

Integration Is Disintegration, Nationalism, Rationalism

by Elliott Dixon

(Doubtless, editor jsh would here say, "this article by no means expresses the opinion of the staff; it is a personal contribution. But we dig the responses, anyway!" So I've said it for him.

love and kisses,
ecd)

Among all my observed hang ups of "racism, childishness, black anger, and emotionalism" is my disdain for having misinterpreted the intellectual depth of my audience. Certainly it misread "The Unofficial Group, Superficial Jazz" and thus conjured false inferences. Far from becoming a respected opinion, the article became my mis-characterized effigy which was almost hanged (Eisenburg, Smith, Nabers, and Bowler were surely knotting ropes.) I venture, now and finally, to correct that effigy -- and if this is hanged, nay, lynched, then sobeit. As my point concerning jazz is but a minuscule aspect of an entire philosophy, I shall explicate that philosophy comprehensively yet briefly.

It is the broad understanding of most Americans that their America lives up to, or is certainly trying to live up to, her founding ideals. Liberty and Justice for all. One nation under God. E Pluribus Unum. Indivisibility. Democracy. In short, there is an American nationality, hard fought for, and one in which all citizens should develop those worthy ideals and values, maintain them, and spread them throughout the world.

It is my position to question that nationality -- not whether it exists (it does in fact), but to question its components; its developers, maintainers, spreaders; its validity.

Any objective analysis of the American nationality would reveal many pertinent but obscure truths. The most striking observation is that the nationality of America is the nationality of a minority -- the founding white Anglo - Saxon Protestants. There's was the American culture at Independence, and despite millions of immigrants and black slave descendants, theirs is the American culture, nationality, now.

How? It is shattering to think that the prevailing values of equality, integration, religious freedom, and the melting pot actually belie the true answer. When the query teased the mind of sociologist Milton M. Gordon he set out to empirically examine the nature of the American Nationality. His work, culminating in his noted, comprehensive ASSIMILATION IN AMERICAN LIFE, (1) revealed the much sought for analysis and, as expected, establishes the base for much of my philosophy.

According to Gordon, the white Anglo - Saxon Protestants rooted their culture as the model for all immigrants, who, being alien, apprehensive, and desirous of acceptance, followed that model, supplanting much of their ethnic culture with WASPian culture. However, that the immigrants and their descendants still retain much of their ethnicity today prevents one from concluding that assimilation was in any way total.

Propounding the reason, Gordon hypothesizes a "paradigm of assimilation." This paradigm lists seven processes in the phenomenon of complete assimilation, of which four are sufficient for our understanding here. These are cultural assimilation, or acculturation; structural assimilation, or entry into primary, highly personal relationships with the host society; marital assimilation, or amalgamation; and identificational assimilation, or identification in total with the host society's ethnicity.

"It is my position to question the American nationality--not whether it exists (it does in fact), but to question its components; its developers, maintainers, spreaders; its validity."

It is Gordon's hypothesis, further, that ethnic groups in America have effected only the first assimilational process of

acculturation. Inus, at least, seems likely; certainly, to follow the pervasive WASPian norms and accept their institutions are the demands of American society. In order to achieve the Western idea of success in America the ethnic must adopt unquestioningly the WASPian ethic, the WASPian culture. Acculturation is, despite the mere initial step of assimilation, the requisite step to success.

That the ethnics haven't effected the crucial second process is why they are still characteristic of America: once the second process is fulfilled, i.e. primary relationships formed between the ethnic group's membership and that of the WASPs, the other assimilational processes inevitably occur.

The answer to why this crucial process hasn't occurred is far from a speculation. On the one hand, religio-racial-national ethnic groups have retained enough ethnic pride to obviate the need of forming primary relationships outside of the group. Furthermore, their living together in ghettos, especially in the first and second generations, greatly reinvigorated ethnic identity. On the other hand, WASPs in many instances were appalled by the great influx of immigrants, even since the beginnings of the nation. It was Thomas Jefferson who wrote the early 1780's "They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their

"The nationality of America is the nationality of a minority--the founding white Anglo-Saxon Protestants."

early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another... These principles, with their language, they will transmit to their children. In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its directions, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass." (2)

The Great "Emancipator," eighty years later, nutshellled the prevalent attitude in the following: "As a nation, we began by declaring that all men are created equal. We now practically read it 'all men are created equal except Negroes.' When the Know-Nothings a party pledged to restrict immigration get control, it will read 'all men are created equal except Negroes, and foreigners and Catholics.'" (3)

Thus, in sum, it was/is ethnic pride and WASPian racism, primacy, pride which prevented/prevents the second process of structural assimilation to manifest itself in America.

I have said little yet of the black man in this social context for one reason -- he is incomparably unique. Before examining him I must introduce more terms. Gordon depicts culture as being both non material and material. Non-material culture entails the values,

beliefs, norms, etc. of a culture while artifacts are the material manifestations of the non-material. In delineating the culture of black people, I must adumbrate an indescribable other cultural aspect. This addition might seem to be a part on non-material culture, but because of its characteristic uniqueness for black people I am compelled to set it in its own sphere. This I term psychic culture. This is that indescribable something innate to our people hood; it is our social mien; it is all of the manifestations of what we call SOUL, and more so its very subtle expressions which overshadow our way of living.

