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CHAPTER 4

Pluralism, Cosmopolitanism,
and the Diversification
of Diversity

That the United States ought to be home to a number of distinctive cultures, especially those associated with different ethno-racial affiliations, is now widely accepted. But the implications of this basic multiculturalist idea remain decidedly unresolved. Does the United States have an ethnos of its own, or is the nation best seen as a container of cultures defined largely by ethno-racial communities? How autonomous and how enduring are the communities credited with producing America's many cultures? Are all of these cultures of equal value and demanding of equal attention in education? What relation do these ethno-racially based cultures have with cultures that are not derived from ethno-racial communities? What hopes can we have that projects in cultural reform can diminish political and economic inequalities? To what extent can an emphasis on the

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differences between people promote the goal of human equality?

These questions, over which multiculturalists disagree among themselves, have been too often obscured by the prevailing terms of the great multiculturalist debate of the last several years. Participants in these debates frequently characterize each other as separatists or as defenders of Eurocentric domination; they often construct the issues as a series of choices between similarity or difference, wholeness or fragmentation, assimilation or dissimulation, and uniformity or diversity. No doubt these terms describe fairly some participants in this debate and some of the doctrines advanced. But these terms more often amount to opprobrious epithets. The debate is too often scripted as a two-sided confrontation between traditionalists who want a uniform culture grounded in "Western Civilization" as presented by colleges in the 1950s and progressives who appreciate difference and promote diversity. Defenders of multiculturalism have complained with good reason that critics have lumped together indiscriminately a range of distinctive ideas offered in the name of multiculturalism, but the next step is all too often to return the favor by sweeping all critics of multiculturalism into a single army of reactionaries.¹ Part of the problem is that virtually no one defends monoculturalism,² with the result that multiculturalism is deprived of an honest, natural opposite.

Eurocentrism is often said to be multiculturalism's most immediate and active enemy, but this concept, like

monoculturalism, is more a polemicist's device than a fair description of any but a few of the people who have worried aloud about the cultural fragmentation of the United States and a loss of pedagogic focus in the nation's classrooms.³ And many who do uphold European traditions insist that what makes these traditions worth defending is their multitudinous, decidedly multicultural character.⁴ Hence the "opponents" of multiculturalism sometimes end up claiming its banner as their own, while a more-multiculturalist-than-thou faction simultaneously complains that a merely cosmetic acceptance of multiculturalism masks a conservative victory in the culture wars and a rejection of "true" multiculturalism.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., defends what he calls multiculturalism in the midst of an incisive attack on what many critics of multiculturalism take to be its most salient expression, identity politics.⁵ Diane Ravitch is often treated as an enemy of multiculturalism because of her criticisms of particularism, especially as manifest in Afrocentrist curricula, but Ravitch has repeatedly declared herself to be in favor of multiculturalism.⁶ One of the world's leading exponents of traditional liberal philosophy, Joseph Raz, has fashioned multiculturalism as a liberal initiative, while it has been developed as a critical initiative by a Chicago collective skeptical in the extreme of traditional liberal strategies.⁷ The widespread triumph of the basic multiculturalist idea and the shrewd determination of most discussants

to claim the multiculturalist label for themselves has rendered the word "multiculturalism" a shibboleth. Behind this shibboleth are concealed a variety of persuasions and counterpersuasions well worth drawing out into the open in the interests of addressing in a more forthright manner the issues that have given rise to the multiculturalist debate to begin with.

To this purpose, one can look more closely at a single example, a recent essay by the 1994-95 president of the Organization of American Historians, Gary B. Nash of UCLA. Nash defends multiculturalism, which he takes to be an emphasis on diversity, an elimination of ethnocentrism, and the "integration of the histories of both genders and people of all classes and racial or ethnic groups."⁸ Indeed, Nash is the principal author of a widely discussed series of textbooks recently adopted by most public school districts in California and designed explicitly to serve these multiculturalist goals.⁹ Yet Nash is insistently critical of the Afrocentrism that is sometimes counted as a version of multiculturalism. Nash finds fault with the ethnocentric reasoning by which our schools might be asked to design "Sinocentric," "Khmercentrist," and "Hispanocentric" curricula, and to ignore the needs of "mixed-race children in a society where . . . interracial marriage is at an all-time high." Nash defends the idea of "common ground" in terms that might well have come from multiculturalism's critics. "If multiculturalism is to get beyond a promiscuous plural-

ism that gives everything equal weight and adopts complete moral relativism," says Nash, "it must reach some agreement on what is at the core of American culture."¹⁰

