

HUDDLED CLICHÉS

**Exposing the Fraudulent
Arguments That Have Opened
America's Borders to the World**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
I. The Economic Argument	7
II. False Parallels with Other Cultures: The Myth of Hispanic Family Values	21
III. The Fallacy of “Conservative” Open Borders	29
IV. The Emotional Case	44
Conclusion	57
References	58

Introduction

Anyone who has followed or participated in America's long-running immigration debate knows that opposing the open-immigration ideology is like wrestling with Proteus: as soon as you think you have your adversary pinned, he changes his shape, maybe into a bird or sea-monster, and escapes your grasp. As a result of this mercurial quality of the open-borders arguments, there never seems to be any closure in the immigration debate, even on the most obvious and irrefutable points.

For example, one of the perennial assertions of open-borders wisdom is that "current immigration is not high by historical standards," a plausible-sounding statement which has the effect on many people of sweeping away, or at least of silencing, all doubts they may have on the subject. But as a matter of fact the statement is untrue, because the "historical standards" it refers to are based on just two decades of exceptionally high immigration at the turn of the twentieth century. It is also irrelevant, since large-scale immigration in the past tells us nothing about how much immigration we should have today. But no matter how many times the "not high by historical standards" slogan is discredited, the open-immigration advocates will just turn around and say that America is a nation of immigrants, or that immigration is a historical force that cannot be stopped, or that immigration

restrictionists are intolerant and racist. And as soon as the next opportunity presents itself, the mass-immigration advocates will come back and repeat the argument that “immigration is not high by historical standards,” and with the same triumphant, conclusory air.

It is not only immigration reform activists who find themselves discouraged at times by the inexhaustible energy (backed by the seemingly inexhaustible funds) of the open-borders lobby. A large majority of Americans are deeply troubled by current immigration and would like to see it reduced, but they are perplexed and intimidated by the never-ending stream of clichés, myths, catch-phrases and fallacies, disseminated by the news media, the political parties, and other powerful institutions, that are used to promote it. In the following pages I will critically examine a number of these slogans from a variety of angles. While I will go into some topics at length, the discussion as a whole will be neither systematic nor exhaustive. Think of it rather as an attempt to pin the open-borders Proteus to the ground even as he keeps changing his shape before our eyes. Or think of it as a series of forays against the outposts of an occupying army, in which I will seek to expose the false premises, the deceptive assertions, the illogical leaps of thought, and the brain-numbing sentiments by which the open immigrationists have kept America in thrall.

In doing so, I will make no attempt at “balance.” Since immigration is a vast phenomenon involving millions of human beings, it would be astonishing if there were not many good and wonderful things to be said about it. And these things have, of course, been said for many years, but in such emotional and all-embracing terms that they paralyze critical thought. Since the American mind is already soaked with open-borders clichés, true balance only requires us to show how those clichés are *wrong*.

The idea of “balance” (so beloved—in theory!—by the news media) is supposed to mean that the pros and cons of any issue must be given a formulaic equal weight, regardless of their inherent merits. To get an idea of how misleading and dangerous this notion can be, consider the following statements:

“Third-World immigrants are *not* assimilating.”

“Third-World immigrants *are* assimilating.”

Let us imagine that we accept the first statement (that Third-World immigrants are not assimilating) and radically reduce immigration. If it turns out to be wrong, no permanent harm will have been done to the country. But if we accept the second proposition (that the immigrants are assimilating) and continue our current immigration policy, and if *that* statement turns out to be wrong, we will have irretrievably damaged the country. Thus the two statements are not of equal importance. To put it another way, if it is true that many immigrants are *not* assimilating, that fact would not be “balanced” by the fact that other immigrants *are* assimilating, since the net effect of immigration is to introduce a non-assimilating population into this country.

Of course, the news media do not even follow this rule of balance, as specious as it is, but consistently tilt the issue in favor of immigration. In a sane world, the burden of proof would rest on those who seek radically to transform a society, not on those who want to keep the society as it is. But in our progressivist age (in which even the “conservatives” are progressives), this basic rule of prudence has been turned on its head.

Another specious balancing device used by immigration proponents is the *non sequitur*, in which some negative fact about immigration is countered by some positive fact about immigration, which is wholly unrelated to the negative fact. For example, if you say that “Immigration is balkanizing America,” you’re likely to hear responses such as these:

“Hispanic immigrants are better workers than blacks.”

“Diversity enriches us.”

“Immigrants are needed to fill jobs.”

“Immigrants strengthen the economy.”

“Immigrants bring good family values.”

Even if all of those assertions were true, they would be completely beside the point. If you learned that a glass of milk you were about to drink contained an ingredient that would make you seriously ill, the fact that the milk also contained lots of vitamins and minerals would not matter to you. Similarly, if current immigration is causing irreversible harm to our country, then the fact that immigration may also provide some benefits is irrelevant. It is the *total impact* of immigration that matters. Immigration proponents who stress the positive, transient effects of immigration while ignoring the negative, irreversible consequences are engaged in a dangerous con game.

In the same way, it is dishonest to stress the “desirable” immigrants while ignoring the “undesirable” ones. Joel Kotkin, an open-borders enthusiast, once wrote that “already roughly one-quarter of all new immigrants possess professional or technical backgrounds, compared to only 15 percent of our overall population.”¹ But what about the other 75 percent of immigrants who are *not* skilled? As Dan Stein of the Federation for American Immigration Reform pointed out:

[N]early 50 percent of all immigrants are working in the low-skilled category, a much higher percentage than is found in the U.S. labor force as a whole.... Joel Kotkin has conveniently manipulated statistics to show a supposedly cost-free boon from immigration in the 25 percent, while virtually ignoring the impact and implications of the other 75 percent. That’s not fair.²

It may not be fair, but it is typical of the deceitful manner in which immigrationists have conducted the debate. Writing in the pro-open borders *Wall Street Journal* some years ago, author George Gilder denounced proposed cuts in legal immigration because a tiny number of recent immigrants (the ones he mentioned were all from Europe or East Asia) were scientific “geniuses” who had made valuable contributions to U.S. industry, particularly in the computer field. “A decision to cut back legal immigration today, as Congress is contemplating, is a decision to wreck the key element of the American technological miracle,” Gilder wrote.³ But how did the acquisition of a few talented inventors justify the continued immigration of a million Third-World people per year, most of whom were low-skilled and poorly educated? Gilder didn’t expect his readers to ask that question. He just wanted them to get so excited about all those immigrant “geniuses” that they would reject *any* immigration restrictions. Which, by the way, is exactly what the Republican-controlled Congress did a few months after Gilder’s article was published.

Far from raising American intelligence, as Gilder claims it will do, continued Third-World immigration will result in a serious decline in American skill levels over the coming century. In the sort of frank analysis of American racial and cultural problems that seems to come only from foreigners, Japanese economist Yuji Aida has argued that it will be very difficult for America to remain a leading industrial power if Hispanics and blacks become the majority in this country:

Do blacks and Hispanics, for instance, have the skills and knowledge to run an advanced industrial economy? If the answer is yes, America will maintain its vitality through the next century and beyond. But I’m skeptical.

To compete in a high-tech age dominated by microelectronics requires a disciplined, well-trained labor force. *Brilliant inventors and innovative engineers are not enough.* [Italics added]. Workers themselves must be highly motivated and equipped to meet the stringent norms of standardization imposed by precision-perfect high-tech manufacturing.

Blue-collar employees have to work steadily, day in and day out, at jobs requiring great concentration and manual dexterity. They must continually hone skills and improve personal performance and products through quality control.

Unfortunately, relatively few national groups meet these exacting requirements. I doubt that many African or Latin American countries, for instance, will become high-tech societies in the foreseeable future.... [T]he experience of the last 500 years leaves little room for hope. Blacks and Hispanics will not be able to run a complex industrial society like the United States unless they dramatically raise their sights and standards in the next 40 years.

Burdened with a handicap of this magnitude, how will the United States cope?⁴

How indeed? Aida suggests that as the United States becomes increasingly Third-World it will have no choice but to employ its vast low-skilled population in agriculture. America will thus become “a premier agrarian power ... the breadbasket of the world,” while ceasing to be a great industrial power.

A brutal prognosis such as Aida’s—which does not evade reality by means of slogans and *non sequiturs*, but instead calculates the *ultimate costs* of mass Third-World immigration—appears in the U.S. media only at rare intervals, while every day America’s elites keep spreading

their unceasing barrage of propaganda about the wondrous benefits of immigration, the absence of any harm from immigration, and the immorality of opposing it. In the pages that follow, let us try to redress the imbalance somewhat.

I. The Economic Argument

The prevailing view of immigration among mainstream elites is that it represents a great boon to the economy. That immigration is only to be considered from the standpoint of its economic effects has become such an accepted notion over the past 25 years that it has not occurred to many people what a bizarre idea it really is. The implication is that our well-being as a society is solely a function of economic output. Matters of quality of life, social cohesion and continuity, aesthetic enjoyment, political liberty, national identity, and all the other intangibles that make up the life of a society—since these cannot be stated *statistically*, they don't count. Or so the economists seem to believe. The late Julian Simon, with his crack-pated idea that every immigrant, regardless of his cultural origin, level of education, or legal status, represents a net economic gain for this country, was perhaps the most extreme of these “economystics.”

