recently articulated his own appreciation of Arnold, stressing Arnold's originality in demanding "relevance" in literary studies and the fact that Arnold's "canon" was "anti-canonical, existential" (Dickstein 12). Dickstein notes the irony (vividly illustrated by the multiculturalism debate) that Arnold's "attacks on English insularity . . . became the ground of a new traditionalism, the justification for a new insularity, not very different from the insularity he attacked" (Dickstein 15). He summarizes:

> Mistaken for a conservative, Arnold belongs if anything to this great tradition of cultural radicalism which recoiled from the alliance between liberalism and "progress," and hence did much to establish the modern humanist critique of industrial society. (Dickstein 16)

And contrasting Arnold with his present-day detractors who see in his striving for "disinterestedness" a "mask for specific social interests: white, male, and middle-class," Dickstein, whose most famous earlier book was a sympathetic account of the 1960s, points out that for Arnold, "disinterestedness" "was a social as well as literary goal--really a utopian ideal" (Dickstein 17)--of which we have found so little in the multiculturalism debate.

5. "Politically correct" and George Orwell's **Nineteen Eighty-Four**

Mark Kurlansky writes in a recent letter to the New York Times Book Review:

> There was a time when I loved the phrase "poltically correct" as a wonderfully snide label for the safe conformism of the liberal establishment. But then it became a tedious cliché used to decribe the tyranny of that same establishment, which tries to censor anyone who does not conform. Now we see another use. An idea can simply be dismissed by asserting that it is politically correct. (31 May 1992, 46)

The term "politically correct"--PC for short--is pervasive in the multiculturalism debate. It was traced by Ruth Perry to 1970, to an essay by Toni Cade (who was yet to add "Bambara" to her name). Perry suspects that the term may come from Maoist rhetoric (Aufderheide 72-73). It is also possible that the phrasing first occurred in critiques of totalitarianism. Thus when the protagonist of Ellison's novel Invisible Man gets censored by the brotherhood he is questioned; and Brother Tobitt sarcastically asks: "You mean he admits the possibility of being incorrect?" (Ellison 453).

Though the word "politically correct" does not seem to appear in Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four it might come from the ambience of this work. For example, when Julia asks Winston about his wife Katharine. Winston answers:

> "She was--do you know the Newspeak word goodthinkful? Meaning naturally orthodox, incapable of thinking a bad thought?"
>
> "No, I didn't know the word, but I know the kind of person, right enough." (Orwell 133)

Even though Orwell said "goodthinkful" rather than "politically correct" in order to characterize Winston's wife and legitimate his adultery, the multiculturalism debate is suffused with nothing more than with allusions to Orwell's world--a world with which many intellectuals refamiliarized themselves in the year 1984.

First, there is the general sense of "newspeak" about all the new words that have come out of the desire to be more sensitive and gender neutral. (I suppose a German equivalent would be "SodomitInnen.") Walter Goodman, for example, reviewed one of the many new and politically correct dictionaries that are now on the market under the title "Decreasing our word power: the new newspeak." In a similar vein, Robert Lerner complained about "Newspeak, feminist-style" in Commentary (1990). If the conservatives call the liberals' pleas for more sensitive language "newspeak," the liberals retaliate in kind.

I already mentioned "hate speech," the term generally used now to describe offensive or insensitive language. Orwell readers will recognize the echo of "Hate Week" (Orwell 149) and the "Hate Song" that people sing during this event. Supporters of multiculturalism are as much at home in Orwell as are their conservative opponents.

Thus Berubé uses the word doubleplusungood in order to describe the

media campaign against political correctness (Berman 139--see Orwell 45): in Orwell it refers to pornography in Pornosec of Ministry of Truth Records Department (Orwell 52). Paula Rothenberg writes: "But in the end, war is not peace, slavery is not freedom, and no matter what the N.A.S. may believe, ignorance is not strength" (Berman 268--see Orwell 5). She is alluding to the inscriptions on the ministries in Orwell.

The most frequently circulating Orwellian term may be "thought police," used by right, center and left. George Will employs it in order to denounce politically correct thinking at American universities, (Aufderheide 112; see Orwell 122; Michael Novak uses "Thought Police," writing on politically correct thinking at American universities in Forbes 1990; and the journalists used it again and again, from Playboy to Reader's Digest, to describe the atmosphere of censorship on some campuses. The titles: "Campus Christians and the New Thought Police;" "Thought Police on Campus;" and "The Thought Police Get Tenure." Robert Hughes argues against comparisons between McCarthyism and political correctness by pointing out that the "number of conservative academics fired by the lefty thought police. . . is zero" (Hughes 46). The unclassifiable Camille Paglia deplores womens's studies programs and finds that they have "hatched the new thought police of political correctness" (Paglia 19). Nat Hentoff cites Henry Louis Gates: "We must not succumb to the temptation to resurrect our own version of the thought police, who would determine who, and what, is 'black'" (Hentoff).