Moreover, Nash is very direct in telling us what we should take as that core: the democratic values "clearly stated" in the nation's "founding documents." These old principles "are a precious heritage" endowing with the same rights all "individuals" of "whatever group attachments." Nash thus alludes to the nation's nonethnic ideological tradition and points to that tradition's helpful role in "virtually every social and political struggle carried out by women, religious minorities, labor, and people of color." Scorning the varieties of particularism that encourage young people to identify only with antecedents of their own ethno-racial category, Nash insists that "Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells should inspire all students, not simply African-American females." He further reminds us that W. E. B. Du Bois once "wed" a color-neutral "Truth" and sought to "live above the veil" of color by learning from Aristotle and Shakespeare. Nash several times invokes "cosmopolitanism," a concept that matches his ideas more comfortably than does the more ambiguous "multiculturalism" with which he, like so many other opponents of a narrowly Anglo-Protestant curriculum and public culture, finds himself saddled.¹¹

Sharpening the distinction between cosmopolitanism and some of the other persuasions that reside in and around multiculturalism may help to clarify the issues. The

word *cosmopolitanism* has sometimes been used as a synonym for *universalism*, on the basis of the correct understanding that cosmopolitans look beyond a province or nation to the larger sphere of humankind that is the object of universalists. Both terms can be comfortably applied to many statements made in the species-centered discourse of the era of World War II. Yet these two words can serve us best if we use them not as synonyms but as labels for significantly different orientations toward the wider world to which both are attentive.

We can distinguish a universalist will to find common ground from a cosmopolitan will to engage human diversity. Cosmopolitanism shares with all varieties of universalism a profound suspicion of enclosures, but cosmopolitanism is defined by an additional element not essential to universalism itself: recognition, acceptance, and eager exploration of diversity. Cosmopolitanism urges each individual and collective unit to absorb as much varied experience as it can, while retaining its capacity to advance its aims effectively. For cosmopolitans, the diversity of humankind is a fact; for universalists, it is a potential problem. Hence multiculturalists have reason to find diversity-appreciating cosmopolitanism much less suspect than unity-seeking universalism.

But an additional distinction is even more vital to the task of breaking the logjams of the multiculturalist debates. A tension between cosmopolitanism and pluralism runs throughout these debates, is rarely acknowledged, and is

increasingly acute as resistance to essential multiculturalism diminishes. That the concept of multiculturalism was amorphous mattered little when its adherents were fewer and when alliances had to be made against people who were slow to appreciate the need for it. Pluralism and cosmopolitanism have often been united in the common cause of promoting tolerance and diversity. Hence they have not always been distinguished as sharply as I believe today's circumstances demand. But now that so many parties are claiming multiculturalism as their own, the issues within multiculturalism should receive more open and extended discussion. Many of these issues fall into view once the pluralist-cosmopolitan distinction is developed and confronted.

Pluralism differs from cosmopolitanism in the degree to which it endows with privilege particular groups, especially the communities that are well established at whatever time the ideal of pluralism is invoked. While cosmopolitanism is willing to put the future of every culture at risk through the sympathetic but critical scrutiny of other cultures, pluralism is more concerned to protect and perpetuate particular, existing cultures. In its extreme form, this conservative concern takes the form of a bargain: "You keep the acids of your modernity out of my culture, and I'll keep the acids of mine away from yours." If cosmopolitanism can be casual about community building and community maintenance and tends to seek voluntary affiliations of wide compass, pluralism promotes affiliations on the narrower

grounds of shared history and is more quick to see reasons for drawing boundaries between communities.

Cosmopolitanism is more oriented to the individual, whom it is likely to understand as a member of a number of different communities simultaneously. Pluralism is more oriented to the group, and is likely to identify each individual with reference to a single, primary community. Cosmopolitanism is more suspicious than is pluralism of the potential for conformist pressures within the communities celebrated by pluralists, while pluralism is more suspicious than is cosmopolitanism of the variousness and lack of apparent structure in the wider world celebrated by cosmopolitans. Arguments offered by universalists that certain interests are shared by many, if not all, groups will get a longer hearing from cosmopolitans than from pluralists. The latter are more likely to see in such arguments the covert advancement of the interests of one particular group.

