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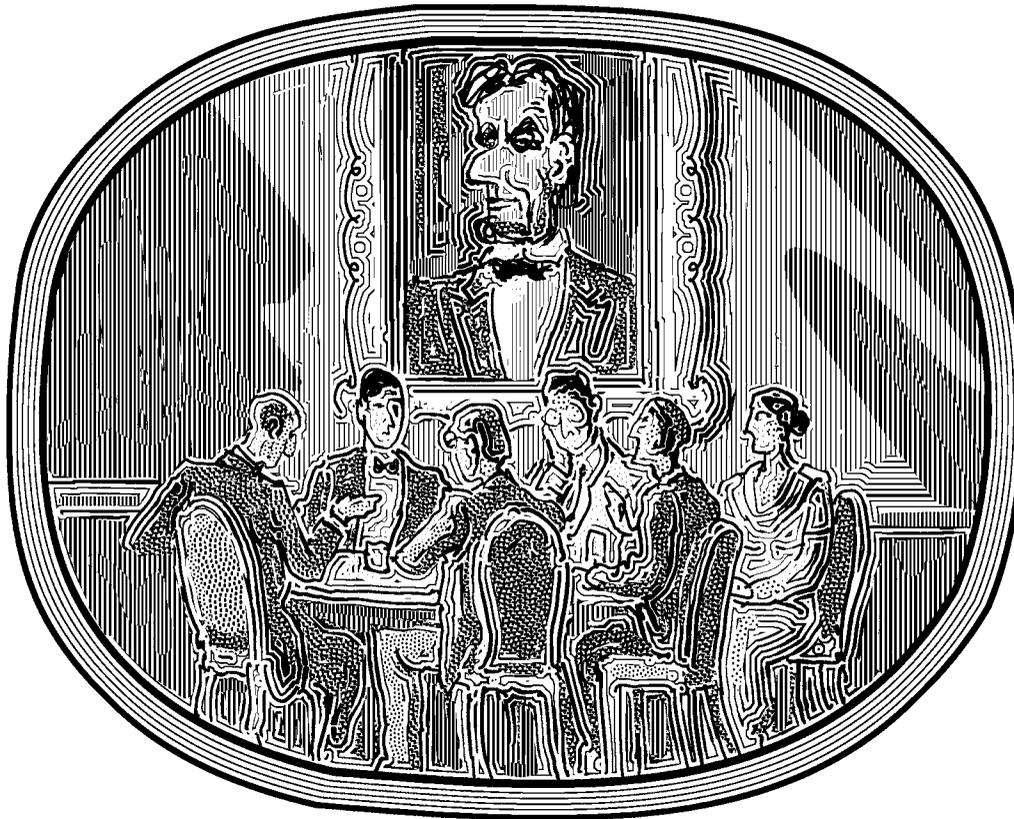
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Essay by Thomas D. Klingenstein

PATRIOTISM VS. MULTICULTURALISM



THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF THINGS TO admire about Donald Trump, but we need not so much admire him as appreciate what he has shown us. Trump points the way forward. His value often has less to do with what he actually does than what he shows us *we* must do.

Foremost, President Trump has exposed multiculturalism as the political revolution it is. He has allowed us to see that we are engaged in a contest between two understandings of justice, one built on the principle that all human beings are equal—the other on the principle that all “marginalized” identity groups are equal, and all are oppressed by white males. Because justice is the foundation of society, Trump has, in effect, framed the country’s divide as a war between two mutually exclusive regimes: America and multiculturalism. He does not formulate it this way, but he has shown us that this is the way to formulate it. And he has shown us that multiculturalism as a political force is underestimated by the Right.

America is a multi-racial society with citizens drawn from every corner of the world. Despite its multiplicity, or rather because of

it, the country has striven to unite around a single, national political culture based on natural rights, individual freedom, and republican government. Multiculturalism is something else again, the antithesis of those unifying principles and common patriotism. Nourished in our colleges and universities, multiculturalism is an insane exercise in self-flagellation. It sees America’s past as a series of crimes against humanity: genocide, racism, and all its co-morbidities. Multiculturalism’s worldview is enforced by a ruthless speech code (political correctness) which makes it virtually impossible for anyone in the mainstream of American life to challenge it. Trump, however, is the exception. He has shown that it is possible to stand up to multiculturalism. In the stirring words of Michael Anton,

Trump alone...has stood up to say: I want to live. I want my party to live. I want my country to live. I want my people to live. I want to end this insanity.

Trump has shown us, in addition, that a large swath of the citizenry wants what he wants.

In this age of doubt and guilt, Trump has the one absolutely essential thing: an unabashed, unapologetic love of his own country. That is his core and it is solid. It is his primary virtue and his basic appeal. Trump is a walking, talking, all-out defense of America. Whatever else he knows, he knows that he is no global citizen and that America is not a collection of identity groups, but one people and a people with greatness in its genes. Trump may not be able to express as well as one might like what makes America great but in his soul he knows what not so long ago our elite knew, that we are the “almost chosen” people (in Abraham Lincoln’s quaint, humble phrase) dedicated to the proposition that “all men are created equal,” here to show the rest the world that man can govern himself. The defining moments in our history—the republic we founded, the wars we fought (including the cold one), the nations we rebuilt and defended, the democratic revolutions we inspired—justified Lincoln’s claim that America is the “last, best hope of earth.” Our original sin—slavery—and other, lesser imperfections did not make us lose faith in our goodness; they inspired us to do better.

Common Sense, and a Knife

TRUMP'S STRENGTHS SERVE HIM WELL in the battle against multiculturalism. He is comfortable marching out of step. He wears his ties down to his knees and that's the length they will stay. He is courageous, direct, persistent, and, to his supporters, inspirational. He brings common sense to the fight. He also brings a knife. Despite his manifold deficiencies, he is the right man for the times—not all times, not most times, perhaps not even one in a hundred times, but *these* times, when the conservative elite has lost its nerve, and no one on the national stage is willing to offer a categorical, full-throated defense of America.