Patricia Williams distinguishes the "joy of multiculturalism" from "the oppression of groupthink and totalitarianism" (Aufderheide 197).

The elusive nature of "reality" has also been seen in terms of Nineteen Eighty-Four. Thus Speaking for the Humanities (a debated ACLS pamphlet) stated that, as "the most powerful modern philosophies and theories have been demonstrating, claims of disinterest, objectivity, and universality are not to be trusted and themselves tend to reflect local historical conditions" (Berman 110). When Tzvetan Todorov reviewed the pamphlet in the New Republic, he pointed out that it is "awkwardly reminiscent" of O'Brien's speech to Winston Smith in Orwell's 1984:

> You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. . . . But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind and nowhere else.

This review is--in the characteristic fashion of anecdote-retelling--cited

by Kimball (Berman 111). Searle cites it from Kimball and continues:

> according to the literary theorists influenced by Derrida, there is nothing beyond or outside texts. So O'Brien is supposed to have triumphed over Winston after all. (Berman 113)

Searle argues that one cannot, within human linguistic practices, "intelligibly deny metaphysical realism, because the meaningfulness of our public utterances already presupposes an independently existing reality to which expressions in those utterances can refer" (Berman 114).

The context of Orwell's novel actually is slightly different from such uses, as it concerns a dialogue in the feared torture chamber 101 (101 is, of course, also a frequently used number of introductory college courses!) of the Ministry of Truth about the party's right to history. O'Brien shows Winston a photograph of three one-time party members that constitutes proof that they were later executed for trumped-up charges; then he destroys it in the memory hole:

> "Ashes, he said. "Not even identifiable ashes. Dust. It does not exist. It never existed."
>
> "But it did exist! It does exist! It exists in memory. I remember it. You remember it."
>
> "I do not remember it," said O'Brien. (Orwell 250-251)

O'Brien forces Winston to recite the Party slogan about the past: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 251). Then O'Brien lectures Winston, as he responds to the question how one can control memory which is involuntary; and it is from this passage that some sentences were taken:

> Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes; only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. (Orwell 252)

Orwell's point is the possibility of individual resistance to collective power, not metaphysical realism--and O'Brien is not a deconstructionist.

Rereading Orwell, one notices his strange misrepresentation of totalitarianism that one might expect would collide with multiculturalism:

a. Sexual freedom is strongly stressed, while Julia is generally uninterested in politics and described as a rebel only "from the waist downwards" (Orwell 128), making the book a "sexist" text to today's readers. Indeed, Daphne Patai has discussed Orwell's novel under the category "androcentrism" and focused on narrative comments which make women the embodiment of what we would now call political correctness: "It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy" (Orwell 12; Patai 241).

b. Amazingly, racial (but not sexual) integration is ascribed to the realm of totalitarianism (which is strange if one remembers that it is a conglomerate of communism and fascism). Thus Orwell writes: "In principle, membership ... is not hereditary. Admission to either branch of the party is by examination, taken at the age of sixteen. Nor is there any racial discrimination. . . . Jews, Negroes, South Americans of pure Indian blood are to be found in the highest ranks of the Party. . . ." (Orwell 210). This might give a reader the impression that fighting for racial integration might be fighting for the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four, for the party, and for totalitarianism.

No matter how incompatible the issues of the multiculturalism and of Orwell's novel may be, the present debate is a form of "living Orwell." Like "multiculturalism," "Orwell" has become a compromise term that can be used for opposite political purposes (in the United States, he has been taken up by radicals, liberals, neoconservatives, old conservatives, and the John Birch Society [Rodden 26-27]), can be marketed successfully as a commodity (Orwell's two most famous novels sold 40 million copies world-wide, "more than any other pair of books by a serious or popular postwar author [Rodden 16]), and also marks the case of a white male English author whose canonical status (however recently acquired) all sides in the multiculturalism debate acclaim by taking general knowledge of his work for granted. John Rodden has called the posthumous adoption of Orwell "Assimilation Through Canonization" (Rodden 30); Rodden who has subjected the politics of literary reputation in the case of "St. George" Orwell points out that

> "Big Brother," "1984," "doublethink," "Newspeak," "Orwellian," and even "Orwell" are obfuscatory language. . . . Whether hurled with intent to confuse or in ignorance of Orwell's life and work, they have become charged code words, easily manipulated to call up reflexively all sorts of (often widely exaggerated) associations with a police state. (Rodden 37)

This way, Rodden says, Orwell has become the Dr. Frankenstein of the twentieth century. One certainly finds that this monster is a constitutive feature of the rhetoric of the multiculturalism debate; and all sides in the debate define themselves against totalitarianism, as represented by Orwell, in order to characterize their opponents.