This tension between pluralism and cosmopolitanism is not novel to the multiculturalist debates. In less acute form it can be found throughout the long history of discourse about the character of diversity in the United States.¹² By attending briefly to that history, we can better understand the ways in which multiculturalism is a continuation of an old conversation, and the ways in which it is a highly distinctive episode.

The national motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, displayed from the republic's start a sense that whatever singularity the

nation achieved was to be constructed out of diverse materials. This appreciation for multiplicity derived in large part from the fact that thirteen different sovereignties needed to be incorporated into a single political authority. But it derived also from the new nation's social and religious heterogeneity, especially as lived and sometimes celebrated in the colonial past of polyglot Pennsylvania and New York. The notion that the United States was the vehicle for the development of a new, amalgamated people was advanced as early as the Revolutionary era in J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's famous praise for the "strange mixture of blood" that made "this new man," the "American." Crèvecoeur's ideal is not quite pluralist, because he does not explicitly envision a series of enduring groups, nor is it unambiguously cosmopolitan. He emphasizes the diversity not of the final product but only of the materials going into it.

What is true of Crèvecoeur is also true of Ralph Waldo Emerson. A generation after Crèvecoeur, Emerson hailed this "asylum of all nations," drawing "the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, and all the European tribes—of the Africans, and the Polynesians," creating in the process a "new race" as "vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting pot of the Dark Ages."¹³ The same emphasis on diversity of base but singleness of product can be found in the most eloquent of all the voices in this tradition, Herman Melville:

We are not a nation, so much as a world. . . . Our ancestry is lost in the Universal paternity; and Caesar and Alfred, St. Paul and Luther, and Homer and Shakespeare are as much ours as Washington. . . . We are the heirs of all time, and with all nations we divide our inheritance. On this Western Hemisphere all tribes and peoples are forming into one federated whole; and there is a future which shall see the estranged children of Adam restored as to the old hearthstone in Eden.¹⁴

Not everyone shared this appreciation for diversity, which was always under pressure from what we today would call an ethnic sense of American nationality, based on the presumed centrality of British stock.¹⁵ Hence if Melville's peroration begs the question of how great and how persistent would be the range of internal differences within the new American society, once built, Melville was decisively on the side of diversity where it most counted: in the fight against a narrowly ethnic nationalism and against the idea that some Americans were more American than others. To "forever extinguish the prejudices of national dislikes" was what he took to be the reasonable outcome of sober reflection on "the mode in which America has been settled."¹⁶

By virtue of his position in this quarrel against nativists, Melville is sometimes called a cosmopolitan. In Melville's own time, however, cosmopolitanism carried implications of superficiality and even shiftlessness that are altogether

alien to these passages in *Redburn*. Melville was a strong nationalist, while the cosmopolite or cosmopolitan in mid-nineteenth-century America was a well-traveled character probably lacking in substance.¹⁷

But neither those who sought to circumscribe diversity nor those, like Melville, who sought to expand it bequeathed to the twentieth century any carefully elaborated theory of pluralism or of cosmopolitanism. What they left, instead, was a set of ambiguities that created openings, invited contentions, and fostered confusions that affected the shape and character of twentieth-century efforts to defend diversity, right down to the present day.

One of these inherited ambiguities was at the heart of the very idea of a pluralistic society. Just what human properties served to distinguish people from one another, and thereby to define the many (*pluribus*) to be incorporated into one (*unum*)? Was religious affiliation the salient property? Or was it language, biological ancestry, prior nationality, geographic locality, political ideology, economic interest, or perhaps all of the above? Some references to plurality even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took for granted that the relevant distinctions were those then called racial or national, distinguishing Germans, English, Swedes, Irish, and so forth from one another. But other references to plurality invoked religious denominations, political factions, states of the union, and property interests. That an appropriate form of pluralism was cultural, and

that cultural meant what we have since come to call ethnic or perhaps even racial, was far from an established understanding when the twentieth century began.