When he suggested boycotting Starbucks for prohibiting its employees from saying "Merry Christmas," the president was and is defending America's Judeo-Christian culture. He is showing impatience with an America that teaches its citizens, non-Christian and Christians alike, that non-Christians should be offended by a friendly "Merry Christmas." He at least senses that the Judeo-Christian understanding of justice goes hand in hand with the understanding of justice that informs the Declaration of Independence. Trump was also defending our culture when he proposed a temporary ban on all Muslim immigration. He was implying that we do not have a duty to invite Muslims into this country and they (as is true of any group) have no right to come here. Although not an immigration policy, those are the necessary premises for a sound one. When, at the 2017 Conservative Political Action Conference, he endorsed a friend's comment that "Paris is no longer Paris," he was warning us to avoid the multicultural suicide pact that is Europe. He is urging patriotism when he says he would fire NFL players who do not salute the flag. He is demonstrating colorblindness when he says Maxine Waters has a low I.Q.; and when he speaks to blacks as Americans rather than through their self-appointed, race-hustling "spokesmen," he is showing that Americans are one people.

In a climate in which we all walk on multicultural egg shells, this unequivocal defense of America's way of life is nothing less than extraordinary. It is largely beside the point whether Trump makes the best arguments or exemplifies the virtues for which he argues because, even on the Right, he is virtually alone in making the arguments.

Many conservatives, however, see not a savior but a demagogue who implicitly indicts his putatively racist supporters. More plausibly, the rise of Trump indicts not his supporters

but his conservative accusers. Trump's notorious reference to Haiti and other countries as "shitholes" illustrates what is right with Trump and wrong with much of the Right. He was excoriated for his remarks. Every last Republican senator and most conservatives distanced themselves from his comments, many rebuked him or called him "anti-American," a few ducked.

I daresay, even among those who ducked, very few recognized that Trump had raised the most needful question: who are we as a people? It is the most needful because America's understanding of itself is currently under relentless attack by multiculturalism. He was not making an economic argument for controlling immigration (though he makes those); he was making a moral-political argument. He was expressing the view that it is wrong to invite into our society people who cannot, or will not, live responsibly in the way Americans believe is the right way to live. This is part of the argument from justice (what most Americans would call "common sense") which conservatives insist on not making.

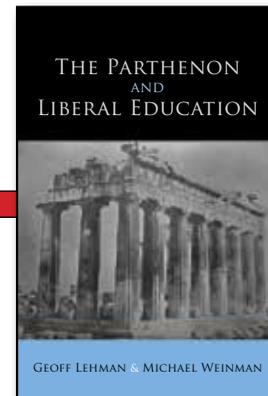
Of course, those on the Right, particularly politicians, know that to have come firmly to Trump's defense would have subjected themselves to the potentially career-ending charge of "racism." One can appreciate their predicament but still believe they yield too easily. They do not appreciate that they are being shut up. Though they are well aware that political correctness has silenced dissent on college campuses, they are much less aware that the same political correctness is silencing them. Nor do they appreciate the consequences. When they fail to make arguments that defend America's way of life they are failing in their first and most essential obligation: to defend America.

Think Like Lincoln

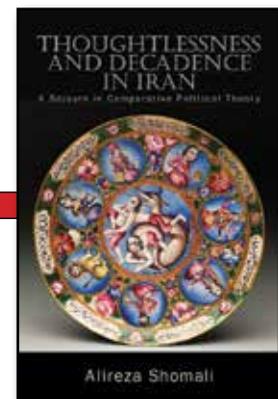
WHAT MAY EXPLAIN MUCH OF THE conservatives' lack of clarity is the way conservatives think about politics. Conservatives say they belong to the party of Lincoln but few of them think about politics as Lincoln did.

Lincoln operated by a theory, or a model, which explains how society works—its purpose and the means necessary to achieve that purpose. He revealed his way of thinking about politics in many places, but its essentials are captured in three quotations. One is from his speech on the Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857). Senator Stephen Douglas had argued, in an echo of today's multiculturalists, that, since the

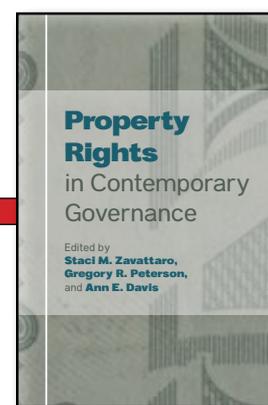
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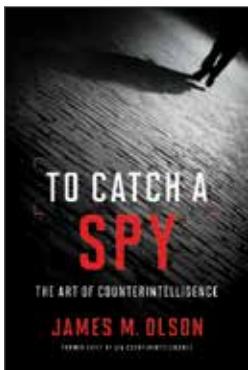
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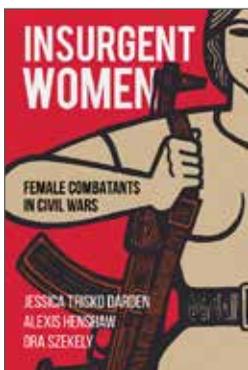
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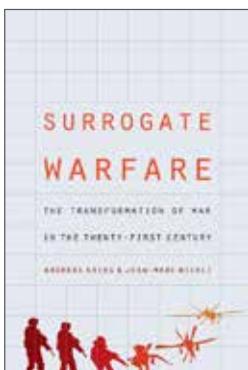
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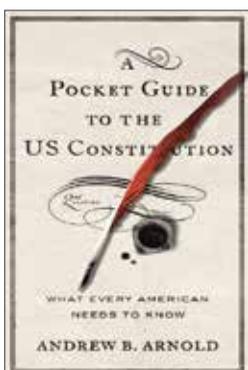
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founders did not abolish slavery and some owned slaves themselves, the Declaration's "all men are created equal" must have excluded black men and women. This "grave charge," said Lincoln with dismissive sarcasm,

comes to nothing at all. I think the authors of that notable instrument [the Declaration] meant to include all men.... They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This they said and this meant. They [the founders] did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality.... They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all and revered by all—constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even, though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated; and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people, of all colors, everywhere.