Whether through "Orwell" or not, all factions in the multiculturalism debate evoke Hitler, fascism, and the Holocaust in order to make their points. Contemporary American students demonstrating for homosexual rights wear buttons imitating the pink triangles homosexuals were forced to wear in German concentration camps. In the instance where Ishmael Reed uses the word "monocultural" before "multiculturalism" had come into vogue, he asks: "wasn't Adolph Hitler the archetypal monoculturalist who, in his pigheaded arrogance, believed that one way and one blood was so pure that it had to be protected from alien strains at all costs?" (Simonson 157-158; Hitler's first name is often spelled "Adolph" in the United States.)

The general Orwellian atmosphere and such instances raise the question of how theories of group relations were affected by totalitarianism, and especially by the Nazi extermination policies of the 1940s. Historians of group relations thinking have for a long time emphasized the significance of totalitarianism and World War II for the development of integrationist policies in the United States. Richard Polenberg has described the discrediting of racialism that took place in American scholarship of the 1940s (Polenberg 70); Philip Gleason has carefully traced the effect of the war years on such central terms of group relations as "identity," "minorities," and "pluralism" (Gleason 153-228); Arthur Mann noted that the assumptions of post-World War II cultural pluralism rested on the notion of a shared national culture (Mann 142-143); and John Higham in his survey of pluralistic thinking formulated memorably the relationship of European totalitarianism and American pluralism: "If the enemy was totalitarian, America would have to be pluralistic" (Higham 220). Perhaps it is an

inversion of this maxim that characterizes the cultural logic of this moment: If America is "multicultural," those Americans who question such ascriptions--or those countries who fail to follow this model--must be totalitarian.

III. THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF "MULTICULTURALISM"

> The unique fact that characterizes America is that it is a multiculture society. Consider at random almost any community in the country. Its social structure reveals a variety of culture groups, which differ widely in pattern, enlisting more or less distinctive racial folkways, religious faiths, languages, Old-World or indigenous household practices, social mores, and economic class status. (Cole 3)

This observation was made in a chapter entitled "Disunity Among Americans," and the discussion proceeds to mention Crèvecoeur and Zangwill, distinguishing such concepts as "Anglo-Conformity," "Melting Pot," and "Pluralism;" yet the text is not from the multiculturalism debate, but from 1954! It is the earliest instance of "multiculture" I have found and that I promised I would cite.

What is now debated under the label "multiculturalism" may not at all be new. Though many participants in the debate speak about the importance of history, or say with Orwell that who controls the past controls the future, the relatively short history of the concept of America as a multicultural society largely remains ignored. I shall here offer only a brief consideration of some of the many works that appeared from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s--roughly contemporary with Orwell's novel--in order to suggest the need for further investigations; and I shall focus on the sociologists around Robert MacIver; on Robin Williams and the Social Science Research Council; on the movement for "intercultural education" around Stewart A. Cole; and on the social psychology of Gordon Allport.

Donald R. Young, the sociologist who helped propagate the term "minority" for American use (Gleason 93-94), wrote in Robert McIver's Civilization and Group Relationships (1945) what was a theme of many studies of that moment:

> A practical program to reduce the social visibility of our minorities would reverse Hitler's measures to increase anti-Semitism in Germany.