A second ambiguity had to do with the scope of diversity, even when discussants assumed that ethno-racial distinctions were the stuff of which diversity was made. Did that multiplicity embrace persons of all ethno-racial groups? In practice, the obvious answer to this question was no. The privileged status of British and later of Western European and still later of any European ancestry is now one of the most widely recognized themes in the history of the United States. Several cultural pluralists of the early twentieth century considered themselves radical for appreciating the cultural contributions of Jews, Irish Catholics, and various Slavic and Mediterranean peoples, yet were slow to conceive of the possibility that pluralism might provide legitimacy to peoples known today as African American, Asian American, indigenous, and Latino. But in theory, diversity meant something less restrictive. The privileged status of certain stocks was informal in character, thereby inviting contest by an ever expanding number of marginalized groups in the name of the Enlightenment abstractions implanted in the nation's political charters.

Yet a third ambiguity lay in the extent to which ethno-racial identity implied affiliation with an autonomous and enduring social community. American political ideology and constitutional doctrine so emphasized individuality that the

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pluralists of the early twentieth century were endowed with very few tools for talking about the claims of groups. The notion of legally protected territorial enclaves for nationality groups was rejected by Congress—first for Irish immigrants in Ohio in 1818, and thirty years later for German immigrants in Texas—but informal clustering and a measure of legally sanctioned residential segregation were obvious facts of American demographic life. It was possible to construe ethno-racial groups as internally coherent subgroups expected to perpetuate themselves and to attain some measure of recognition as groups. Yet it was more common to regard these groups as fluid, contributing to American diversity by serving as temporary homes for individuals whose descendants would eventually assimilate.

Uncertainty about the character of ethno-racial groups and their place in the larger American society was displayed even in constructions of the melting pot. As it was first construed in the early twentieth century, the melting pot—a figure of speech introduced into the American lexicon by Israel Zangwill's 1908 play of the same name—served to transform not only the immigrants, but everyone, including Mayflower descendants, who were to be improved through a dynamic mixing with immigrants. This notion of "melting" was consistent with the ideas Crèvecoeur, Emerson, and Melville had articulated much earlier. Yet in Zangwill's time this figure of speech also became associated with an antithetical, conformist impulse to melt down the peculiarities

of immigrants in order to pour the resulting liquid into pre-existing molds created in the self-image of the Anglo-Protestants who claimed prior possession of America. The significance of ethno-racial groups for American society was radically unresolved when taken up shortly after Zangwill wrote by the men and women who would eventually be remembered as cultural pluralists.

Chief among these was the philosopher Horace Kallen, who in magazine articles published as early as 1915 set forth the ideas that in 1924 he named "cultural pluralism."¹⁸ Kallen envisioned the life of the United States as analogous to a symphony orchestra: each instrument was a distinctive group transplanted from the Old World, making harmonious music with other groups. He emphasized the integrity and autonomy of each descent-defined group. But Kallen's cultural pluralism was defined less sharply as a positive program than as a negative reaction to conformist versions of the melting pot. The massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe since the 1880s had generated an increasingly hostile movement to Americanize the immigrants according to norms favored by the nation's old Protestant elite. This movement intensified after 1914, when the outbreak of war in Europe rendered suspect the dual loyalties perceived in immigrants from the German and Austrian empires. Kallen, a Jew born in Germany, defended the right of immigrants to resist assimilation and to maintain cohesive communities devoted to the perpetua-

tion of ancestral religious, linguistic, and social practices. Hence the vision of America as a political canopy providing protection for a variety of descent-defined groups was the dialectical product of a distinctive historical moment: a moment at which unprecedented ethno-racial diversity collided with an Anglo-conformist movement made more aggressive by World War I.