Notwithstanding the veneer of scientific expertise with which its claims are advanced, the economystic faith boils down to an almost vacuous proposition: immigration is good because it increases population, and thus (assuming more economic output from more people) proportionately increases gross product. A doubling or tripling of the U.S. population will lead to a doubling or tripling of economic output. Voilà—immigration makes us a “wealthier” nation! One of the problems with this logic is that *individual* wealth

does not necessarily increase, only the aggregate wealth. Meanwhile, our congested coastal and metropolitan areas have become two or three times more crowded. Pressure on open spaces and parks, stress on resources (increasing the need for burdensome regulations), crippling traffic congestion, displacement of older residents, as well as ethnic conflict, all become worse. Even as economic output goes up, overall quality of life can decline. But the economystic cannot see these things because for him the only reality is that which can be stated in economic terms.

For the economystic, the swelling of Los Angeles due to immigration has been a wonderful thing. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “Development policies over the last decade have sought to make the Los Angeles area the magnet of the burgeoning Pacific Rim economy. The region’s growth has been phenomenal, as measured by trade revenues, number of building permits issued and aggregate income.” Sounds great, right? But the article continued: “The success of Los Angeles’ integration into the international economy, however, is not matched by success in integrating its immigrant and ethnic minority populations.” The article then discussed the uncontrolled ethnic rivalry and violence in this new “world-class” city of Los Angeles.⁵

In other words, the great economic growth of Los Angeles has *not* necessarily been a boon for the people living there. By most standards, Los Angeles over the last 30 years has become an immeasurably *worse* place to live in as a direct result of the very things that have led to the growth of its aggregate wealth. The economystic cannot see this. He looks at a table of statistics, notices the upward trend in population and aggregate income, and rushes into print telling us how immigration is turning America into an earthly paradise.

The deeper problem with economism is that no true values, including the values of a distinct political system,

culture and way of life, can be comprehended in economic or utilitarian terms. Solely on the basis of measurable, quantifiable, pragmatic facts it is impossible to preserve any society or institution, even so basic an institution as the nuclear family.

Suppose there were two families, the Smiths and the Joneses, living next door to each other. The two families get along, the children play together, the parents occasionally socialize with each other. Then one day the Joneses announce that they want to move in permanently with the Smiths. When the Smiths seem less than enthusiastic about this proposal, the Joneses say: “What’s your problem? You have enough room, your house is bigger than ours, and we get along together. Besides, the nuclear family is only a modern invention. A dual family will enrich all of us.” To back up these claims, the Joneses bring in an economist who says that two-family households have larger aggregate wealth than one-family households. They bring in a sociologist who cites studies showing that the children raised in two-family households have superior abilities in adjusting to different types of people in a diverse society. Faced with this aggressive challenge to their existence as a family, what can the Smiths say? Their family, as a unique, autonomous association, is an intrinsic, irreplaceable value to its members. It cannot be defended on the basis of quantifiable facts. In the same way, the nation is a family whose distinct character and values cannot be defended on a purely rationalistic basis. To say that it must do so in order to have the right to exist, is to deny its right to exist.

Now that we’ve considered some of the underlying problems with economism, let us look at some claims that have been made about the economic benefits of immigration and its “vitalizing” impact on society.

“Academy’s Report Says Immigration Benefits the U.S.”

This was the way the *New York Times*, in a front page headline, characterized a 1997 report on immigration by the National Academy of Sciences. But as Dan Stein pointed out in a letter to the *Times*, all that this “benefit” amounted to was a \$10 billion annual increase in gross national product in a \$7 trillion economy—an increase of *one-seventh of one percent*. When balanced against the substantial costs of immigration, such as downward pressure on wages, disastrous population growth in southern California and elsewhere, and increasing welfare and tax burdens on state and local governments, this “benefit” disappeared.

“We need smart Asians to fill high-skill jobs in engineering and the sciences because Americans are not going into those fields.”

Although the argument sounds hard-nosed and realistic, relying on a constant supply of high-skilled immigrants has the somewhat the same effect on a society that welfare dependency has on an individual: it destroys the need and incentive to become independent. It is an escape from reality, shielding us from the painful fact that we are failing to prepare *our own citizens* to carry on our civilization. If we stopped concealing that failure from ourselves, we would be forced to respond to it in a serious way, doing whatever was necessary to remain a self-sustaining society.

We must also point out that the supposed shortage of American scientists and engineers has been overblown. Because of immigrant competition, many American science graduates have been unable to find work in their fields and have been forced to defer their careers or go into other fields, as reported in the *New York Times*.⁶ Far from “saving” us, low-wage immigrant engineers and scientists are depriving many Americans of rewarding careers.

“If we didn’t have immigrants doing all kinds of jobs in America today, there would be nobody to do them.”

As Roy Beck demonstrated in his powerful account of American workers displaced by immigration, this widely believed idea is empirically false. It is also based on a false assumption.⁷ The assumption is that the American economy could only have developed in one way, with lots of immigrants coming here and taking lots of jobs. Therefore, the thinking goes, without the immigrants there would have been no one else to do those jobs and the economy would have been crippled. In fact, most of those jobs only exist *because* of immigrants. We can illustrate this by means of a thought experiment. Imagine that back in the late nineteenth century there had been no Chinese Exclusion Act, and that large numbers of Chinese had continued to settle in California after 1882. Over the following decades, the Chinese would have filled all kinds of existing jobs in the California economy, and would also have created new types of businesses and employment niches that hadn’t existed before. Let us imagine further that in 1920 Californians began to call for immigration restrictions against the Chinese. The pro-immigration lobby in our fictional 1920 (using the same arguments that the pro-immigration lobby uses today) would have replied: “Without Chinese immigrants here, who would have done all these jobs?” The truth, of course, is that the Chinese in our imaginary 1920 are doing all those jobs only because they had come to America in the first place. *Had there been no Chinese immigrants between 1882 and 1920, which was the actual case in the actual 1882-1920 period, California would have done just fine, as it in fact did.*

From this we derive a maxim: Large-scale immigration creates the illusion of its own indispensability.

“Even if immigrants are not needed in all fields, we need immigrants for low-status, low-paying jobs that Americans are no longer willing to do, such as work in fast-food restaurants and hotels.”

Once again, immigration creates the illusion of its own indispensability. The predominance of immigrant employees in the hotel industry in some major cities creates the impression that without immigrants there would be no one to do those jobs. But if true, how is it that in low-immigrant regions of the country, such as the Midwest, hotels are staffed quite adequately by Americans?

Immigration restrictionist and California radio host Terry Anderson, a black who once worked as a self-employed mechanic, has made a similar observation:

Pro-immigrant groups say the jobs immigrants are taking are jobs that black Americans don’t want. Why is it then, that when you go outside Southern California or Texas—to Phoenix, say, or Washington—you see black people holding the same jobs they used to hold here in Los Angeles? Black people want to work. But the jobs they used to have, paying \$5 to \$7 an hour for unskilled labor, now go to immigrants for \$3 an hour.⁸

As for fast-food restaurants, a major factor in the growth of that industry has been the increasing number of low-skilled people, many of them immigrants, who have made industries based on a low-skilled work force a more viable investment. Entrepreneurs choose businesses based partly on the skills of the available labor market. If we had had a more highly educated labor force, entrepreneurs would have developed more of the kinds of businesses that use highly-skilled workers instead of low-skilled workers. Instead of the multiplication of fast-food restaurants across the land, which has not exactly raised the quality of American life, we

might have had a greater number of real restaurants with real cooks and waiters serving real food.

“Tighter restrictions on immigration will not be the answer. On the contrary, high levels of immigration to the United States will be necessary into the next century, if for no other reason than to provide enough working men and women to support our aging population.”

The flaw in this argument—which was made by Michael Lind and Mark Lagon in the neoconservative journal *Policy Review*—is that the same immigrants whose taxes are expected to support aging whites will also grow old (obviously) and require old-age assistance themselves. Indeed, the average age of immigrants is only a little lower than that of the native population. By bringing in so many immigrants, we are simply augmenting the dependent elderly population of the future, which will make it necessary to bring in even more immigrants to support *them*.

Michael Lind himself eventually conceded that his position was wrong. Financing retirees through immigration, he declared in a letter to *National Review*, is an “unworkable Ponzi scheme,” since “the immigrants brought in to pay for Social Security would require even more immigrants when *they* retire, and so on *ad infinitum*.” Adding that mass immigration intensifies competition for jobs and lowers wages, Lind concluded: “Mark Lagon and I were wrong.... Tighter restrictions on immigration *are* the answer.”⁹

There are other problems with the notion that young immigrants will supply the government revenues to support older Americans. First, under our family-oriented immigration laws, many immigrants are *already* old, and begin collecting public assistance as soon as they enter the country. Second, the average educational level of younger immigrants has been steadily dropping; it is unlikely that

immigrants with a fifth grade education will contribute much to government revenues. Third, an “aging” population is not a crisis but is simply the natural result of population stabilization. As a Canadian writer pointed out, “European countries already have the high percentage of older people that Canada (and the U.S.) will have in the next century and they are doing fine. Even with ordinary increases in productivity the whole question of supporting an aging population just disappears.”¹⁰

Of course, the above comment, which was written in 1992, applies to a country undergoing a temporary decrease of population leading to population *stabilization*, not to a country undergoing permanent population *shrinkage*. A country cannot maintain a fertility rate of, say, 1.2, as Italy as had in recent years, and survive for very long. But what we need to understand is that *immigration cannot save such a country either*. A national population with a 1.2 fertility rate is shrinking by almost half in each generation. Immigration sufficient to replace the declining host population would thus become almost half the population in one generation, almost three quarters of the population in the next. This is not population maintenance, but simply the suicide and disappearance of a nation and its replacement by other nations. The upshot is that immigration sufficient to maintain a population is either an unnecessary palliative (in the case of a temporary decrease of the host population leading to stabilization), or a catastrophic *coup de grace* (in the case of an ongoing precipitous decrease of the host population).