> He increased awareness of the Jews and assured their identification by marking their clothing and their places of business, by designating special areas where they could live. He increased fear of the Jews by a constant stream of propaganda emphasizing their success and their wealth, asserting that they monopolized the professions, ran the government, held all the best jobs, and so threatened the welfare of all the rest of the population. His campaign was very effective in Germany and in a good part of Europe; its influence reached across the ocean to this country. (MacIver 157)

Young's response to the Holocaust was to work for better group assimilation, since the Nazis had based their program on exaggerating difference. He discusses how this would work with various immigrant groups and Indians; then he proceeds to consider the case of African Americans:

> In the single case of the Negro, both numbers and visibility are such that awareness and fear are less easily decreased. But fear can be reduced by seeing to it that white people become familiar with the fact that Negroes can do and are doing everything that anyone else does. A campaign to make Negro activities of all kinds usual and matter-of-fact will both allay fears and reduce social visibility in spite of great numbers and biological visibility. But such a campaign must emphasize differences neither by stressing alleged special abilities and accomplishments, even though they are considered to be of high social value, such as dancing, musical, or dramatic talent, nor by needlessly overemphasizing mistreatment and conflict. The former unconsciously lends support to theories of race differences. The latter sharpens issues, increases visibility and fears, and can do little more than increase general awareness that there is a "Negro problem." We have too great a tendency, in our efforts to prove that there is no basis for discrimination, to stress the exceptional qualities and achievements of all minority groups instead of concentrating on making their participation in all the ordinary aspects of life so commonplace that it does not cause concern. The current campaign against anti-Semitism is wise in that it does not accentuate special Jewish contributions to modern civilization, does not needlessly publicize cases of discrimination, and does as little as possible to bring Jews to the attention of the nation as Jews. (MacIver 158-159)

For Young, as for many social scientists of that time, things could not just be left to the wisdom of the populace; what was needed was a program, formulated in opposition to the Nazis:

> The Nazis and the Fascists . . . had a racial goal for a purpose and they knew what had to be done to achieve it. It is incredible that we should help them do it simply because we can only state that the integration of democratic principles and intergroup behavior is our goal and vow to hold to it, when we should be actually blazing the trail by work on a planned program of practical accomplishments. (MacIver 159; my emphasis).

This is the emphatic ending of Young's essay of 1945. In his demand for a program, and his suggestion that deemphasizing difference should be a constitutive part of it, he shared beliefs widely held by social scientists.

The Columbia University sociologist Robert M. MacIver similarly advocated, in 1945, a "line" of "social re-education" for Americans (the word re-education was certainly in the air elsewhere!). His principle was: "What we do for one [group], we are doing for all, we are doing for ourselves. The accent must not be on difference, because that is already our trouble" (MacIver 164; my emphasis). MacIver--whom I quoted earlier with his look at e pluribus unum--was really interested in finding a middle way between pluralism and assimilation; as Higham writes, MacIver "made a significant effort to give that middle way some conceptual coherence. . . [he] developed a fundamental distinction between culture and coercion" (Higham 221).

> What we have to advance toward is the common rights of all groups, and we can help by showing how some are denied these common rights, and proceeding to indicate these rights in the name of all rather than in the name of any group. (MacIver 165)

He saw the danger of distorted ideas about groups, because

> they exaggerate the difference between the group that makes them and the group they are supposed to represent. They give the one group many virtues, and, of course, they give the other group many less favorable qualities. Thus they exaggerate the differences between groups, and, even more, they exaggerate the likeness within the single group" (MacIver 165; my emphasis).

Higham writes that the sense of crisis in 1945 was also evident in the Social Science Research Council: Its freshly appointed Committee on Techniques for Reducing Group Hostility produced a most interesting report (Higham 218n). The sociologist Robin M. Williams Jr. was in charge of this Social Science Research Council bulletin, The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions: A Survey of Research on Problems of Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Group Relations, published in 1947. Williams cites numerous empirical studies that support the MacIver group approach. Again, Williams' findings led him to formulate a careful program toward positive changes in group relations that worries particularly about possible unintended side effects. His research findings and suggestions include the following:

> Simultaneous direct attack on every form of intergroup discrimination is likely to intensify the reaction it attempts to stop. (Williams 63)
>
> Generally speaking, any policy which tends to make Jews as Jews more conspicuous, and particularly those Jews who are at the same time vulnerable symbols in other respects, would tend to be an invitation to anti-Semitic reaction. Thus, indiscriminate attack on every form of existent discrimination, regardless of anything but the immediate effectiveness of the means, is not likely to achieve the actual elimination of anti-Semitism, but on the contrary to intensify the reactions it attempts to stop. (Williams 63, drawing in Talcott Parsons)
>
> [P]roblems of group conflict are usually most readily resolved by indirection than by frontal assault (Williams 63)
>
> Where strong prejudice is present in a group which is highly self-conscious, and strongly bound together, outside criticism of its prejudice is likely to be taken as an attack on the group; and one immediate effect is to strengthen the prejudice, which by virtue of the attack becomes a symbol of in-group membership and solidarity. (Williams 63; citing Northern criticism of the US South as one example)
>
> Propaganda which appeals for minority rights on the basis of the group's achievements tends beyond a certain point to arouse insecurity-hostility in the dominant group by stressing group differences and competitive success. (Williams 67)
>
> An effective propaganda approach in intergroup relations is that which emphasizes national symbols and common American achievements,