We see that for Lincoln the purpose of society is to create for all the opportunity for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (the "right way to live"). These principles are "constantly labored for." The goal of society is just and so must be the means. In other words, society is a moral order. Government, including of course the Constitution, serves the moral order. But there is something more important than government for sustaining that moral order. In a country like ours, Lincoln argued in his first debate with Douglas a year later:

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment, goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed.

Two years earlier, at a Republican banquet in Chicago, Lincoln had put it this way:

Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just so much. Public opinion, on any subject, always has a "central idea," from which all its minor thoughts radiate. That "central idea" in our political public

opinion, at the beginning was, and until recently has continued to be, "the equality of men." And although it was always submitted patiently to whatever of inequality there seemed to be as matter of actual necessity, its constant working has been a steady progress towards the practical equality of all men.

If we are to keep on course, says Lincoln, it is necessary above all else that the public have the proper understanding of justice and the virtues that support that understanding. The public's understanding of justice is political ("our government rests on public opinion") and so therefore are the civil institutions that shape the public's understanding of justice—most notably, family, education, religion, and voluntary associations. They are political in so far as they serve the public welfare. These institutions are designed to operate as close to the people as possible because that conduces to the pursuit of happiness. Even so, the national statesman keeps these institutions in sight. He ensures that they have the proper foundation. He does this in part through public rhetoric, which, along with civil institutions, helps shape the public mind. Rhetoric involves both appeals to the heart and arguments. The most important argument is always the argument from justice: Lincoln won the Civil War in large measure because he won that argument.

Rules Versus Principles

TRUMP'S THINKING ABOUT POLITICS, imperfect and inarticulate as it may be, is closer to Lincoln's thinking than is that of most conservatives. They do not operate by a theory; they pay too little attention to justice and to the public mind. They misunderstand prudence and take too narrow a view of politics.

Ask a conservative what conservatism is and you're likely to be told: a strong defense, limited government, free markets, rule of law, a strict interpretation of the Constitution, freedom limited only to the extent it does not infringe on the freedom of others, freedom of opportunity rather than equality of outcome, prudent and incremental policymaking based on empirical study, respect for family, religion, and personal virtue, a social safety net but one that does not foster dependency, one culture, not many.

What is striking about this list is just that: it's a list. It's not an ordered way of thinking, but rather a bunch of things strung together. These are all good things, to be sure, but it is not obvious how they are related to one another or how they serve a larger purpose.



Most of these are presented as absolutes and so we do not know how, when they clash as they must at times, their competing claims will be negotiated. In other words, there is no theory, nothing that ties everything together.

This is by intent. Conservatives are wary of *operating* by theories. They fear igniting another French Revolution which they believe (quite rightly) was theory run amok. For conservatives, the pursuit of happiness (the good) is too indeterminate a goal to guide politicians. Instead, conservatives prefer “rules” or bright lines, which serve as proxies for the principles that would otherwise make up a theory. Conservatives’ rules include among others: follow tradition, proceed slowly and cautiously, support a given set of policies, “states rights,” and, in the case of jurisprudence, follow the words on the page. Conservatives tend to be legalistic and literal. They sometimes miss the emotional meaning of things (odd for conservatives) and so miss, for example, that the border wall is less about keeping Mexicans out than it is about keeping multiculturalism out and keeping America “in.”

There is much to be said in favor of following rules and bright lines. Rules are concrete and easy to follow, which is their virtue. And the right rules tend to promote healthy habits of mind. On the other hand, rules are rigid and do not fit all circumstances. And rules in themselves say nothing about the crucial question of justice. But, as Lincoln and the founders understood, politics is inescapably about good and bad. Politicians do and say things that support the right way to live. This is not optional. Humans are justice-demanding beings. Support for a policy, or a court decision, requires that citizens believe it is just, not merely that it increases GDP. And that requires a theory and an argument.

Rules certainly have their place in politics, but the intelligent use of rules requires understanding their rationale—always keeping in mind that the rule was designed, or has evolved, in order to serve a desired end or ends. For example, we follow tradition because, we believe, and for good reason, tradition tends to incorporate the cumulative, time-tested wisdom of many generations, which is usually superior to that of the current generation. But “usually” is not always. Some traditions are bad. Slavery comes to mind. One must be able to tell the difference between good traditions and bad ones, and that requires a standard of justice outside of tradition, which in America is found most notably in the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

Other rules have similar limitations. To go slowly is usually sound advice, but every

once in a while it is necessary to speed up or to throw the long ball or even a Hail Mary. Policies like free trade, which may be right most of the time, must sometimes yield to a higher good. The questions in all cases are under what circumstances does justice require exceptions, and what should we do in such situations? There are no rules to answer those questions.

Following Trump’s Lead

THIS IS WHERE LINCOLNIAN PRUDENCE comes in. The statesman aims at the good (i.e., tries to put into effect the principles of the Declaration) but he recognizes that he is always constrained by the tools at his disposal, the state of public sentiment, and many other constraining circumstances on the ground. Knowing the step to take, or thing to say, that gets closest to the good is the virtue of prudence, the art of the statesman.

But prudence does not sit well with those who want to operate by rules because prudence requires the weighing of things in the

Multiculturalism is the central issue and threat—the Communism or slavery, as it were—of our time.

context of a theory or an account of ends, and it requires as well a wide view of politics in order to capture all the relevant circumstances that must be weighed. Prudence requires statesmen, which many conservatives are inclined to think we can do without so long as we have competent policymakers.