Kallen's constitutionally vague references to the United States as a "federation" of enduring ethno-racial groups located him at the protoseparatist extreme of cultural pluralism, but his celebration of group differences appealed to a number of liberal intellectuals who shared his opposition to forced assimilation. These included John Dewey, who, without invoking either cosmopolitanism or pluralism, took friendly issue with Kallen along the lines of exactly this distinction. Dewey warned Kallen against the danger of endorsing "segregation" and of promoting a program whereby traditional cultural differences would be too rigidly "fastened upon" people.¹⁹ Kallen's sympathizers also included Jane Addams, Louis Brandeis, and, above all, Randolph Bourne, who acknowledged Kallen as the inspiration for his legendary essay of 1916, "Trans-National America."²⁰

Bourne celebrated the deprovincializing effect of immigrants on the native-born population and hailed a new, "cosmopolitan" America as superior to the more homogeneous societies left behind by the immigrants. Bourne's sense of cosmopolitanism was much thicker than the one

that prevailed in Melville's time. For Bourne, cosmopolitanism implied strength and resilience rather than a lack of deep character. Cosmopolitans engaged a world the complexity of which rendered provincial tastes and skills inadequate and uninspiring. Although Bourne saw himself as an ally of Kallen's against the proponents of forced assimilation and Anglo-Saxon cultural arrogance, the drift of his argument was actually quite different from Kallen's. While Kallen stressed the autonomy and persistence of the different cultures brought to America by distinctive immigrant groups, Bourne emphasized the dynamic mixing that would change the immigrants as well as the descendants of the Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers. At some moments in "Trans-National America," to be sure, Bourne spoke in a pluralist rather than a cosmopolitan mode, endorsing the integrity of immigrant cultures and lamenting their dilution in the mass of American society. Hence the mixing of pluralism with cosmopolitanism so common in our multiculturalist debates can be found in the most significant piece of writing by multiculturalism's most illustrious precursor and prophet: Bourne himself.

In the era of World War I and the 1920s, there were few incentives to distinguish between pluralist and cosmopolitan visions of an ideal America. On the contrary, there was a common enemy to fight: the nativism that was displayed in a flourishing Ku Klux Klan and that triumphed in the Johnson-Reed Act, the congressional decision of 1924 that drastically cur-

tailed immigration. Hence the chief, joint legacy of both Kallen's and Bourne's writings, within the small circle who read their work at all, was a simple, unelaborated insistence that American nationality should not entail the suppression of diversity nor of multiple identity.

This critique of intolerance, of prejudice, of ethnocentrism, and of one hundred percent Americanism was routinely advanced by a vocal minority of liberal and radical intellectuals during the 1930s. The most popular Broadway production during that decade, Ann Nichols's comedy *Abie's Irish Rose*, celebrated cross-ethnic love and marriage. This ideology of tolerance often carried the implicitly hierarchical assumption that some groups were more fully in possession of the nation than others. It expressed a kind of *noblesse oblige* to tolerate the rest, and was then taken up with enthusiasm by the popular media during World War II. The government recognized the propaganda value of this ideology for the purpose of mobilizing Americans of all ethno-racial identities against the Axis powers.

The classic foxhole society of wartime movies consisted of an Anglo-Protestant soldier surrounded by comrades representing Irish, Jewish, Italian, and other ethnic groups. In *Bataan* (1943), Sgt. Bill Dana (Robert Taylor) and his melting-pot comrades were all united, to be sure, by their colorfully expressed hatred of "Japs." This company of American fighting men included Desi Arnez, who played the group's Latino member.

But neither *Bataan* nor *Back to Bataan* (1945), with Anthony Quinn now playing the swarthy character, nor the other films in this popular genre, challenged the individualist and ultimately assimilationist presuppositions that Kallen's formulation of cultural pluralism had called into question. On the contrary, what celebration there was of ethno-racial groups in the World War II era was generally cast in an Americans-all idiom, aimed not at reinforcing ethno-racial affiliation but at affirming a transethnic vision of American nationality against Anglo-Protestant ethnocentrism. This was true of *One Nation*, for example, the war-inspired picture of American society the young Wallace Stegner edited for *Look* magazine.²¹ *Common Ground* was the appropriately universalist title for the journal edited during the 1940s by Louis Adamic, a Slovenian immigrant now remembered as the era's most prolific advocate of an ethno-racially diverse America.