> sacrifices, destinies, etc., while unobtrusively indicating the common participation of minority group members. (Williams 67)
>
> Hostility is reduced by arranging for reverse role-taking in public drama or ceremony (e.g., an anti-Negro person plays a realistic Negro role). (Williams 72)
>
> The likelihood of conflict is reduced by education and propaganda emphases upon characteristics and values common to various groups rather than upon intergroup differences. (Williams 64)

Yet Williams is also alert to the problems inherent in such an approach and makes two important qualifications:

> But there is danger that attitudes thus created may lead to expectation of greater similarity than later experience demonstrates, and this can lead to disillusionment and secondary reinforcement of hostility. A second qualification is that some persons holding to a doctrine of cultural pluralism advocate awareness of differences on the assumption that acceptance of differences comes only after a transitional period, which may involve temporary intensification of hostilities. (Williams 64; my emphasis)

Williams' paradigm is clearly designed to deemphasize difference; yet he is open to the possible workings of a pluralistic program, too. The tradeoff is simply a hopefully "transitional" intensification of hostilities which might lead to acceptance of differences. I shall return to this point at the end.

Another way of reconciling the integrationist reactions to World War II with more pluralism than was acceptable in Young's essay came with the concept of "intercultural education," advocated by a group of educators and sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. The Bureau for Intercultural Education in New York published a series of monographs on such topics as prejudice, race relations, and assimilation.

Stewart G. Cole and Mildred Wiese Cole's Minorities and the American Promise: The Conflict of Principle and Practice (New York: Harper, 1954) is also characteristic of a balanced approach toward the shortcomings and merits of both assimilationist and pluralist strategies. Looking today at this text from 1954 makes a good part of the current debate look like slightly touched-up déja-vu. The Coles were the ones I quoted earlier as writing: "The unique fact that characterizes America is that it is a

multiculture society" (Cole 3). I have not found any recognition or mention of this even semantically interesting precursor text in the literature on multiculturalism.

After a rejection of "Anglo-conformity," the approaches of "melting pot" and "pluralism and tolerance" are weighed against each other: the practice of assimilation is criticized for sacrificing the "significance of ethnic differences," overemphasizing "social likeness and cultural solidarity of the people," and for often being "impracticable in human relations" (Cole 152). On the other hand pluralism "tends to border indecisively on the shaky rim of intolerance" exaggerating "the social separateness of peoples and the individuality of their subcultures" (Cole 153). Hence their conclusion: "A multiculture society needs a more comprehensive conception of democratic human relations" (Cole 153). In diagrams and discussions they search for principles of democratic human relations that combine the advantages (and eschew the shortcomings) of both melting pot and pluralism.

They represent their analysis schematically in a figure entitled "Historic Concepts of Human Relations" (Cole 152):

		The Problem of Cultural Diversity and National Unity		
		Emphasis on American Group Differences	Emphasis on American Group Likenesses	Differences *and* Likenesses in Balance
Foci of Human Relations	Anglo-Domination	A social hierarchy with relative group status		
	The Melting Pot		Assimilation of groups into one inclusive pattern	
	Pluralism and Tolerance	Culture groups enjoying autonomy and equality		
	Dynamic Democracy			see Chapter Seven

The opening in the box for "Dynamic Democracy" that refers to Chapter Seven is fleshed out by a diagram entitled "The Principles of Democratic Human Relations" (Cole 173):

		Articles of Faith: (The Moral Law)	(1) The dignity of the human person (2) The perfectibility of human relations					
	Areas of Democratic Living: →	1. Cultural	2. Psychological	3. Political	4. Religious	5. Social	6. Economic	7. International
ETHICAL VALUES	A. Basic belief: HUMAN FREEDOM	Human differences	Individual independence	(1) Autonomy of the individual (a) Autonomy of the people (i) Autonomy of the individual state	(1) A variety of organized faiths (a) A diversity of secular ideals (i) The appeals of religious and secular idealism	Group diversity	Enlightened self-interest	Americans *among* many peoples
	B. Complementary belief: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	Human likenesses	Individual interdependence	(2) Sovereignty of the people (b) Sovereignty of the government (ii) Sovereignty of the Union	(2) The ideal of interfaith harmony (b) A desirable common idealism (ii) The possibility of a common ground	A united people	The welfare of society	One humanity
	C. Dynamic balance: FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN HARMONY	Out of many, oneness	Independence *and* interdependence in interpersonal relations	(3) A system (c) of "checks (iii) and balances"	(3) (c) (iii) Many idealisms in one spiritual unity	Diversity *and* unity in intergroup relationships	A rising standard of living for all	Many peoples *in* one world