“Immigrants are revitalizing our cities.”

In fact, upwardly mobile immigrants are bypassing the cities and heading straight to the suburbs. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, immigrants

have turned once-depressed urban neighborhoods into thriving ethnic enclaves. But healthy cities need a middle class, and ... today's immigrants, upon reaching middle-class status, tend to move to the suburbs. Many of those who remain are political refugees with fairly high rates of welfare dependency. The revitalization claim also ignores another problem: gang crime. Today police in Chicago are fighting not just black and Hispanic gangs but Greek, Filipino, Assyrian, Chinese, Cambodian and Vietnamese gangs.¹¹

So it is not necessarily true that immigrants are “re-energizing” the cities, whatever that means. Indeed, such “revitalization” was only needed because middle-class whites had left the cities to get away from an increasingly alien populace made up of immigrants and the urban underclass. Immigration is not so much replenishing depopulated cities as it is forcing many Americans to leave cities where they would have otherwise preferred to stay. When immigrants move on to the suburbs, whites move to more distant parts of the country. Many blacks have also been leaving immigration-affected areas and moving back to the South. As far as white (and black) America is concerned, there is no revitalization in this process, there is only displacement.

Besides, what do people really mean when they say that a city is being “energized?” “Energy”—which is always presented as an unquestioned good—is one of those reductive concepts, like economic growth, that ignore intangible values such as the quality of life, the level of a culture, the cohesiveness of a society. Surely the cities of China—with their fearsome pollution and their streets jammed with humanity day and night—have fantastic amounts of “energy.” Does that mean that Americans would be better off if their cities become “energetic” like China’s? Stretching for three miles through

Manhattan's Harlem Heights and Washington Heights, upper Broadway with its largely Dominican population has abundant "energy"—block after block of tacky stores, cheap wares being sold from bins on the sidewalk, people sitting in chairs on the sidewalk and otherwise milling about, and the incessant sound of boom boxes from passing cars. Such "energy" may be normal and healthy in the context of Caribbean cultures, but is it desirable from the point of view of Western civilization? Accompanying the famous Latino exuberance are low levels of standards, infrastructure, and social order that are incompatible with North American society.

There is yet another kind of "energy" that is applauded by the immigrationists—the "energy" produced by ethnic diversity. True, the psychic stress and the unresolvable cultural conflicts generated by the squeezing together of totally unrelated peoples in a city such as New York or Los Angeles do provide a sort of "energy"—but it is an "energy" that most people flee if they can, which explains the middle-class exodus from areas with high concentrations of immigrants.

Thus, when people speak of America's being "energized," what they mean in many cases is that America is being *Third-Worldized*. If we had never acquired all that Third-World energy, American cities would have remained more attractive to *Americans*, and would not have required the continual influx of foreigners to maintain their population base.

"Without immigration, the U.S. population will decline because of low native birthrates."

Immigration does not "replenish" a country's population, it *replaces* it. American history is instructive on this point. Between 1790 and 1830, a period in which the total number of immigrants was about 385,000, or under 10,000 per year,

the U.S. population increased by an astonishing *nine million* (from 3.9 million in 1790 to 12.9 million in 1830). This tripling was due mainly to the natural increase of the 1790 population, not to immigration. As population expert Francis A. Walker noted in a famous essay published in 1891, this very high native birthrate dropped subsequent to the upward turn of immigration after 1830 and the even sharper increase of immigration after 1840. The reason for this, Walker argued, was that immigrants lowered living standards, wage levels, and working conditions, which resulted in reduced prospects for the native population, which made having large families less attractive. Immigration thus caused a drop in the native birthrate, replacing those lost native births with immigrants.¹² The same effect of mass immigration on wages and working conditions is clearly in operation today, along with the same effect on the native birthrate.

Another factor related to America's changing ethnic composition which is pushing down the native birth rate has been the deterioration of the public schools. In earlier decades, when New York was still a white majority city, middle-class parents sent their children to New York's excellent public schools. But today's public schools, dominated by blacks and Hispanics along with a continuing influx of Third-World immigrants, have sunk to an academic and behavioral level that is unacceptable to most whites. Some years ago a professional Manhattan couple of my acquaintance sent their two sons to private school, at an annual cost of \$12,000 each. They had wanted to have more children, but the cost of schooling made a larger family economically prohibitive for them. The swelling nonwhite population has a direct negative impact on the ability of middle-class whites to raise families. Immigration is not strengthening the American people—it is weakening and replacing them.

Immigration also has psychological effects that tend to lower the native birthrate. As Virginia Abernethy has argued in *Population Politics*, fertility rises when people feel hopeful about the future, and declines when they are pessimistic about the future. It is a remarkable fact that women emigrating from Third-World countries to the United States, where they perceive that their prospects are much improved, have more children than their countrywomen who stay at home. Conversely, whites in an increasingly Third-World America, where they foresee a less promising future for themselves and their children, are having fewer children than they would otherwise have done.

The surest way to raise the native birth rate back up to replacement level is drastically to lower immigration. We do not need an ever-expanding population in this country, as the growth ideologues believe. Our long-term prospects for environmental sustainability, cultural cohesion, political freedom, and a high quality of life will be much improved if our population were stabilized at the current 280 million (or at a lower number), instead of doubling to half a billion over the coming century and doubling again in the century after that, which is what will happen if immigration continues at current rates.

“Immigration makes society dynamic.”

Mass immigration, especially culturally diverse mass immigration, creates turmoil and disruption, but that’s not necessarily the same thing as dynamism. Was America not dynamic from the early 1920s to the mid 1960s, when immigration was low and largely restricted to Northern Europeans? Is not Japan—with no immigration at all—one of the most dynamic and confident societies on earth? Some economists predict that Japan with its cohesive and high-morale society is poised to surpass an increasingly troubled

and divided United States in coming years.

Sustained vitality—as distinct from the overheated frenzy of a society that expands like a balloon until it explodes—requires demographic and cultural stability, strong self-supporting families, abiding moral traditions, and the values that lead to productive enterprise. A culturally fragmented, ethnically conflicted, demoralized, low-skilled, Third-World America won't be dynamic. As political scientist James Kurth has pointed out, the most dynamic nations in this new century will be those that maintain their internal cultural cohesion, and thus their ability to be effective actors on the world stage. The societies that become multicultural, ceasing to be nations, will find themselves unable to act in a coherent fashion, and will join the ranks of the “acted-upon.”¹³

In light of Kurth's analysis, it is an amazing irony that the people who are most desirous of maintaining and expanding America's role as a global *hegemon*—namely the neoconservatives—support immigration policies that are turning America into a self-conflicted, multicultural hodgepodge.

“Immigrants strengthen America.”

Military conquest is not the only way that countries lose their freedom. Throughout history, nations have inadvertently lost their independence by asking other nations to help them meet some challenge that they couldn't handle themselves. Depending on the kindness of strangers may yield short-term benefits, but it further weakens the host nation. Sensing that weakness, the guests soon drop all pretense of being guests and take over.

Sometimes the help sought from foreigners has been military. The ancient Greeks asked the Romans, the Romans asked the Visigoths, the Celtic Britons asked the Anglo-Saxons, to help them ward off their respective enemies, and in

each case the helpful ally soon became the ruler. Sometimes the help is economic. The Romans after they gained their empire imported a vast population of foreigners into Italy as artisans, merchants, servants, slaves, and soldiers, and as a result the old Romans and their culture were gradually marginalized. In the twentieth century Indians were brought to the island nation of Fiji to work as merchants and civil servants, and within a few decades the Indians had taken majority control of the island away from the Fijians. The American South imported African slaves, and today the descendants of those slaves are busy dismantling whatever remains of the symbols and traditions of their former masters. In each case the host people initially congratulates itself for its cleverness in getting foreigners to fight its enemies, perform its hard labor, care for its children, or provide it with exotic cuisine or inexpensive produce. And in each case the host people ends up losing control over its own country, and disappearing from the pages of history.

This is not to deny that immigrants who bring particular skills, or “cultural capital,” may be of great help in building up a society, as Thomas Sowell has demonstrated in his several books on the subject of ethnicity and economics. But as Sowell himself acknowledges, the large-scale immigration of people who are culturally distinct from the host population is a very different matter. Such immigration, he writes, “can profoundly affect the fabric of a society and even dissolve the ties that hold a nation together.”¹⁴

To recognize the dangers of immigration is not to propose sealing America off from the world. Nevertheless, if America, or any nation, is to survive in the long run, it must maintain a basic degree of self-sufficiency, foregoing the short-lived luxuries both of global hegemony and of mass immigration.