Rule-bound thinking is particularly ill-suited to periods of great change, when circumstances are so unlike those when the rules evolved. The present is such a time. We are in a war not over policy per se, but over the understanding of justice. Most conservatives do not see the contest this way, perhaps because they pay very little attention either to justice or to public understanding. Because they do not see clearly the nature of the war they cannot see that President Trump has just the attributes which—however they may violate political norms—make him the right man for this particular struggle. In order to see this requires a mind habituated to Lincolnian prudence.

Conservative intellectuals should follow Trump’s lead, picking up where he has left off. Instead of bemoaning his inability to develop coherent arguments, they themselves should develop his arguments.

Conservatives should be explaining that multiculturalism is the central issue and threat—the Communism or slavery, as it were—of our time. Opposition to multiculturalism (or identity politics) should become the center of the conservative movement, the basis for a political coalition, the principle on which to build a rhetorical strategy and the conceptual framework for interpreting events, for organizing and tying together the domestic dangers we face.

Conservatives must call attention to manifestations of multiculturalism—for example, point out that the Brett Kavanaugh hearings were not so much a party contest over the appointment of a Supreme Court justice as they were a battle over two understandings of justice. The multiculturalists’ assumption that Kavanaugh was guilty until proven innocent was, from their perspective, not a violation of a sacred American principle of fair play; rather it was faithful adherence to their own sacred principle, which flows logically enough from their belief that white males oppress women. This is to say, the contest was not over how to apply an agreed-upon set of rules, but which set of rules to apply.

Conservatives must also explain how multiculturalism works—for example, how the principles of multiculturalism have turned a justifiable “love of one’s own” (what Trump was expressing bluntly in his Haiti comment) into “racism.” Or, as John Marini has been explaining for decades, how the administrative state is gutting the civil sphere thereby removing political decisions, decisions about the right way to live, from the hands of the people. The politicians and public must see how this is all part of the multicultural project to disunite America, as that old-fashioned liberal, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., warned several decades ago.

The Argument from Justice

CONSERVATIVE INTELLECTUALS AND Republicans must have it more clearly in mind than they do that it is their job, their most important job, to make arguments that defend the American way to live, which is predicated on the belief, expressed in the Declaration, that there is a universal right and wrong, justice and injustice. It is this that multiculturalism seeks to destroy. The conservative counterattack requires the deployment of patriotism, a weapon many-



fold more powerful than the multiculturalists' counterpart: loyalty to identity group or hatred of the oppressive "other" (i.e., white males). But conservatives have allowed the multiculturalists to delegitimize patriotism by making it the equivalent of "blood and soil" nationalism with its redolence of Nazism. We cannot let that stand. Politicians must see patriotism not simply as "messaging" or as something that dresses up a policy, but rather as the very foundation of policy. We cannot implement policies, let alone defend ourselves, unless we have a common commitment to the American understanding of right and wrong, justice and injustice. Without that we are not a nation.

Liberals, unlike conservatives, understand the need to argue from justice, what today they call "social justice." Liberal arguments from justice may be perverse, but they will continue to prevail until they are met by other, better arguments.

Take, for example, liberal support for open borders, a policy liberals defend by arguing that it is selfish or racist to allow people from some countries, but not others, to immigrate. Typically, conservatives respond with economic arguments (e.g., immigrants take jobs or benefits from Americans). But arguments of this type do not meet the liberal argument for they leave unanswered the question as to why those currently residing here deserve preference over non-residents.

The conservative argument from justice rests on the belief that there are certain naturally circumscribed or political aspects to human nature. The more tribes in a given society, the more conflict. Conversely, the fewer the tribes (other things being equal), the closer the friendships among citizens and thereby the greater the opportunity to pursue happiness (the purpose of society). This is because friends themselves contribute to happiness, and because friends are more trustworthy than non-friends: friends are more inclined to sacrifice for each other and a community of friends requires fewer social and political restraints than a community of non-friends. Who can be friends is open to debate, but there should be no debate that not everyone can be a friend. In other words, there is a limit to "diversity."

Where conservatives today talk least about justice is exactly where justice would seem to be the most necessary thing to talk about: the Constitution. Trump, unlike most conservatives, understands constitutional law (like law in general) as the application of justice to a particular situation. Take birthright citizenship. It is the law of the land that if a pregnant woman enters the United States illegally and then has

a baby on U.S. soil, that baby is a U.S. citizen. It does not take a degree in moral philosophy to see that there is something morally suspect about this result, specifically, that law-breaking is being rewarded and the woman is doing what might be called an "end-around." In calling attention to the injustice of birthright citizenship, Trump has cast doubt, however inadvertently, on a jurisprudence that separates justice from law. Insofar as he understands the Constitution as enforcing the principles of the Declaration (a just end), he is closer to the originalism of the founders and the drafters of the 14th Amendment's citizenship clause than are most of today's conservative "experts," who don't think justice has anything to do with interpreting the Constitution.

Making Patriots

WE ARE MOST IN NEED OF ARGUMENTS from justice (and other aspects of Lincolnian thinking) where the problem is most intractable: education, in particular, elite higher education. It is here that we find the headwaters of multiculturalism, where professors teach future citizens that America's history is one long narrative of crimes against humanity. In point of fact, the crime against humanity is not America; it is the professoriate's wanton destruction of America.

Unfortunately, many conservatives consider education outside of, or on the periphery of, politics. And to the extent they allow education to be a political question, they insist it belongs exclusively with state and local governments. The founders and Lincoln, on the other hand, thought education was the key to good government, not just good state government. Even as recently as a few generations ago, it was taken for granted, by the Left and the Right, that the purpose of our colleges and universities—private ones, too—was to train future *American* citizens on behalf of the *public* welfare. This function is inherently national in its implications, even if it is proper for the federal government to leave higher education mostly in the hands of the states or private sector. Today, colleges think they are training not Americans but so-called "global" citizens, and although they say they do so for the common good, they make not the slightest effort to take into account what the "commoners" believe is good.