Their synthesis sounds a bit mystical and hazy, but it suggests the extent to which the Coles thought through the need for, and the shortcomings of, thinking about unity and about diversity; their book is also clearer than many contributions to the current debate about what is at stake either in stressing, or in deemphasizing, difference; they describe their project of an educational philosophy adequate for a "multiculture society" in ways that differentiates "pluralism" from education for "dynamic democracy" (which includes assimilation and shared values). Finally, they view American edcuation in a global context and demand that students should learn not only to negotiate ethnic and American identities but also to be prepared as citizens of the world.

Gordon Allport's work, The Nature of Prejudice, published in the same year 1954, explicitly acknowledges that the rising interest in these subject matters is due to "the threat to democratic values posed by twentieth-century totalitarianism" (Allport 477). Hence the "objective study of the irrational, " prohibited by all totalitarian countries, "will help us counteract" "irrational and immature elements in human behavior" (Allport 477).

Allport also weighs the pros and cons of pluralism and assimilation and finds a solution to his question where change for the better is to begin that stresses individual choice in the matter. Like MacIver, Williams, and the Coles, Allport does not see assimilation as a "Utopia" (Allport 469). "We shall improve human relations only by learning to live with racial and cultural pluralism for a long time to come. . . ." Yet he also questions methods that go along with such a recognition: "The teaching and publishing of scientifically sound information concerning the history and characteristics of groups, and about the nature of prejudice, certainly does no harm. Yet it is not the panacea that many educators like to believe. . . ." (Allport 469-470)

He does not hesitate to include some practical advice that is not backed up by studies: "While there is no relevant research on the point, it seems likely that ridicule and humor help to prick the pomposity and irrational appeal of rabble-rousers. Laughter is a weapon against bigotry. It too often lies rusty while reformers grow unnecessarily solemns and heavy-handed." (Allport 470-471)

For real bigots, Allport recommends individual therapy (Allport 470).

But for the change in prejudice to succeed he counts on intercultural education, "partly because of the characteristic faith that Americans have in education, and partly because it is easier to install remedial programs in the school than in the home. School children comprise a vast captive audience; they study what is set before them. While school boards, principals, and teachers may resist the introduction of intercultural education, yet it is increasingly included in the curriculum" (Allport 472).

The content of educational efforts that he believes could be offered year after year from childhood to college in a graded fashion have some similarities with the social scientists' precepts, and differ remarkably from multicultural practice today. For example, under the heading (1) Meaning of race, he writes that

> [the child] should understand that many "colored" people are racially as much Caucasian as Negro, but that a caste definition obscures this biological fact. The misconceptions of racism in its various forms, and the psychology underlying racist myths, can be made clear to older children.
>
> Nature of group differences. Less easy to teach, but needed for the purpose of generalizing the two preceding lessons, is a sound understanding of the ways in which human groups differ and do not differ. It is here that fallacious sterotypes can be combatted, likewise "belief in essence." . . .
>
> Traits sometimes resulting from victimization. . . . The danger lies in creating a stereotype to the effect that all Jews are ambitious and aggressive in order to compensate for their handicaps; or that all Negroes are inclined to sullen hate or petty thieving. The lesson can, however, be taught without primary reference to minority groups. (Allport 474)

Allport notes that the "teacher may point out that the predicament of the adolescent resembles the permanent uncertainty under which many minority groups have to live" (Allport 475).

> Facts concerning discrimination and prejudice. Pupils should not be kept ignorant of the blemishes of the society in which they live. . . Films may be used in this connection, so too the "literature of protest," especially biographical accounts of young American Negroes,

such as Richard Wright's Black Boy. (Allport 475)

Most important is Allport's specific negotiation of the pluralistic and assimilationist tendencies:

> Multiple loyalties are possible. Schools have always inculcated patriotism, but the terms of allegiance are often narrowly conceived. The fact that loyalty to the nation requires loyalty to all subgroups within the nation is seldom pointed out. . . The teaching of exclusive loyalty--whether to nation, school, fraternity, or family--is a method of instilling prejudice. (Allport 475)

He views the debate between assimilation and pluralism as a debate dependent on the problem of "values" that he weighs as carefully as did the Coles. He asks: "Is the amalgamation of all groups a valid ideal, or should we strive to maintain as much diversity and cultural pluralism as possible?" (Allport 479).