"As is, black culture is reactive in America. THERE IS NO PURE BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA."

Continuing, it is my hypothesis that slavery deracinated only our native non-material and material cultures (this is not to say that this merciless deracination wasn't of gross significance. Quite contrary. It couldn't uproot our psychic culture. In acculturating the imposed WASPian ethic, however, all of these cultural aspects blended to evolve into what is now the black American culture -- "black American" because what evolved is for the most part just that -- American colored black: our present culture is in most of its expressions conspicuously imitative of the WASPian culture, and in ALL its expressions reactive to it. Parts of our culture, which was not deracinated. Hence we have the blues, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, the African twist, the tighten-up, the grind, and our social mien. To propound that these cultural forms are largely reactive seems profound, yet close examination would reveal that, as is, black culture is in fact reactive in America. THERE IS NO PURE BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA. Once the deracination of African cultures and the consequent need to evolve a new culture are understood, this truth would not be hard to realize. And concerning the immigrant, his culture wasn't hardly so extirpated.

To complete this hypothesis I further divide the reactive culture into its positive and negative components. To do this here might not seem understandable, and it might not be acceptable. Its full meaning will not be understood until the entire philosophy is understood. I expound this here more for sake of inclusiveness rather than rhetoric. Simply stated, positive reactive culture consists of those parts having potential to develop into true, nonreactive cultural forms. This includes music, dance, theatre, and literature, to name a few, most of which stem from our psychic culture. Negative reactive culture consists of those parts having no potential relevance to pure black culture. The Western decadent system is the all-encompassing example.

It is history then that asserts that America is a nation of nations. Irish-Americans, Polish-Americans, Japanese Americans, Franco-Americans, Italo-Americans, Afro-Americans, Jews, Catholics, and white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, et. al. ARE America. And because the latter minority undermines and programs the majority, we are in reality a nation of sheep, let alone one of nations, and the WASPS are the shepherds.

Now is the three hundred fifty year old American paradox clear: While it is the WASPs who say "No one ethnic group should remain tenacious on their heritage; we must all blend our cultures" it is the same WASPs who have incontrovertibly

"Integration is another WASP-erected myth which has humbugged the black race into unreality."

determined and dominated the evolution of the American nationality. While it is the WASPs who herald "give me your tired, your poor" it is the same WASPs who instituted the Johnson Act of 1921 which effected a national -- origins quota on immigrants; what it said in short was "WE AMERICANS DON'T WANT ANY OF YOU IMMIGRANTS WHO DO NOT HAVE FORBEARS HERE BECAUSE YOU ARE PROVEN BIOLOGICALLY INFERIOR AND HARD TO ASSIMILATE." (4) And while it is the WASPs who emote "Love your country -- its tradition, its values, its goals" it is the same WASPs who paraphrase "Love MY country -- My tradition, MY goals (such as spreading MY culture to Viet Nam.)"

Milton Gordon summarizes "Thus, what is, usually referred to as 'general American society' turns out in reality, insofar as communal institutions and primary group relations are concerned, to be a white Protestant social world, colored and infused with the implicit assumptions of this particular ethnic group." (5)

The implications of my title should now be clearer; if Gordon and history are correct, of what significance is integration? I propound that it is another WASP -- erected myth which has humbugged the black race into unreality.

Integration once meant the equal giving and taking and sacrificing of the parts in forming the homogeneous whole. This is noble, is a melting pot. As I have argued above, no such melting, integrating has occurred in America (Gordon contends that there is a marginal group of intellectuals from all ethnic groups who have truly melted; I retort by asking what has the black intellectual had to melt? Of course, he could marry a white and thereby melt his skin color...) All ethnics that fill our boundary have settled for the dominance of our notorious ethnic minority. Hence, if blacks and whites (America minus blacks) should talk of integration by definition -- it would have to involve the twosome in a half-n-half compromise. Is this viable?

Hypothetically, Moses Shickletroy is a black American. His native culture having been extirpated by WASPs, his psyche is one programmed by the dominant culture. His new culture, a minuscule imitation and reaction of the WASP's, is for the most part meaningless to both him and society. A digrammatical representation of Moses and a white would be as follows:



The diagram shows that through acculturation Moses Shickletroy is 75% whitened. The white man is blackened negligibly (maybe by the boundary of the circle itself.)

Now, if integration by the only honorable definition is desired, then HASN'T MOSES SHICKLETROY ALREADY, FROM ACCULTURATION, DONE MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF INTEGRATING, AND THE WHITE MAN NONE? Fitting reality to the symbols, the black man is more than half white, psychologically, and it seems ludicrous that he must insist upon integration, unless he does in fact seek gradualism, tokenism, assimilation.

To expound further, if Moses Shickletroy exemplifies the average black American then it is no wonder (his being