It is not possible to fix higher elite education purely by private or even by state means. And I suspect that without fixing elite higher education, it is not possible to subdue multiculturalism. Under these conditions, something political may have to be done at the na-

tional level in order to save American higher education from itself—e.g., making federal grants conditional on protecting college students' free speech and due process rights, and on providing a civic education friendly to American principles and national history.

Even stronger medicine may eventually be necessary. Our founders understood that not all exigencies can be anticipated. Thus, they bequeathed to us a regime based on a moral order that has within itself the authority to defend itself. Some conservatives, legalist and non-theoretical as they think they are, will resist stronger national policies under *any* circumstance, a theoretical position (one cannot avoid theory) they support by pointing out that interventions by conservatives will only invite intervention by liberals. True enough, but that is democracy. The only way to prevent liberal policies from replacing conservative ones is to persuade the public that the latter are more just than the former.

Whether intervention now or in the future is appropriate or not, President Trump should employ his matchless marketing skills to call attention to the anti-Americanism of elite higher education. He is right to call attention to the shutting down of speech on college campuses. But speech suppression is only a means to an end. And that end, the multicultural dissolution of America, is what Trump needs to bring into focus. He should beat Berkeley and Harvard and the other Benedict Arnolds with the same kind of rhetorical stick he wields against the "fake" media. Trump may not be able to take the argument very far, but there are many capable people who can. The president should deputize them. And if he thinks it makes political sense, he should make education a major issue in the 2020 campaign.

When he leaves office, whenever that is, we need a more traditional statesman, someone who sees Trump's value but also his limitations—like Trump, a red-blooded American patriot who has the courage to stand up to the times, but unlike Trump, someone who can articulate the nature of the war we are in, who speaks the language of justice, and who can remind us that our goal is the good. But this should be someone who, like a good conservative, understands that we must pursue the good with a keen sense of our own limitations. In other words, we need someone who thinks about politics as Abraham Lincoln did—confident that America, imperfect as it is, is still the "last, best hope of earth."

Thomas D. Klingenstein is a principal in the investment firm of Cohen, Klingenstein, LLC, and the chairman of the Claremont Institute's Board of Directors.

Allen C. Guelzo

FOR ALL THE WORK THAT IT WAS DESIGNED to do, and has done for over 200 years, the U.S. Constitution is a remarkably tight-lipped document, running (in its original 1787 form) to about 4,000 words. It speaks far more about what federal and state governments cannot do rather than what they ought to do, with the rest left mostly to the people themselves. And so the Constitution contains nothing about culture. It ordains no language, music, religion, coat-of-arms, shrines, ancestry, or tribal myth. We could, presumably, all be Buddhists, Sikhs, Finns, Sicilians, or members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks for all that the Constitution would notice.

Partly, this is because the members of the Constitutional Convention already shared a culture that they simply took for granted: hence, the Constitution does not establish and ordain a culture because those who wrote it already operated within one. In 1787, that culture understood certain matters as givens: some form of Protestant Christian theism, largely patterned after the Bible (whether or not all Americans shared the same convictions about it), and a moral code derived from that theism that sanctified property-ownership, the nuclear family, natural rights, and the rule of law. The American Revolution sharpened the application of the rule of law by abolishing traditional social and political hierarchies, but it still operated within the long tradition of English-speaking jurisprudence that stretched back to the Middle Ages. None of that made it into the Constitution, but it did find an unavoidable lodgment in everyday Americans' lives.

Yet, from the very beginning, that culture had to come to terms with a large number of immigrants on America's doorstep who seemed likely to capsize it. Some of them, viewed from a long distance, might not seem really all that culturally dissimilar (Irish and German Catholics, French-speaking Caribbean refugees); nevertheless, they struck Americans *then* as being dangerously alien, and were often treated that way. There were also the Indian tribes already present, some of whom (like the Cherokee) seriously struggled to assimilate themselves to American norms, only to be rebuffed. These alternative cultures lived by different codes—sometimes uncom-

fortably different—but in the end, the Constitution turned out to be quite adequate to absorbing them all, while they themselves felt no particular cultural incitement to challenge the constitutional order. Even when they were being victimized by the Constitution's officers, they appealed their victimization to the Constitution's tribunals.

A VERY DIFFERENT FORM OF CULTURAL challenge, however, came from a very different form of immigration—in this case, the forced introduction of an enslaved population which gradually created a world very different from anything the Constitution could absorb. This was not because the slaves themselves injected into American life cultural forms too alien in their African origin to prosper under the Constitution's umbrella, but because the institution of slavery itself created its own new synthesis culture for both black and white, African and American. This new culture was built around principles—dominance, hierarchy, and race supremacy—which ultimately could not be reconciled with either the culture or the Constitution espoused in Philadelphia in 1787.

What made the culture of slave society all the more dangerous was the congruities it established with the political culture of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Democrats, which, when blended with the racial Romanticism of John C. Calhoun, George Fitzhugh, and James Henry Hammond, became quite a world of difference from the rival political culture of Federalists, Whigs, and Republicans such as Alexander Hamilton, Henry Clay, and Abraham Lincoln. And these really were rival cultures: whether it was the Union and sectionalism, the priority of self-transformation as against the priority of racial or class identity, or economic dynamism versus economic stasis, Americans of the Hamilton-Clay-Lincoln persuasion were culturally at odds with the swaggering, slave-owning, Jeffersonian and Jacksonian one. In the end, it led to civil war. But even civil war did not succeed in imposing a uniform political culture on the republic, as the sorry conclusion of Reconstruction so vividly demonstrated.