> Those who favor assimilation (a value judgment) point out that when groups completely fuse there is no longer any visible or psychological basis for prejudice. Particularly the less educated portions of a population, who are unable to understand or to value foreign ways, seem to require a homogenization of groups before they can give up their biased thinking. To them unity means conformity.
>
> On the other hand, those favoring cultural pluralism regard it as a great loss (again a value judgment) when ethnic groups discard their distinctive and colorful ways: the cuisine of the Near East, the Italian love of opera, the sage philosophy of the Orient, the art of the Mexican, the tribal lore of the American Indian. When preserved, these ways are of interest and value to the whole nation, and prevent drab standardization in a culture dominated by advertising, canned foods, and sedative television. Yet it is true that at least one large group against which there is prejudice, the American Negro, can scarcely be said to have a distinctive culture, and the cultural pluralist in this case is not very clear regarding the most desirable outcome. (Allport 479)

From such--admittedly somewhat clichéd and dated--considerations Allport arrives at the following "reasonable democratic guideline":

> For those who wish to assimilate, there should be no artificial barriers placed in their way; for those who wish to maintain ethnic

> integrity, their efforts should be met with tolerance and appreciation. If such a permissive policy were in force, portions of the Italian, Mexican, Jewish, and colored groups would no doubt lose themselves in the melting pot; others, at least in the foreseeable future, would remain separate and identifiable. . . . In this way, the nation will achieve, at least for a long time to come, a desirable "unity in diversity." What the remote future may hold we cannot foresee. (Allport 480)

Allport thus advocated a multiple-choice pluralism of individual methods in approaching the issue of pluralism vs. assimilation in society; the Coles on the other hand were looking for something that unites the advantages of assimilation and those of pluralism.

Things have changed so radically that neiter a reasoned choice between pluralism and assimilation nor a hope for a synthesis of the two emerges at the present. A current report from Pittsburgh seems representative in its overwhelming focus on teaching "cultural identity," and "racial or ethnic pride and self-esteem" as the mission of schooling (Gottfredson 8). Multiculturalism seems largely unaware of its precursors and has worked out its own rhetorical conventions and hopes.

How did we get from the 1950s to the present? Milton Gordon has offered an account that illuminates the transformation from liberal pluralism (giving no formal recognition to categories of people on the basis of race or ethnicity) to corporate pluralism which recognizes ethnic entities (Gordon 1988, 140-168). More than the social sciences it was probably black political language of the 1960s that changed things, redefining assimilation and melting pot as if they were associated with the Holocaust. We saw how Donald R. Young had suggested the promotion of ethnic assimilation in response to the Holocaust. The following longer remarks from Malcolm X's Autobiography (1965) signal the collapse of the assimilationist paradigm:

> "Integration" is called "assimilation" if white ethnic groups alone are involved: it's fought against tooth and nail by those who want their heritage preserved. Look at how the Irish threw the English out of Ireland. The Irish knew the English would engulf them. Look at the French-Canadians, fanatically fighting to keep their identity.

> In fact, history's most tragic result of a mixed, therefore diluted and weakened, ethnic identity has been experienced by a white ethnic group--the Jew in Germany.
>
> He had made greater contributions to Germany than German themselves had. Jews had won over half of Germany's Nobel Prizes. Every culture in Germany was led by the Jew; he published the greatest newspaper. Jews were the greatest artists, the greatest poets, composers, stage directors. But those Jews made a fatal mistake--assimilating.
>
> From World War I to Hitler's rise, the Jews in Germany had been increasingly intermarrying. Many changed their names and many took other religions. Their own Jewish religion, their own rich Jewish ethnic and cultural roots, they anesthetized and cut off...until they began thinking of themselves as "Germans."
>
> And the next thing they knew, there was Hitler, rising to power from the beer halls--with his emotional "Aryan master race" theory. And right at hand for a scapegoat was the self-weakened, self-deluded "German" Jew.
>
> Most mysterious is how did those Jews--with all of their brilliant minds, with all of their power in every aspect of Germany's affairs--how did those Jews stand almost as if mesmerized, watching something which did not spring upon them overnight, but which was gradually developed--a monstrous plan for their own <u>murder</u>.
>
> The self-brainwashing had been so complete that not long after, in the gas chambers, a lot of them were still gasping, "It <u>can't</u> be true!"
>
> If Hitler <u>had</u> conquered the world, as he meant to--that is a shuddery thought for every Jew alive today.
>
> The Jew will never forget that lesson. Jewish intelligence eyes watch over every neo-Nazi organization. Right after the war, the Jews' Haganah mediating body stepped up the longtime negotiations with the British. But this time, the Stern gang was shooting the British. And this time the British acquiesced and helped them to wrest Palestine away from the Arabs, the rightful owners, and then the Jews set up Israel, their own country--the one thing that every race of man in the world respects, and understands. (Malcolm X 277-278)