Kallen himself, in the meantime, had lost interest in these issues, married the daughter of a Methodist minister, and from the late 1920s until his death in 1974 did almost nothing to clarify cultural pluralism as a positive program. When the term *cultural pluralism* did appear during the 1930s and 1940s, it was commonly used in reference to religious rather than ethno-racial diversity. Ecumenists eager to promote cooperation between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews found the term useful.²²

Bourne had died in 1919, but his cosmopolitanism was

espoused in the 1930s and 1940s by a substantial cohort of intellectuals engaged by two major international movements, socialism in politics and modernism in the arts.²³ Both of these movements were of course more species centered than ethnos centered, and in that respect were part of the same atmosphere for which Kinsey, Willkie, and Steichen are convenient emblems. These modernist and socialist intellectuals, many of whom were associated with the *Partisan Review*, continued Bourne's antagonism against provincialism of all sorts. The provincialism they most feared was that of traditional Anglo-Protestant nativism, but they were also critical of the provincialism of the immigrant groups, including the Jewish community into which many of these intellectuals had been born. The *Partisan Review* intellectuals did not share Adamic's warm engagement with the various ethnic cultures found within the United States, but the perspective of these proudly elitist intellectuals was more aloof than hostile. Although *Partisan Review* and *Common Ground* might be construed as vehicles for cosmopolitan and pluralist ideas, respectively, the two were not ranged against each other. *Common Ground* was much more engaged than was *Partisan Review* with American politics and with the injustices suffered by black Americans, but both stood for diversity against a continuing, if somewhat diminished, Anglo-Protestant chauvinism.

An ideology of tolerance remained a prominent feature of American intellectual life through the 1950s and 1960s,

but this ideology's ties to cultural pluralism became more attenuated. Neither Kallen's name nor the term he contributed figured prominently during this postwar era. Even Will Herberg's *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, perhaps the closest thing to a major pluralist work of the 1950s, defended an explicitly religious pluralism and invoked cultural pluralism by name only as a ghost of the 1920s. Indeed, Herberg patronized cultural pluralists as "backward-looking romantics" and "shrewd opportunists."²⁴

During these twenty-five years following World War II, moreover, advocates of racial equality increasingly directed their energies against a specific target that had been of little concern to the cultural pluralists of the 1910s and 1920s: antiblack racism and the political and social inequalities resulting from it. Any movement to replace segregation with integration had little incentive to embrace the pluralist emphasis on the autonomy and durability of ethno-racial groups. The United States Supreme Court's rejection of the separate-but-equal standard in 1954 was an invitation not to difference-asserting pluralism but to engagement, if not intimacy, across the color line.

Cultural pluralism had thus become ancient history by the early 1970s, by which time a number of historic turns produced a new willingness to explore pluralist ideas. Among these turns were an extensive reconsideration of integrationist goals and strategies on the part of frustrated black leaders, the backlash against affirmative action on the

part of white ethnics suddenly eager to proclaim the solidarity of their own groups, and the dramatic increase in immigration from Asian and Latin American countries facilitated by congressional action taken in 1965. The revision of immigration legislation not only increased the number of diverse ethno-racial groups substantially present in the American population but, by maintaining a steady flow of immigrants fresh from each source, provided such groups with identity reinforcement absent for most groups since Congress had suspended massive immigration in 1924. An interest in maintaining the integrity of ethno-racial communities was also stimulated, less directly, by the Vietnam War, which generated among many younger Americans a deep skepticism about the society into which peoples of all ethno-racial affiliations had been encouraged to assimilate. If the center of the society was so badly flawed, the periphery presented itself as a source of potentially countervailing cultural power.

These matrices were conducive to the initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s, which were occasionally called cultural pluralism, especially by older discussants, but which eventually came to be known as multiculturalism. The term *pluralism* had by then become associated, in academic circles at least, with a relatively uncritical perspective on the American political system as one that delivered its services reasonably well to organized interests. Had Kallen's trail been warmer and had interest-group pluralism not tainted

the word "pluralism," it is possible that "cultural pluralism" rather than "multiculturalism" would have been more consistently applied to these new initiatives. They quickly took specific form in relation to the ethno-racial pentagon designed to facilitate antidiscrimination policies. A truly national debate on these cultural initiatives gave the concept of multiculturalism much more prominence than the concept of cultural pluralism had ever enjoyed.