II. False Parallels with Other Cultures: The Myth of Hispanic Family Values

In their attempt to make immigration seem like an unmixed blessing, immigration advocates will often identify some trait of a foreign culture that seems to correspond with some highly valued American trait, thus proving that immigrants from that culture will “strengthen” America. But more often than not, these cultural correspondences are merely *verbal* correspondences—indeterminate phrases that may mean entirely different things in different cultures.

For example, the pro-immigrationists often say that because Hispanic and Asian immigrants have “good family values,” such immigrants are “good for America.” In fact, the family ethos of many Hispanics is markedly different from that of the traditional European or American family, not to mention the increasingly disordered American family of today. As Latin America expert Lawrence Harrison has argued, the Latin American family, notwithstanding its recognized strengths (or perhaps as a result of them), is characterized by a closed loyalty within the family circle, a lack of trust toward those outside it, and nonparticipation in civic life. This behavior pattern, known as “amoral familism,” has been a major factor in the unhappy political history of Latin America. Confucian cultures are also marked by extreme patriarchal authority (extreme even by the supposedly patriarchal standards of traditional Western culture), deeply institutionalized habits of corruption, and an absence of civic mindedness. By contrast, the traditional American family, as Toqueville famously remarked, was the seedbed of good citizenship in a society based on ordered freedom. Thus to say that an immigrant group has “good family values” tells us precisely nothing about that group’s compatibility with America.

The strength and stability of their families also tells us nothing about a people's cultural level. As Hispanic scholar Juan F. Lara told the *New York Times*, the peasant background and low educational level of Mexican immigrants endangers the survival of California's civic and cultural institutions: "What is threatened here is intellectual life, the arts, museums, symphonies. How can you talk about preserving open space and establishing museums with a large undereducated underclass?" Mexicans and other Hispanics also tend to be very different from European Americans in their attitudes toward such social values as education, the environment, and public order, not to mention driving habits. Even if they have strong families, many Hispanics do not have American/Western cultural norms.

Which brings us to a basic logical problem with the "immigrants are strengthening our values" argument. Even if Hispanics did have stronger families, what does that do for *us*? If the European-American majority have weaker family values than Mexican immigrants, then the Mexicans can only maintain their family values so long as they don't assimilate into the majority culture, in which case their family values only benefit themselves. To the extent that Mexicans do assimilate into our rootless and increasingly disordered society, they rapidly lose those good values. "In Mexico," says Hispanic scholar Dennis Hayes-Bautista, "the common folk wisdom is that if you want to see a family go to wrack and ruin, have them spend ten years living in the United States. At the end of ten years, the husband and wife are divorced; the teenage kids are into gangs, rock and roll, and drugs; the little kids won't even participate in the church any more." Generally, family structure among Hispanics erodes by the third generation, with corresponding increase of welfare.¹⁵ As people become acclimated in the United States, says Elena Pell of the Aspira Association, the percentage of

single-parent Hispanic families is increasing, just as in other groups. The factors in this family breakdown are economic pressures requiring both parents to work; children breaking away from their parents' traditional mores; dissolution of the extended family; and adoption of American-style individualism.¹⁶

That Mexicans are adopting American-style individualism should not be seen as something to celebrate. Individualism no longer means what it once did, the achievement of personal and familial autonomy combined with a measure of civic responsibility. It now denotes radical individualism—a total liberation from moral norms. Young Hispanics coming from village cultures, where behavior is controlled in traditional ways by the community, arrive in today's morally chaotic America and lose their bearings. Many who might have been law-abiding at home become criminals, join gangs, or just join the general slovenliness. What good does that do *us*—and what good does it do *them*? If we truly admire their values as we claim, we ought to leave the Mexicans where they are so that they will not be corrupted by our decadent culture which destroys family values quicker than paper in sulfuric acid. Clearly, if we want to improve the family stability of *Americans*, we have to do it ourselves, not depend on immigrants from foreign cultures to do it for us.

The family values argument for immigration is analogous to the South African belief that a man can be cured of the AIDS virus by having sexual intercourse with a young girl.¹⁷ Of course the man does not rid himself of the virus through this magical operation, but he does infect the girl. In the same way, America does not magically heal itself of its moral ills by interacting with lots of “virtuous” immigrants, but many immigrants certainly catch our sicknesses.

While Hayes-Bautista criticizes America for its bad influence on Hispanics, he nevertheless insists that Hispanics

are good for America. In an interview with the conservative newsletter *The Family in America*, he says that Hispanics “tend to smoke less than Anglos and blacks, drink much less, and use drugs much, much less.” The only Latino drug babies, he says, are born to U.S.-born Latinas, not to immigrants. Also, immigrant Hispanic women are much more likely to be married than U.S.-born Hispanic women.¹⁸ But Hayes-Bautista’s remarks, by which he intended to bolster support for immigration, only confirm what I have already said—that *the immigrants’ traditional values tend to be dissipated once they settle here*. Where, then, is the gain for America?

Hayes-Bautista points out that Hispanics in California are twice as likely as Anglos to have an intact nuclear family, and he expresses regret that Anglos don’t “learn” from the Hispanics about the importance of family. *But why should they?* Hispanics for the most part are a distinct people from European-Americans, speaking a different language, watching different television programs, living different lives, many of them in unassimilated ethnic enclaves. Americans, like any other people, have their own concerns. They don’t say to themselves: Hey, look at these great statistics on Mexicans, let’s be more like them! Yet intellectuals of both left and right actually seem to think that this is the way the world works. Subscribing to magical catch-phrases instead of looking at reality, they imagine that the mere physical presence of millions of Mexican families in the U.S. will, by some mysterious osmosis, “teach” white and black families how to live more ordered lives.

The solution to America’s moral crisis is not to adopt Mexican-style familism as opposed to contemporary American anomie. It is to reconstitute the traditional morality—the balance of order and freedom unique to Western culture—that we have lost. Such a moral restoration requires profound cultural and political changes that would

be very difficult to achieve even in the best of circumstances. They will be impossible to achieve so long as Third-World immigrants, with their socially destabilizing effects, continue to pour into our country in such huge numbers.

Having said all that, I must confess that I have given the family values argument more credit than it really deserves. The claim that Hispanics have more cohesive and responsible families than white Americans turns out to be largely a myth. The truth emerged in an exchange a decade ago between the neoconservative scholar Francis Fukuyama and Michael Lind, who by then had become an immigration critic. Fukuyama had written an article for *Commentary* in which he celebrated Hispanic family values as a boon to America and urged continued non-European immigration. Lind wrote in response:

Hispanic immigrants, even in the second and third generation, are significantly more likely than white Americans (and East Asian immigrants) to drop out of school, go on welfare, and end up in jail, notwithstanding their (exaggerated) greater “family values” and the (equally exaggerated) moral rot “right in the heart of American’s well-established white, Anglo-Saxon community.”

Lind further stated that among Mexican Americans (by far the largest Hispanic group), the rate of out-of-wedlock births was 28.9 percent, over twice as high as the white American rate of 13.9 percent.¹⁹ Significantly, Fukuyama did not contest these figures. Instead, he replied evasively that the illegitimacy rates for whites and Hispanics are much closer than the figures suggest, if you adjust for income level, that is, if you look only at Hispanics whose average income is equal to that of non-Hispanic whites. But Fukuyama was playing a statistical trick. Since Mexicans on average are

much poorer than non-Hispanic whites, they will also have the high illegitimacy rates correlated with poverty. To adjust for income level between two such widely disparate groups is completely misleading, since it means looking at a small, unrepresentative segment of the Hispanic population.

In responding to Lind and other critics, Fukuyama engaged in a further evasion. First, he conceded that the superior Hispanic family values he had praised in his article really meant “amoral familism.” In other words, he was admitting that the central assertion of his article—that the family ethos of Mexicans was superior to that of Americans—was *false*. But then, without missing a beat, he switched to a whole new argument. Amoral familism, he said, *isn't such a bad thing after all*. Many of the earlier Italian immigrants were quite similar to Hispanics, and it took them generations to assimilate. Likewise, Hispanics may take longer to assimilate than some other groups, but in the end they will assimilate and all will be well.

Of all the pro-immigration arguments, the parallel between Italians and Hispanics is perhaps the most stupid and offensive. It is true that southern Italian immigrants to the United States were for the most part of a lower socioeconomic class and of traditional Catholic background, and that their descendants have taken longer than some other European-origin groups to move into the mainstream of American life. But Italians never formed an aggressive ethnic lobby as Hispanics have done. They never demanded quota representation in every area of American life. They never formed huge “bilingual” establishments. They never promoted a distinct sub-national identity openly hostile to the American nationality. They never formed a huge welfare class. There were never Italian-American academics and elected officials who declared that the United States is a guilty country that has no right to protect its borders. Most importantly, Italians never

dominated entire cities and regions, swamping American institutions and customs and setting off a mass exodus of Americans from those areas. Indeed, how could they? People of Italian origin have never comprised more than four percent of the U.S. population. Hispanics already comprise over 12 percent of the U.S. population and (if immigration is not stopped) will comprise 25 percent in a few decades. Their growing presence in California, where they now make up over a quarter of the population, could very well lead to the Quebecization of that state in the near future.