For Malcolm X, "German" was a stand-in for "American," and "Jew" for "Negro"; and the lesson of the Holocaust had become an <u>opposition</u> to racial

integration, and militant Zionism was seen as the model for black Americans--the very opposite of Young's conclusions. Malcolm stands for many other cultural figures of the 1960s that have similarly opposed racial integration in the name of the Holocaust. One only needs to think of LeRoi Jones, later to become Amiri Baraka, who in the essay "What Does Nonviolence Mean?", collected in Home, draws the analogy between the situation of black Americans and the

> fate of German Jews at the hands of Adolph Hitler. The German Jews, at the time of Hitler's rise to power, were the most assimilated Jews in Europe. They believed, and with a great deal of emotional investment, that they were Germans. The middle-class German Jew, like the middle-class American Negro, had actually moved, in many instances, into the mainstream of the society, and wanted to believe as that mainstream did. Even when the anti-Jewish climate bagan to thicken and take on the heaviness of permanence, many middle-class Jews believed that was only the poor Jews, who, perhaps rightly so, would suffer in such a climate.
>
> Like these unfortunate Jews the middle-class Negro has no real program of rebellion against the status quo in America, quite frankly, because he believes he is pretty well off. The blatant cultural assassination, the social and economic exploitation of most Negroes in this society, does not really impress him. The middle-class Negro's goal, like the rest of the American middle class, is to be ignorant comfortably. (Jones 1966, 149-150)

The formulation "cultural assassination" gives expression to the post-Holocaust parallel of genocide and racial assimilation that help to tilt the scale in favor of difference. Jones pursued a similar strategy in his poetry; and he did not always focus on African Americans. In his poem "Black Dada Nihilismus" he invokes the

> ugly silent deaths of jews under
> the surgeon's knife. (Jones 1964, 61-62)

Having thus suggested the image of a Dr. Mengele and the inhuman medical experiments that accompanied the Holocaust, LeRoi Jones continues in the same line:

> (To awake on
> 69th street with money and a hip

nose. (Jones 1964, 62)

Plastic surgery as the enactment of assimilation is thus put into the symbolic universe of genocide. Jones's "hip nose" may pun on "hypnosis," just as Malcolm had used the word "mesmerized"--and both would refer to "brainwashing"--in order to describe assimilation as a form of being taken possession of by a deadly alien force. In a universe in which "assimilation"--of blacks or Jews--becomes culturally linked to the Holocaust, the image of the melting pot could become as threatening as a gas chamber. Assimilation now could be viewed as if it were annihilation--and the careful weighing of pluralism and assimilation gave way to a strong assertion of difference, first in the "new ethnicity" of the 1970s, and now in "multiculturalism." It would be interesting to pursue the references to the Holocaust in theories of group relations after the 1960s.

Whether multiculturalism is a promise for the future or not, whether it is a phenomenon that has more utopian potential than the current discussions seem to articulate, the debate itself has constituted itself in an interestingly heterogeneous space and recapitulated such diverse elements as a Latin motto, Matthew Arnold, George Orwell, the related opposition to totalitarianism, and the divergent conclusions that are drawn from the Holocaust. What seems most disturbing to me is that much of the debate reinvents--and reintroduces with less scholarly evidence--what has been discussed for nearly fifty years, often leading earlier scholars to the opposite recommendations from the ones that are now being institutionalized and practiced.

Perhaps the pluralist's hope that Robin Williams cited in an aside is well-founded. But what if it is not? What if the racist and sexist incidents that are increasingly reported in the literature of multicultural anecdotes signaled an increase in hostilities that is at least partly a reaction to multiculturalism itself? Is American university life going through a "transitional period" at the end of which mutual acceptance will be greater--or is it at an explosive crisis point, made all the more volatile by the farreaching institutional support that is being extended to difference in a social system in which the classes are drifting further apart?

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