The two movements—the multiculturalism of recent decades and the cultural pluralism of the World War I era—differed dramatically in their relation to perceived political and economic inequalities. These inequalities were generally overlooked by the cultural pluralists, but multiculturalists examined them explicitly and extensively. Indeed multiculturalism was frequently advanced as a means of empowering young people said to be psychologically victimized by a Eurocentric curriculum that displayed few achievements by members of their own ethno-racial groups. Cultural pluralism as developed by Kallen and his contemporaries was exclusively European in scope; from the perspective of multiculturalism, Europe was just one of many sources for the culture of the United States. The cultural pluralists' relative lack of attention to African Americans, in particular, renders ironic the fact that it was a black contemporary of theirs, W. E. B. Du Bois, who formulated in *The Souls of Black Folk* the notion of dual identity in terms that would become highly influential among multi-

culturalists.²⁵ As an intellectual movement, the multiculturalism of the last quarter of the twentieth century thus took on a shape and character rather different from that of the cultural pluralism of the century's early decades.

The most striking difference of all between these two episodes in the American discussion of diversity was the sheer triumph, in late-twentieth-century America, of the doctrine that the United States ought to sustain rather than diminish a great variety of distinctive cultures carried by ethno-racial groups. In the 1990s doubts about this doctrine had not disappeared, but a sea change had taken place since 1924 when Kallen, at the crest of the tide of Anglo-Protestant nativism, actually gave the doctrine the first of its two names. By the 1990s opponents of this idea were very much on the defensive in national politics, the mass media, public education, and academia. Cultural pluralism had been a minor movement in the history of the American academic and literary intelligentsia. By contrast, multiculturalism has proved to be a major preoccupation in American life as registered in the deliberations of local school boards and in the professional journals of the humanities and social sciences.

The triumph of basic multiculturalism has fostered a sensitivity to diversity so acute that the deep differences between the various groups and subgroups are now being addressed with unprecedented ethnographic detail and theoretical sophistication.²⁶ The communities credited with

creating and sustaining the nation's many cultures have assumed their present shape in response to very different historical forces, including enslavement, conquest, and immigration under widely varying socioeconomic conditions. The more these differences have come to be recognized, the more difficult it has become to convincingly represent American society in classically pluralist fashion as an expanse of internally homogeneous and analogically structured units, each authorized by an ancestral charter and each possessed of a singular mythology of diaspora. The historical experiences of African Americans, Mexican Americans, Korean Americans, and Norwegian Americans do not fit the same abstract model.

The heightened sensitivity to diversity fostered by multiculturalism has had the ironic result of diversifying diversity to the point that the ethno-racial pentagon can no longer contain it. The most dramatic indicator of this diversification of diversity has been the demand for recognition voiced by mixed-race Americans whose affirmation of their own difference has complicated the argument over what kinds of sameness and what kinds of difference matter. "We don't want *that* kind of diversity," defenders of the ethno-racial pentagon say, in effect, to mixed-race activists, "because it undermines the sameness necessary for identity." Hence the concerns voiced by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and others on behalf of America—in, for example, Schlesinger's best-selling 1992 book, *The Disuniting of America*—can be voiced on

behalf of several blocs of the pentagon. Conservative ethno-racial politicians thus play Schlesinger to the mixed-race radical disuniters.

The historian Nash is far from the only participant in the multiculturalist debates to advance explicitly the concept of cosmopolitanism in the setting of the diversification of diversity. Although the literary critic Bruce Robbins has described cosmopolitanism as an "unfashionable term that needs defending," Robbins's own vigorous and discerning defense of it²⁷ is but one of a number that have suddenly appeared in the quarterlies and op-ed pages, distant from the supermarket checkout counters where *Cosmopolitan* is a magazine for women with interests more careerist and provocatively sexual than the sensibility to which the nearby competitor *Family Circle* openly appeals. Political philosophers Jeremy Waldron and Mitchell Cohen have produced ringing vindications of cosmopolitanism, as have the literary theorist Tobin Siebers, the historian Linda Kerber, and the legal scholar Bruce Ackerman.²⁸ No doubt Helen Gurley Brown's "Cosmo girl" has an unbreakable lock on the notion of cosmopolitanism in mass culture and gives the notion some of the connotations of lightness current in Melville's time. But this complication has not prevented others from using "cosmopolitanism" to advance a vision of diversity much broader and deeper than the personal and social fulfillments exemplified by Brown's popular heroine.