The equating of Italians with Hispanics is typical of the false parallels that are so frequently employed by immigration advocates. On the basis of a couple of characteristics held in common by two otherwise very different groups, the immigration advocates conclude that the two groups are essentially alike. In the present instance this argument takes the form of a syllogism:

- (a) Most Italian immigrants were of peasant or working class background, with low educational levels.
- (b) Most Hispanic immigrants are of peasant or working class background, with low educational levels.
- (c) Therefore, the Hispanics will not change America any more than the Italians did!

On the basis of such fallacious reasoning the immigrationists construct a fantasy world, obstructing the real world in which we live.

“Asians are hard workers, and are strengthening America.”

This is another example of syllogistic reasoning divorced from reality. The syllogism goes like this:

- (a) Industriousness is an important American value.
- (b) Asians are very industrious.
- (c) Therefore Asians are good for America—the more the better!

The problem here is that industriousness—like family values—means different things in different cultures. When commercial fishermen on the Texas Gulf coast in the 1980s complained that they were being outcompeted by Vietnamese fishermen who worked, as journalist James Fallows put it, “harder and longer and under more difficult conditions that do most Americans,” Fallows retorted: “Should the fishermen have been protected against the Vietnamese’ willingness to work longer hours? Are we ready to say that fair competition is too much for Americans to stand?” Fallows concluded that it would be wrong to keep hardworking Southeast Asian fisherman out of Texas, since as Americans we believe in the rewards of industry.²⁰

In making industriousness *per se* his standard of value for inclusion in American society, Fallows ignores an important cultural difference between Orientals and Westerners—namely that from a Western point of view the incredible industriousness of East Asians often seems more like that of slaves than that of free men. Why should Americans be forced to compete with quasi-slaves, working slave hours in slave-like conditions, in order to make a living? To pose the question another way: If America imported 100 million immigrants who were the hardest-working people in the universe, but whose way of life was incompatible with ours and pushed our way of life aside, *what good would that do us?*

“Muslims will fit into America, since Muslims believe in the same transcendent God as Christians.”

True, Muslims have a monotheistic faith as do Christians, but that is just about *all* the two religions have in common. Everything else about Islamic religion, ethics, and culture is radically incompatible with the West—which is why the Islamic world and the Western Christian world have been at odds for the past 1400 years. It is also the reason why Islamic countries have

so far shown themselves incapable of forming representative governments based on liberty under law. Once again, we must look beyond these simplistic phrases that suggest sameness and see the reality behind the words—a reality in which there are irreconcilable differences between different civilizations.

III. The Fallacy of “Conservative” Open Borders

In the previous section, I discussed some of the false parallels between non-Western cultures and our own culture by which immigration proponents make it appear that endlessly importing a million people a year from non-Western cultures will somehow make America a better country. Particularly prone to this type of fantasy are the conservative immigration advocates, who support mass Third-World immigration because they see it as a way of “advancing conservative values.” These conservatives believe that mass immigration is morally strengthening America; that immigration proves America’s greatness to the world; that immigration fulfills America’s destiny as a universal nation transcending all human particularities; and that immigration is propelled by irresistible historical forces carrying us forward to some millennial vision. As we will see, these “conservative” ideas are anything but.

“Immigrants—particularly Asians—are strengthening America, since they have traditional values and are more family-centered and hard-working than Americans. A majority of Asians voted against a gay rights ordinance in San Francisco. That shows Asians are good for conservative values.”

Even if it were true that Asians all have “conservative” values (and there is much evidence to suggest that they

do not), the notion that Asians will bail us out with their superior discipline or morality is based on a deeply cynical assumption: We Americans are so degenerate that we are no longer a viable people. So let's not even try to restore our moral and cultural vitality. Let's just depend on endless transfusions of "non-decadent" peoples to keep us afloat.

The first problem with this should be obvious. *If good moral qualities can be preserved among us only by bringing in strangers from foreign cultures, then America is already finished.* We have given up on ourselves, and are simply letting other people take our place. At least they'll keep the economy going.

The second problem is less apparent. Since we Americans are doing nothing to reverse our own decadence, the newer Americans, particularly the fabled Asians, are becoming part of that decadence. Asians carry no magical immunity against the moral and spiritual rot that has affected Westerners. Many of their young people, having absorbed our ultra-democratic culture, are becoming just as slovenly and self-regarding as our own. I once attended Sunday services at a "conservative" Protestant church on Manhattan's East Side, where the young, well-educated congregation was about half white and half Korean. To my surprise, congregants of both races were dressed in a style more suited to a sports event than a religious service—jeans and t-shirts, shirts worn outside pants, even baseball caps. There is little evidence to suggest that Asian-Americans, of whatever class, are raising the cultural level of their white American counterparts, or that whites are raising that of Asians. Multicultural America does not mean some higher civilizational blending of East and West—it means Asian-American young women who talk like Valley girls. (Significantly, an increasing number of Asian immigrant families have been moving back to their homelands in recent years because the parents have become

alarmed at the disordering effect America was having on their children.)

The belief that immigrants from non-Western cultures can morally improve Americans is a by-product of the ideology of democratic universalism. Modern conservatives, particularly the neoconservatives, seem to believe that moral behavior is a kind of universal essence that can be transfused from one culture into another simply by placing the two cultures side by side within the same borders. Obviously the world does not work like that. Moral values, while they have a universal dimension, cannot be embodied or transmitted apart from common membership in a *particular* tradition—apart from the shared faith, habits, and institutions of a particular people. The cultural differences between immigrants and Americans thus raise an insuperable obstacle to the neoconservative-moralist argument. If, as I pointed out earlier, the “values-carrying” immigrants are assimilated into our culture, they will lose the moral values that are supposed to improve the rest of us. But if they remain culturally separate from the larger society, their values will have no effect on us in any case. Does the presence in Brooklyn of tens of thousands of Hasidic Jews, the most sexually straightlaced people on the planet, have any “uplifting” effect on their underclass black neighbors? Does the abstemious lifestyle of the Amish people in rural Pennsylvania improve the morals of the white yuppies who tour the Amish country on their weekend jaunts? By the same token, can anyone seriously believe that millions of Muslim or Buddhist immigrants will reinvigorate the moral and religious traditions of decadent Westerners?

So even if it were true that immigrants from non-Western cultures had superior morals (i.e., family cohesion, sexual restraint, and industriousness), that would do nothing for the rest of us. *Their* values—the total fabric of shared understandings, habits and loyalties by which they order their lives—do not

become *our* values; and in many instances *their* values (e.g. amoral familism, shamanism, forced child marriage, female genital mutilation, and honor killings) are *antithetical* to our values.

“Conservatives must welcome immigration because the eagerness of so many non-whites to come here proves that America is not the racist country that the left says it is.”

This argument, which has occasionally been made by conservative spokesmen, implies that the chief purpose of immigration is to supply conservatives with rhetorical ammunition to use against their political opponents on the left. Forget about the actual effect of immigration on America—it’s the effect of immigration on *conservatives* that really counts. While this attitude is objectionable, we must note in fairness that the corresponding position of the left is worse. People on the left support Third-World immigration, not (as the conservatives do) in order to make America look good by the lights of their ideology, but in order to swell the ranks of the “oppressed” and make America look *bad*.

In any case, this conservative strategy doesn’t even work. The open-borders conservatives do not seem to have noticed that the more non-Westerners there are in America, thus lending numbers and political support to the multicultural ideologues, the more America’s Western traditions are attacked as unrepresentative, illegitimate, and racist.

“Immigration restrictionism contradicts the modern conservative mentality of optimism and fearlessness about the future.”

This weird declaration, from Mitchell Daniels of the conservative Heritage Foundation, might be restated as follows: “Contemporary (i.e. Reaganite) conservatism is defined by optimism, and a generous immigration policy demonstrates that optimism. Therefore to restrict immigration

would be to abandon conservatism.” As with the previous example, this attitude seems to suggest that what counts the most for open-borders conservatives is not the well-being of the American people as a whole, but the well-being of the conservative movement and ideology.

The most remarkable thing about this “conservatism” is its denial of any sense of limits. Conservatives, almost by definition, are supposed to be critics of the greedy reckless expansiveness, also known as hubris, that throughout history has led men and nations to disaster. But many of today’s “conservatives” have turned the age-old sin of recklessness into an *ideology*, arguing that America must—as a matter of principled fearlessness—refuse to recognize any possible danger that may result from mass immigration.

In its insistence on optimism for the sake of optimism, Daniels’s argument is reminiscent of the Calvinist doctrine that the sole proof of a person’s salvation is his inner sense of assurance that he is saved. If he lacks such assurance, that proves he is damned. So the Calvinist is forever examining his conscience to make sure that he *feels* he is saved. Similarly, a Mitchell Daniels-type conservative must keep examining his conscience to make sure that he *feels* optimistic about the future, because if he loses that subjective sense of optimism, then his ability to project a “smiling face of conservatism”—and his ability to win the next election—will be cast into doubt.

In any case, the bottom line for some open-borders conservatives is that America must be subjected to an endless immigrant invasion so that the conservatives can feel good about themselves.

“The greatness of America is proved by so many people from around the world wanting to come here.”

When people utter this sentimental mush, they are implying that a nation can only believe in itself if strangers from alien

cultures are pouring into it. That is an exceedingly odd notion of national pride. Communities with a strong identity usually place a high price on admission. Indiscriminate immigration, by contrast, would seem to place a low value on what we are.