So, in one comparatively harmless way, Americans have long been multicultural, and formed what Frederick Douglass hailed as a "composite nation." "We are a country of all extremes," he said in 1869,

the most conspicuous example of composite nationality in the world. Our people defy all the ethnological and logical classifications. In races we range all the way from black to white, with intermediate shades which, as in the apocalyptic vision, no man can name a number.

In that respect, multiculturalism has been part of the American warp and woof for a long time, and indeed we may say that there is actually a perfectly constitutional multiculturalism. But there has also been another, relentlessly lethal multiculturalism in American life whose chief example was the slaveowners' culture of narcissism, oligarchy, and power. And that multiculturalism, which the slaveowners demanded, nearly destroyed us.

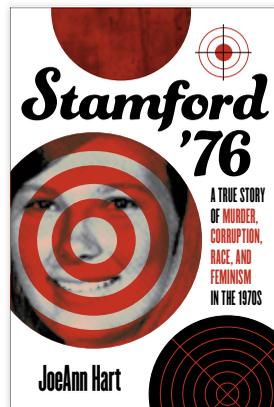
THE MULTICULTURALISM THOMAS Klingenstein has ably diagnosed as the sickness of our age is a very different species altogether from Douglass's "composite" multiculturalism, and should not be embraced with a shrug of the shoulders and a here-we-go-again attitude. Today's multiculturalism is, like the airless conceit of the Calhouns and Fitzhughs, not multi- at all; it is a culture of its own whose values are premised on the same realities and ideas which brought us, on an earlier occasion, to a vast bloodletting. Like the slave aristocracy, modern multiculturalism is predicated on identity politics; like them again, it espouses a form of economic stasis as the only just social form; it has no use for the nation, substituting instead racial and gender states as the focus of its loyalties, and it ruthlessly silences dissent in the name of self-protection. And probably, given half a chance, it will strain to rewrite the Constitution in order to articulate its culture and criminalize disagreement.

Douglass's "composite" multiculturalism is difference around a common core. Bavarians and Prussians could not live more different lives, yet they were both conscious of being Germans; Brittany and Languedoc might almost be different nations, yet they understand themselves nonetheless as French. There was no more radically multicultural state than the old Austrian empire, bringing under its wing German-speaking Austrians, Muslim and Orthodox Slavs, and a host of others, and all of it suspended on nothing more substantial than an acknowledgement of the suzerainty of the House of Habsburg. Of course, these in-

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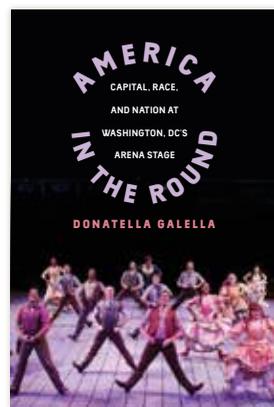


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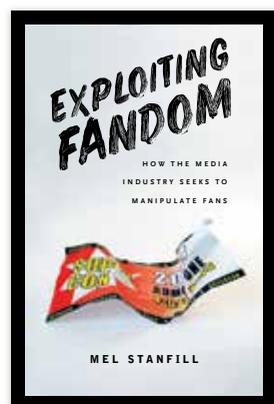


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stances of “composite” multiculturalism were, and are, sustained by two factors: a common language and/or religion (in the German and French example) and (in the Austrian case) a vast territory in which divergent groups lived out of sight and out of conflict with each other. Americans have had the most unusual common core around which a multitude of cultures gather—a set of political propositions and a written Constitution. And that core has managed, to the disbelief of its despisers, to survive without a single established language or religion, and in the full glare of telegraphs, telephones, newspapers, and, most recently, the internet.

None of these ways of structuring multiculturalism defines the multiculturalism with which Klingenstein is dealing. This new multiculturalism is, in fact, an anti-culture, and it dismisses (in the words of essayist Wesley Yang) “the very idea of a fair system of rules applicable to all” as “a pernicious mystification disguising the partial interests of the dominant class as universality itself.” There really is nothing the anti-culture respects outside itself; “what remains to be done,” Yang declares, “is the reengineering of norms, customs, and precedents to favor the marginalized.” The “marginalized,” of course, is what every dictator, tyrant, and ideologue imagines he is speaking for. No slaveowner, swinging back at the perceived aggressions of the anti-slavery North, could have described his situation better. Klingenstein’s invocation of Abraham Lincoln, therefore, is not at all misplaced.

The oddity is that Donald Trump, who entered the lists in 2016 to do combat in this newest form of cultural collision, is, at least in terms of perception and *persona*, no Lincoln, or even a Clay. But he does share at least one fundamental Lincolnian perspective, and that is that a house divided against itself—as violently as the “composite” constitutional multiculturalism of Douglass and Lincoln and the tyrannical multiculturalism of the new Calhounites divides us—really cannot stand. Like Lincoln, neither Klingenstein nor I expects the house to fall, but there is the real possibility that it will inevitably become all one thing or all the other. Trump’s principal virtue is that, whatever his other faults, he sees this divide for what it is, and has no patience with the endless equivocations which have been offered as fruitless placations of it.

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Roger Kimball

THE TWO GREAT THEMES OF THOMAS Klingenstein’s essay on America are rhetoric and reality. He comes to rhetoric through Abraham Lincoln. “[P]ublic sentiment,” said Lincoln, “is everything.”

With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment, goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed.

To the surprise of many, myself included, Donald Trump, the flashy real-estate developer and reality TV star, turned out to be an astonishingly successful molder of public sentiment. Aristotle was correct when he said that rhetoric was the “art of persuasion.” As the cartoonist Scott Adams saw earlier than most, Trump was in this sense a master rhetorician, a “Great Persuader.”

Everything Trump does, Adams pointed out in a column late in the 2016 election cycle, is designed to shape public opinion. “He needed to be loud and outrageous in the primaries, so he was.” And Hillary?