But let us assume for the sake of argument that high immigration does demonstrate our worth, at least in the eyes of the people coming here. Would it not also be true that our insatiable need for such symbolic assurances indicates the very opposite of self-confidence on our part? It is as though America were not a great and powerful nation, but a vain and aging movie star, like Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, demanding endless compliments to boost her fragile self-esteem.

The equation of mass immigration with a sense of national worth also makes no practical sense. Immigration is said to demonstrate America's desirability. In fact, the areas most affected by immigration instantly become less desirable *to Americans*, while remaining extremely desirable to people from poor countries who are accustomed to much worse. America's desirability to immigrants proves nothing about *their* desirability to us. Immigration has certainly not made California more desirable. Explaining the exodus of middle-class residents from that state, Allen Jamieson of Californians for Population Stabilization wrote:

Many are just plain scared of living in places like Los Angeles. All of them are tired of the constant push, the crowds, traffic jams, unbreathable air, and full-up state and national parks where, in years past, they could go to get away from people.... The California school system is stressed beyond any reasonable limits; it's almost impossible to offer the quality of education demanded by today's high-tech job climate.... The trends I see include a breaking up of the cohesive, highly productive society that California brought to the world.

More than any other factor, it is immigration that has tarnished California’s image as an earthly paradise, and that is degrading the quality of life in many other parts of the country as well. So what sense does it make to say that immigration is great because it proves America’s attractiveness? That attractiveness, combined with open borders, is destroying the attractiveness for ever.

America’s attractiveness is not just a blessing but a fatality. It is the relative desirability of America and of other Western nations that makes millions of Third-Worlders want to immigrate. But the attraction does not extend in the other direction. Europeans are not clamoring to get into China or Mexico or Haiti or Burundi or the Dominican Republic. No one is calling the Philippines or Nigeria “xenophobic” because they don’t let in enough whites. As Jared Taylor has argued, the Western nations must squarely face the implications of this “eternal, fateful asymmetry” between the white and nonwhite worlds:

It is because of their ability to build agreeable societies that whites face a problem no other races (except the Japanese and, soon, other North Asians) face: They must exclude others or be swamped. Our crisis is unique, for it is only whites who will be swept away if they *do nothing*. Only white nations must guard against the relentless, transforming influx of aliens who are not only different from us but who, increasingly, despise us and everything we stand for.²¹

In John Vinson’s cogent summary of the problem:

The uniqueness of America appeals to the entire world, but if America embraces the entire world, that uniqueness will perish.²²

“America is based on ideas, not on ethnicity.”

The modern conservative—or neoconservative—view of America, that it is not a nation in the traditional sense but an ideological project for the democratic transformation of humanity, has implications that many conservatives have scarcely realized. If “the West is based on ideas that transcend race and ethnicity,” as historian Gertrude Himmelfarb has put it, then there is the implication that the West can only fulfill its deepest spiritual potentialities by ridding itself of its historic racial character and ceasing to be white. If America is “a country where nationality has nothing to do with ethnicity,” as Patrick Glynn of the American Enterprise Institute has written, then America can only realize its “true” nationhood by divesting itself of the European peoples who created the country in the first place.

The dirty little secret of modern conservatism is that it is as anti-white in its own way as multiculturalism. Multiculturalists say that the essence of America is diversity—which means that America must become multiracial, multicultural, and, inevitably, anti-white. Modern conservatives or neoconservatives say that the essence of America is universal ideas, not ethnicity—which means that America must become multiracial, multicultural, and, inevitably, anti-white. As proof of this unintentional alliance of conservatives with multiculturalists, many conservatives today continue to support mass non-European immigration, despite the fact that the more non-whites there are in America (due to immigration), the more anti-white racial quotas there must be to assure that all our institutions reflect our rapidly changing racial demographics. “Conservative” open borders thus provide the demographic fuel that runs the multicultural group-rights project that the conservatives claim they oppose.

An implicitly anti-white message can also be heard in the “values” argument for immigration. In terms of such conservative values as family cohesion, moral restraint, and productive energy, the conservative immigrationists portray immigrants as not merely equal, but superior to the existing American population. The enthusiasm for immigrants frequently spills over into something resembling idol worship, as seen in this manifesto by William Bennett and Jack Kemp in *The Wall Street Journal*:

America’s immigrants are a net positive gain economically. They tend to live in strong, stable families; possess impressive energy and entrepreneurial spirit; have a deeply rooted religious faith; and make important intellectual contributions to the nation. Most come to America in large part because they believe in traditional American ideals. Their achievements and contributions are worth celebrating, not demeaning or denying.²³

In Kemp and Bennett’s ecstatic treatment, the immigrants—a heterogeneous collection of people from all over the world—have been transformed into a homogenous mass, so stuffed with virtues that they hardly seem human. They have all the good qualities that we Americans are said to lack. *We* are decadent, in need of *their* almost miraculous powers. So there is nothing for us to do but “celebrate” them, and keep on lashing ourselves. In the rhetoric of some Christian conservatives, Third-World immigrants are agents of salvation, even though we (white) Americans don’t seem to be worth saving. Here is the way Fr. Benedict Groeschel of the New York Diocese responded to the problem of irreligion in America:

The only hope is the growing number of non-Anglos who, in the United States, are much more religious. [Emphasis added.] In 1983, fewer than 50 percent of Americans felt

that religion was “very important” in their lives. Now [in 1994] it’s up to 57 percent. That reflects the decline in the numbers of upper and middle-class Anglos and the influx of Hispanics, Asians and Filipinos.²⁴

The *only* hope for sinful America is—more non-white immigrants! Instead of trying to save the souls of his fellow (white) Americans, Groeschel simply wants to replace them with Third-Worlders—a very strange idea of Christian charity.

Sometimes the bias in favor of non-Europeans is masked by a concern for some race-neutral idea such as economics. The late open-borders advocate Julian Simon used to argue that *all* immigrants, whatever their background and skills, help the U.S. economy, and he consistently refused to place any limit on the number of immigrants the U.S. should receive. It turned out, however, that the motive for Simon’s extreme position may have had less to do with economics than with his feelings about racial diversity. “Perhaps a few words about my tastes are appropriate,” he once wrote. “I delight in looking at the variety of faces I see on the subway when I visit New York,” adding that he got *tears in his eyes* when telling people about New York’s immigrant groups.²⁵ Simon’s sentimentality about immigrants had implications that were not necessarily harmless. Since, as he admitted, he derived an emotional catharsis from the ever-increasing diversity of our society, he would positively prefer an America that was less and less white. It was his preference for racial diversity, at least as much as his ideas on economics, that fueled Simon’s utopian crusade for unlimited immigration.

“It is America’s manifest destiny to become a multiracial, global society, the first universal nation.”

The notion of “neo-manifest destiny,” coined by think-tanker and columnist Ben Wattenberg as part of his incessant

advocacy of large-scale immigration, turned the mid-nineteenth century idea of Manifest Destiny on its head. Manifest Destiny symbolized a reality that virtually all Americans at the time embraced or acceded to (even when they had qualms about some of its consequences)—the unstoppable wave of settlers moving westward across the continent, opening the prospect of a nation that stretched from sea to sea. It thus expressed America’s deepest sense of its own ambitions and potentialities. But the post-1965 de-Europeanization of America is happening *against* the will of the American people. It is happening as a result of immigration laws which were passed through deceit and on which serious national debate has been systematically and ruthlessly suppressed. To label those unwanted and disastrous changes “manifest destiny” only adds to the duplicity and coercion through which they were foisted upon us in the first place. It tells us that we have no say in our nation’s future. It tells us to sit back and let the think-tank gurus, the well-funded “seers” of the historical process, control our lives.

“As a result of the global economy and computers, one-worldization—including the totally free movement of peoples—is the wave of the future. Nothing can be done to stop it.”

Historical determinism is always invoked by ideologues who want to make their own preferences seem inevitable. It’s a way of intimidating their opponents and shutting off debate. Whether the determinism is true is another question. Successful societies such as Japan, Singapore, and South Korea do not seem to be in any great rush to give up their respective national identities because of global trade and electronic communications. Only the techno-utopians and globalist elites, who have an interest in dissolving national boundaries (especially America’s), talk this way.

“A tidal wave of people is on the move and you can’t stop a tidal wave.”

“Yes you can, if you decide you really want to,” said Daniel Stoffman:

Italy sent back boatloads of Albanians and the Albanians stopped coming. When the West said it would no longer accept Vietnamese refugees and proved it by forcibly repatriating them from camps in Hong Kong, the boat people stopped coming. The fatalistic notion that countries can’t prevent mass influxes of unwanted migrants is unsupported by any evidence.²⁶

Similarly, when prospective Haitian refugees saw that President Clinton had reversed his earlier policy of letting them all into the United States, and that he was instead sending Haitian refugees back home, they stopped coming.

Assertions of the supposed impossibility of controlling immigration often have more to do with the preferences of the speaker than with objective reality. Addressing a New York City audience in 1992, conservative activist Linda Chavez ridiculed the idea of stopping illegal immigration from Mexico. “What are you going to do,” she asked rhetorically, “put machine guns at the border?” Yet by 1995 Chavez herself was calling for enhanced protective installations along 250 miles of the Mexican border to stop illegal aliens, an idea that restrictionist groups had been advocating, without any help from Chavez, for years.²⁷ Why the reversal? The objective difficulties of border control had not changed since 1992. What *had* changed was that the Republican party and the conservative establishment had moved (if only rhetorically and temporarily) toward a new consensus on the need to reduce illegal immigration, and Chavez had adapted her views accordingly.