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton has revealed herself to be frail, medicated, and probably duplicitous about her health. We also hear reports that she’s a drinker with a bad temper. Suddenly, Clinton looks like the unstable personality in this race. Who do you want controlling the nuclear arsenal now?

That was a good question. Here’s another: Which candidate was the worse bigot? The one who wants stronger immigration policies to protect Americans or the one who castigated tens of millions of voters as a “basket of deplorables” who were “irredeemable” and “thankfully...not America”?

I think Adams was right: whatever else he is, Trump is a “Great Persuader.” Looking back to 2015, Adams wrote:

I told you that Trump was bringing a flamethrower to a stick fight. His talent for persuasion is so strong that he has effectively flipped the script and rewired the brains of the people watching this show.

But I’ll bet you still think Trump is “thin-skinned,” primarily because



Clinton's team has done a great job of branding him that way. The label sticks because Trump has a pattern of going on offense whenever he is attacked. But let me give you another framework to see this same set of facts.... If you were an alien from another planet, and you observed a lion killing a gazelle, you might think that lion was angry at its prey. You might think the lion was insulted that the gazelle was using its watering hole. What did the gazelle do to deserve that treatment? Is the lion being thin-skinned?

THE 2016 ELECTION CYCLE MAY SEEM very long ago. But the rhetorical style that Trump deployed then has been constantly on view since. The talent that enabled him to squish like bugs the 16 tip-top Republican candidates during the primary, and then crush the "inevitable" Hillary Clinton, has also enabled him to preside over what has been one of the most—maybe the single most—successful first two years of any president in our history.

And that brings me to Klingenstein's second theme. I said it was "reality." The negative term he uses is "multiculturalism." "Foremost," he writes, "President Trump has exposed multiculturalism as the political revolution it is."

I think it is still an open question whether Trump has been successful in that task of exposure. He has managed it in substance. His attack on political correctness during the campaign and later, along with his truth-telling about illegal immigration and such multicultural cynosures as "transgender" bathrooms, has been a refreshing change from the tacit endorsement of identity politics by his predecessor. But the jury is still out, I believe, on the position of "public sentiment" on the issues.

About the substance of the issue, however, I have no doubt that Klingenstein is correct. As Samuel Huntington pointed out years ago, multiculturalism is "anti-European civilization.... It is basically an anti-Western ideology." Quite right. The multiculturalists claim to be fostering a progressive cultural cosmopolitanism distinguished by superior sensitivity to the downtrodden and dispossessed. In fact, they encourage an orgy of self-flagellating liberal guilt as impotent as it is insatiable. The "sensitivity" of the multiculturalist is an index not of moral refinement but of moral vacuousness. Multiculturalism is a moral intoxicant; its thrill centers around the emotion of superior virtue; its hangover subsists on a diet of nescience and blighted "good intentions."

KLINGENSTEIN IS RIGHT TO STRESS the baneful effect of multiculturalism on education. "Education" is a synonym for "Our Future." Schools and colleges are laboratories in which future citizens are forged. Wherever the imperatives of multiculturalism have touched the curriculum, they have left broad swaths of anti-Western attitudinizing competing for attention with quite astonishing historical blindness. Courses on minorities, women's issues, and the Third World proliferate; the teaching of mainstream history slides into oblivion.

And note that multiculturalism is not only an academic phenomenon. The attitudes it fosters have profound social, as well as intellectual, consequences. One consequence has been a sharp rise in the phenomenon of immigration without—or with only partial—assimilation: a dangerous demographic trend that threatens American identity in the most basic way.

These various agents of dissolution are also elements in a wider culture war: the contest to define how we live and what counts as the good in the good life. Anti-Americanism occupies such a prominent place on the agenda of the culture wars precisely because the traditional values of American identity—articulated by the founders and grounded in a commitment to individual liberty and public virtue—are deeply at odds with the radical, de-civilizing tenets of the "multiculturalist" enterprise.

What we have witnessed with the triumph of multiculturalism is a kind of hypertrophy or perversion of liberalism, as its core doctrines are pursued to the point of caricature. "Freedom," "diversity," "equality," "tolerance," even "democracy"—how many definitive liberal virtues have been redacted into their opposites by the imperatives of political correctness? If "diversity" mandates bilingual education, then we must institute bilingual education, even if it results in the cultural disenfranchisement of those it was meant to benefit. The passion for equality demands "affirmative action," even though the process of affirmative action depends upon treating people unequally. The French philosopher Jean-François Revel put it well when he observed, in 1983, that "Democratic civilization is the first in history to blame itself because another power is trying to destroy it." We are all in Thomas Klingenstein's debt for reminding us of this forgotten truth.

Roger Kimball is editor and publisher of the New Criterion and president and publisher of Encounter Books.

David Azerrad

THOMAS KLINGENSTEIN HAS WRITTEN a *cri de coeur* against the most powerful, pernicious, and suicidal ideology of our time: multiculturalism. Klingenstein sees it for what it is—"an insane exercise in self-flagellation" fueled by a hatred of America in general and of white men in particular. He understands its formidable power to silence and destroy publicly those who deviate from the accepted script when speaking of protected identity groups. And he is therefore right to call on conservatives to see it as "the central issue and threat—the Communism or slavery, as it were—of our time."

I am a particularly pleased that he published his essay in the pages of the *Claremont Review of Books* since it provides a much needed corrective to the orthodox Claremont account of America. We "Claremonsters" have for too long tried to interpret modern liberalism through the lens of early American Progressivism. Multiculturalism cannot, however, be read as a working out of the ideas of Woodrow Wilson, Richard Ely, Charles Merriam, or any other of their Progressive acolytes.

The leading Progressive luminaries of the early 20th century believed in the superiority of the Teutonic races and their rightful title to rule not just America, but the world. Wilson defended segregation and celebrated the end of Reconstruction for re-establishing "the natural, inevitable ascendancy of the whites, the responsible class." In his *A History of American Political Theories*, Charles Merriam exhorted Teutonic races to adopt "a colonial policy" and "civilize the politically uncivilized." At best, Progressives favored benevolent paternalism vis-à-vis what they viewed as inferior races. At worst, "Barbaric races" who could not be civilized would have to "be swept away," as Merriam casually noted.

However much Progressivism may explain the workings of the modern administrative state, it cannot account for the current cult of diversity and the mounting hatred for all things white. No early Progressive would have called on anyone, much less a sitting president, to resign for calling certain Third World countries "shitholes."

Not surprisingly, the contemporary multicultural Left has turned against the early Progressives. The arch-Progressive Woodrow Wilson, on whom we in the Claremont school have put so much weight, is now despised by the Left. In the summary judgment of the *Atlantic*: "The Virginia native was racist."



TO UNDERSTAND WHAT KLINGENSTEIN calls multiculturalism (but I think should better be called “identity politics”), one needs to understand the radical break that occurred on the Left in the 1960s and ’70s with the rise of the New Left, on the one hand, and the black nationalist, Black Power, and women’s liberation movements on the other.

These ideological movements presented a new critique of America as a fundamentally oppressive regime which subjugates certain groups and stifles authentic living. Their scathing indictment of the country first made headway with women, minorities (as they would now be called), and the nascent gay liberation movement, before penetrating mainstream culture. The victory was sealed when members of the so-called oppressor class, for reasons that have yet to be explained, accepted the critique and came to think of themselves and their country through this lens, giving rise to the self-flagellation which Klingenstein condemns.

Klingenstein identifies “the principle that all ‘marginalized’ identity groups are equal, and all are oppressed by white males” as the leading principle of American multiculturalism. This is not entirely correct as multiculturalists embrace a hierarchy of victimhood. No social justice warrior has as much sympathy for Asian Americans as she does for African Americans. Women who do not want to compete against transgender men in athletic competitions are told to shut up and check their transphobia. And the Jews, who were once almost exterminated for not being white, are now starting to be called “white Jews” to underscore their privilege.

More importantly, the now fashionable concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be oppressed along multiple axes at the same time. Not all marginalized identity groups, it turns out, are equal. Some are more marginalized than others and thus more equal than others.

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Matthew Continetti

“TRUMP,” WRITES THOMAS KLINGENSTEIN in his wide-ranging and fascinating essay, “points the way for-

ward.” But in which direction? Sometimes it is hard to tell.

The president seems eager to embody the “energy in the executive” that *The Federalist* describes as “a leading character in the definition of good government.” He bounds from one decision, policy, controversy, fight, Tweet, rally, and provocation to the next. He rarely pauses for breath, or for sleep. His influence extends throughout the economy, the courts, the media, the globe, and even into outer space. Somehow he still finds time to comment on the Oscars and cable news. This activity is consequential. It is also, for some of us, exasperating.

Klingenstein says the through-line to Trump’s presidency is his resistance to multiculturalism. “He has allowed us to see that we are engaged in a contest between two understandings of justice, one built on the principle that all human beings are equal—the other on the principle that all ‘marginalized’ identity groups are equal, and all are oppressed by white males.”

Multiculturalism and its offspring, identity politics and political correctness, are worth opposing because they divide and undermine a country “based on natural rights, individual freedom, and republican government.” Where Trump knows “in his soul” that Americans are, in Lincoln’s phrase, the “almost chosen people,” multiculturalism offers only “an insane exercise in self-flagellation.”

YOU DON’T NEED ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL soul to believe Klingenstein is on to something. Neither multiculturalism nor the idea of equal natural rights began with Donald Trump, but his rise has brought the opposition of these two worldviews into stark relief.

Trump and the multiculturalists have different understandings of the nation’s past. Trump looks proudly at American history. It’s why he wants to make us great “again.” His opponents are much more hostile. For Stacey Abrams, “marginalized groups” are “finally overcoming centuries-long efforts to erase them from the American polity.” For Governor Andrew Cuomo, America “was never that great.” Former Attorney General Eric Holder asks: “Exactly when did you think America was great?”

A lot follows from such attitudes. If you take pride in America’s heritage, you wish to see the country recapture its glory. If you think American history is reducible to a centuries-old struggle between oppressors and

oppressed, you wish, in the words of Abrams, “[t]o seek redress and inclusion.” The Trump supporters I know desire the equal protection of individual rights under the law. Multiculturalists desire substantive equality, or at least proportional representation, which necessitates the unequal treatment of individuals based on group characteristics.

“Opposition to multiculturalism,” Klingenstein writes, “should become the center of the conservative movement, the basis for a political coalition, the principle on which to build a rhetorical strategy and the conceptual framework for interpreting events, for organizing and tying together the domestic dangers we face.” Rather than re-grounding the conservative movement in opposition to multiculturalism, Trump supporters might find it more useful to advance a positive argument for American nationalism, rightly understood.

TRUMP DEFENDS THE CONSTITUENT elements of the American nation: its borders, its language, its holidays (including Christmas), its symbols (the flag and the national anthem), its industries, and its people. Unlike multiculturalists, he draws a line between citizens of this nation and all others. Except for a few excellent prepared speeches, though, he has spent less time than I would like on the qualities that make American nationalism unique: the principles of equal natural right established in our country’s founding documents.

These are the ideas that make America exceptional. They are the reason membership in the national community is not a matter of race or ethnicity or sect but fidelity to the law and to a shared cultural understanding. They are what Lincoln referred to when he described “a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere.”

It might not be Donald Trump’s sole responsibility to give his program coherence. But he could help! Integrating into his rhetoric the themes and quotations of Thomas Klingenstein’s important essay would be a great place to start.

Matthew Continetti is editor in chief of the Washington Free Beacon.

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