The lesson is this: When immigration advocates say that immigration “can’t be stopped,” what they really mean is that *they don’t want to do anything to stop it.*

“The Republican Party’s earlier efforts to withhold public assistance from illegal aliens and to control illegal and legal immigration alienated Hispanic voters. To survive as a political party in an increasingly Hispanic America, Republicans must embrace the open immigration of Hispanics.”

This argument, put forward by Republican strategists such as Paul Gigot and Linda Chavez and adopted by numerous Republican politicians over the last decade, contains two assumptions that I consider deeply immoral. The first is that a major political party should base its immigration policy, not on how best to serve the country as a whole, but on how best to swell its own ranks with grateful immigrant voters. The second is that the United States should tailor its immigration laws to suit the desires of people who have not yet arrived in this country, and who in many cases have not even been born.

Apart from being morally objectionable, the immigrants-for-votes tactic fails even on its own terms. According to Gigot and Chavez, if the Republican party takes the kind of steps that it attempted (though fitfully and unseriously) in the past to limit immigration, then it can expect to get no more than a quarter of the Hispanic vote. But if, as the strategists urge it to do, the GOP ceases all further attempts to reduce immigration, then they figure that the GOP might get a *third* of the Hispanic vote (or, in their wildest dreams, 40 percent of the Hispanic vote, a figure no Republican presidential candidate has ever attained). Either way, it is obvious that the Democrats will continue to receive an overwhelming majority of the Hispanic vote, which means

that the *more* Hispanics there are in the U.S., the *greater* the Democratic party's electoral advantage will become. I can't imagine how the strategists have missed this fatal flaw in their argument. In any case the Republicans, as usual, have chosen a strategy, not of confrontation in the hope of victory, but of appeasement in the hope of limiting (slightly) their losses.

To get an idea of what victory might look like compared to the surrender advocated by the GOP wise guys, let us imagine two radically different scenarios. In the first scenario, Republicans follow the strategists' advice and make absolutely no further efforts to control legal or illegal immigration, which continues unabated and even increases. Over the next half century, Hispanics swell their share of the population from the 12 percent they had in the 2000 census to over 25 percent in the year 2050. As a reward for doing nothing to retard immigration and the resulting explosion in the U.S. Hispanic population, the Republicans receive a whopping ... 33 percent of the Hispanic vote. Meanwhile (though it doesn't seem to matter much to the GOP thinkers), the American nation as we know it will have been destroyed by the huge influx of unassimilable immigrant populations.

In the second scenario, a restrictionist Republican party gains control of the Congress and the Presidency in the near future, drastically reduces immigration, and deports hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens, thus creating an atmosphere in which millions of other illegals are encouraged to leave voluntarily. This conservative Congress also eliminates affirmative action, cuts back inordinate welfare programs, and ends all government subsidization of illegitimate births. As a result of these profound changes in immigration and social policy, combined with a gradual equalization of fertility rates

between Hispanics and other groups, the Hispanic share of the population over the coming decades remains at about 12 percent. To make the contrast with the first scenario even starker, let us imagine that in anger at the “racist, nativist” Republican party, Hispanics give not just 75 percent of their votes to the Democratic party, as at present, but *100 percent*, thus confirming the GOP’s worst fears of Hispanic rejection.

Yet even with zero Hispanic votes going to the GOP, the advantages of the second, restrictionist, scenario for the Republicans are obvious. In the first scenario, the Hispanic Democratic vote in the mid 21st century will consist of 67 percent of the votes of the 25 percent of the population that is Hispanic, or 16.7 percent of the national total. In the second scenario, the Hispanic Democratic vote will consist of 100 percent of the votes of the 12 percent of the population that is Hispanic, or only 12 percent of the national total.

In other words, even in terms of the GOP strategists’ crassly partisan diagnosis, the Republicans’ long-term prospects would be markedly improved if all Hispanic and other Third-World immigration were stopped immediately. At the same time (though it doesn’t seem to matter much to the strategists), the American nation will have been saved.

Applying the same analysis to the immigration of the last 40 years, we might add that both the Republican party and America as a whole would have been in vastly better shape *today* if the doors of mass immigration had not been opened in 1965, when the Hispanic share of the U.S. population was only *two percent*.

IV. The Emotional Case

Now we will examine some highly charged and often intimidating arguments which revolve around the notion that open immigration is the very essence of America, and therefore that any serious criticism of immigration is un-American or immoral.

“We are a nation of immigrants.”

This—the veritable “king” of open-borders clichés—seems at first glance to be an indisputable statement, in the sense that all Americans, even including the American Indians, are either immigrants themselves or descendants of people who came here from other places. Given the above, it would be more accurate to say that we are “a nation of people *descended* from immigrants.” But such a mundane statement would fail to convey the thrilling idea conjured up by the phrase “nation of immigrants”—the idea that all of us, whether or not we are literally immigrants, are somehow “spiritually” immigrants, in the sense that the immigrant experience defines our character as Americans.

This friendly-sounding, inclusive sentiment—like so many others of its kind—turns out to be profoundly *exclusive*. For one thing, it implies that anyone who is not an immigrant, or who does not identify with immigration as a key aspect of his own being, is not a “real” American. It also suggests that newly arrived immigrants are more American than people whose ancestors have been here for generations. The public television essayist Richard Rodriguez spelled out these assumptions when he declared, in his enervated, ominous tone: “Those of us who live in this country are not the point of America. The newcomers are the point of America.”

In reality, we are not—even in a figurative sense—a nation of immigrants or even a nation of descendants of immigrants. As Chilton Williamson pointed out in *The Immigration Mystique*, the 80,000 mostly English and Scots-Irish settlers of colonial times, the ancestors of America’s historic Anglo-Saxon majority, had not transplanted themselves from one nation to another (which is what defines immigration), but from Britain and its territories to British colonies. They were not immigrants, but *colonists*. The immigrants of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries came to an American nation that had already been formed by those colonists and their descendants. Therefore to call America “a nation of immigrants” is to suggest that America, prior to the late nineteenth century wave of European immigration, was not America. It is to imply that George Washington and Ulysses S. Grant (descended from the original colonists) were not “real” Americans, but that Richard Rodriguez and Julian Simon (descended from 19th and 20th century immigrants) are.

Apart from its politically correct function of diminishing the Americans of the pre-Ellis Island period and their descendants, the “nation of immigrants” motto is meaningless in practical terms. Except for open-borders ideologues, everyone knows we must have some limits on immigration. The statement, “we are a nation of immigrants,” gives us no guidance on what those limits should be. Two hundred thousand immigrants per year? Two million? Why not twenty million—since we’re a nation of immigrants? The slogan also doesn’t tell us, once we have decided on overall numbers, what the criterion of selection shall be among the people who want to come here. Do we choose on the basis of family ties to recent immigrants? Language? Income? Nationality? Race? Victim status? First come first served? The “nation of immigrants” slogan cannot help us choose among these criteria because it doesn’t state any good that

is to be achieved by immigration. It simply produces a blind emotional bias in favor of *more* immigration rather than less, making rational discussion of the issue impossible.

To see the uselessness of the “nation of immigrants” formula as a source of political guidance, imagine what the British would have said if they had adopted it in 1940 when they were facing an imminent invasion by Hitler’s Germany. “Look, old man, we’re a nation of immigrant/invasers. First the Celts took the land from the Neolithic peoples, then the Anglo-Saxons conquered and drove out the Celts, then the Normans invaded and subjugated the Anglo-Saxons. In between there were Danish invaders and settlers and Viking marauders as well. Since we ourselves are descended from invaders, who are *we* to oppose yet another invasion of this island? Being invaded by Germanic barbarians is our national tradition!”

Since every nation could be called a nation of immigrants (or a nation of invaders) if you go back far enough, consistent application of the principle that a nation of immigrants must be open to all future immigrants would require every country on earth to open its borders to whoever wanted to come. But only the United States and, to a lesser extent, a handful of other Western nations, are said to have this obligation. The rule of openness to immigrants turns out to be a double standard, aimed solely at America and the West.

It is also blatantly unfair to make the factoid that “we are all descended from immigrants” our sole guide to national policy, when there are so many other important and *true* facts about America that could also serve as guides. For example, throughout its history the United States has been a member of Western civilization—in religion overwhelmingly Christian, in race (until the post-1965 immigration) overwhelmingly white, in language English. Why shouldn’t *those* little historical facts be at least as important in determining

our immigration policy as the pseudo-fact that we're all "descended from immigrants?" But immigrant advocates are incapable of debating such questions, because there is no rational benefit for America that they seek through open immigration. Their aim is not to strengthen and preserve America, but to transform it into something else.

"It's not a common culture, but a belief in freedom that makes us Americans."

This is a favorite cliché of multiculturalists, liberals, and even some conservatives. The idea is that we should not worry about millions of people entering this country from cultures utterly different from our own, since all of us, native and immigrant, "love freedom." But a universal love of freedom does not constitute a nation, any more than a universal love of fresh air does. If the groups making up a society do not have any common history, way of life, and loyalty, but only a belief in some undefined freedom, they will inevitably exercise that freedom to assert their respective group agendas and tear the society apart.

In practical terms, there is no such thing as a universal freedom that unites all peoples. There are particular freedoms, which often result in the loss of other particular freedoms. Most importantly, the freedom of *immigrants* to enter a country by the tens of millions takes away the freedom of *natives* to determine their country's future, even their simple freedom to continue living unmolested in a country of their own.

"Immigrants love America and are eager to assimilate into this country."

It is imagined that Chinese and Mexicans, Haitians and Nigerians, Moslems and Hmong, will help maintain American civilization, since they "love" America. The premise is silly,

since most immigrants come here mainly for opportunistic and self-interested reasons, not out of “love.” But even if the premise were true, it is to be doubted whether immigrants’ love for their new country will enable them to understand and preserve it. To use an example from ancient history that is more relevant today than ever, the Germanic tribesmen of the fifth century A.D. who took over the provinces of the Western Roman Empire “loved” Rome. They saw themselves as Rome’s protectors and heirs, and wanted to sustain its achievements. Nevertheless, under Germanic rule the fabric of Roman society dissolved. Within two centuries, Roman law, administration, public works, literature, and even literacy itself had vanished. And the Germans were white, like the Romans. The notion that non-Westerners after they have pushed aside white America will preserve America’s basic culture and institutions would be funny, were it not for the appalling fact that so many people seem to believe it.

In any case, it is demonstrably false that all immigrants “love” America. Most of them come here out of economic motives or simply to get away from less promising conditions at home. Many come to take advantage of government handouts—as indicated by the millions of immigrants who suddenly began applying for citizenship when Congress restricted public benefits for non-citizens. A Peruvian man in my apartment building in New York City has resided in the United States for over 35 years—the last twenty of those years living comfortably on government disability for some invisible injury he once received as an elevator operator—and he still barely speaks English or knows anything about this country. In what sense does this fellow “love” America? In what sense do the millions of illegal immigrants who are bilking the welfare system “love” America? In what sense do the affluent Chinese immigrants who transfer their wealth to their grown children and then

go on public assistance (as documented by NBC Evening News) “love” America?

In addition to the millions of people who see the United States as a candy store without a lock, a significant number of immigrants have a conscious animus against this country. A very bright Bengali-American college student—a U.S. citizen—told her college English class that the word “American” is “Orwellian” because it imposes an identity on her that she doesn’t feel. “I’m not an American, I’m a Bengali,” she said. Does this young woman “love” America? Does the Asian-American student at Occidental College, who when asked to grade America said flatly “I would give it an incomplete,” love America? Do the Dominican immigrants in upper Manhattan, who marched with a banner denouncing “Five Hundred Years of Genocide,” love America? Does the Mexican immigrant who told a white California woman: “This is a Latino home. You people need to go back to wherever you came from.... Get with it. People of color are going to take over sooner or later,” love America? Do the illegal aliens who come pouring over the border every night, trampling on American laws and squatting on private property despite the owners’ protests, love America? Did the Jamaican immigrant Colin Ferguson, who blamed all the dissatisfactions of his life on white “racism” and then committed racial mass murder on the Long Island Railroad, love America? Did Mohammed Mehdi of the Arab-American Committee, who forced Grand Central Terminal to take down its Christmas decorations because they “discriminated” against Muslims, and who then wrote to the *New York Post* that historic, WASP America was a “culture of bigotry,” love America? Does novelist Bharati Mukherji, who told Bill Moyers: “Getting rid of the old notions of what America was shouldn’t be seen as a loss.... I want to conquer, I mean, I want to love and possess this country”—love America?

Sure, there are many immigrants who do love America—for its fantastic wealth and opportunities, for its freedoms, for its government hand-outs, or for its emerging character as a multicultural society created in the image of the immigrants themselves. But how many immigrants love America as a historic nation and people that they want to join and help preserve?

In my experience, the immigrants who truly love America are deeply alarmed about the fact that excessive immigration is destroying the very things that they love about America. These immigrants support immigration restrictions.

“Immigrants make good Americans, so it’s wrong to exclude them.”

There is an interesting analogy between this slogan, which is often used by conservatives, and the liberal case for admitting homosexuals into the U.S. military. Liberals say there is no good reason to exclude people from the armed forces on the basis of sexual orientation, since homosexuals can perform their assignments as well anyone else. In many instances, that is undoubtedly true. It is also irrelevant, since it is not a question of how well homosexual soldiers, as individuals, can perform specific military tasks; it is a question of the overall effect of the presence of open homosexuals on the military as an institution. And the answer, which our top military leaders have repeatedly affirmed, and which no honest person can deny, is that it would undermine morale, cohesiveness, and discipline. In fact, it would alter and probably destroy the very identity of the military as an institution, as some homosexual-rights proponents have admitted is their real purpose.

Similarly, open-borders advocates say that today’s immigrants, over 90 percent of whom are non-European, contribute to the economy and are “just as good Americans”

as anyone else. While this is certainly true in many individual cases, it is irrelevant. The real question is, what is the overall effect of mass diverse immigration on this country? And the answer is that it is steadily weakening the bonds that have made us a nation. The issue, then, is not whether individual immigrants are “just as good human beings as you and I.” The issue is whether America is going to preserve its national and civilizational existence.

“If it hadn’t been for immigration, I would have been smoke.”

This piquant remark, by the neoconservative writer Midge Decter, expresses the profound gratitude of an American Jew whose family avoided the Nazi genocide by coming to the United States in the early twentieth century. It is meaningless as a pronouncement on immigration policy. There are innumerable people in many countries whose families did not come and never thought of coming to the United States, yet who have suffered unspeakably in their native lands. A half million Rwandan Tutsis were horribly massacred by the rival Hutus in 1994. If those Tutsis and their relatives had come to the United States in, say, 1980, they would be alive today. Does that mean that the Tutsis—all several million of them, just to be on the safe side—should have come here? Should all the people in the world *who may possibly suffer persecution at some future time*—a major portion of the human race—be allowed into the United States as a preventive measure? If we made a general principle out of Midge Decter’s family history, we would be obligated to admit everyone in the world who wanted to immigrate, because we couldn’t tell for sure if something bad might not happen to them in the future if they stayed where they are.

It is understandable that people would have warm feelings about immigration based on their family’s immigrant

background. The unprecedented situation today is that such feelings are seen as a basis for national policy. At the end of a letter to *National Review* in which he reiterated his support for large-scale immigration, writer Mark Lagon added this strange comment: “As a disclaimer, I should note that I am the son of Polish immigrants. My bias is clear.” Not only did Lagon seem unembarrassed to admit that his policy views were founded on bias, he seemed to think that other people should accept his bias in lieu of general considerations of the public good.²⁸ An even more self-absorbed immigrationist of recent years has been A.M. Rosenthal, former editor of *The New York Times*, who repeatedly wrote that because his own father entered America as an illegal alien, America should welcome all illegal immigrants now. Rosenthal even called for a ticker tape parade up Broadway to honor illegal immigrants.

That such amazing comments could be made without fear of censure indicates the privileged status open-borders advocates enjoy in today’s America. There are, of course, many descendants of immigrants who do not share Lagon’s and Rosenthal’s pro-immigration bias, who are profoundly alarmed by what the post-1965 immigration is doing to America, and who want it reduced. How come they don’t get to assert *their* feelings as insouciantly as Lagon and Rosenthal do theirs? The double standard is astonishing. If someone flagrantly asserts a *pro-immigration bias*, that is seen as a good and reasonable thing. But if someone else makes a reasoned argument against mass immigration, *he is accused of harboring a bias*, which in *his* case is seen as a bad and vicious thing.

“As descendants of immigrants, it would be selfish and immoral of us to support immigration restrictions.”

For many descendants of European immigrants, particularly Jews, this is the decisive pro-immigration

argument. Even when they agree (however reluctantly) that current immigration is leading to intractable problems for America, they remain emotionally incapable of supporting actual restrictions on immigration, since in their minds that would mean embracing the same prejudices that were once directed against their parents and grandparents. They have a primal and (given the philo-Semitic character of this country) irrational fear that to criticize immigration *at all* would be tantamount to saying that they themselves don't belong in this country. Former *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz reflected such sentiments when he remarked once that it would be “unseemly” for him as a Jew to side with immigration restrictionists.

Minority-group loyalties aside, it is not readily apparent why the former restriction on European immigrants mandates openness to non-European immigrants today. Immigration control have been as essential to the development and success of our nation as openness. Sociologist Nathan Glazer, who is Jewish, has said that the immigration restrictions from 1921 to 1965, which were partly aimed at Jews, had profoundly beneficial consequences for American society, namely a sustained period of ethnic equilibrium and dramatically reduced ethnic tensions that eased the assimilation of the European ethnic groups and helped maintain national unity. If Glazer is right, and he surely is, why then the moralistic craze against any immigration restrictions now?

Part of the answer, I would suggest, is that the more-or-less successful assimilation of the European ethnic groups that had occurred by the 1960s blinded politicians and opinion makers to the crucial role that the 1921-1965 restrictions had played in that assimilation. It was as though a motorist, having arrived at his destination, forgot that the brakes of his automobile had been as necessary in getting him safely to his destination as the gas pedal—*so before leaving on his*

next trip he removes the brakes. With similar forgetfulness, the political establishment concluded that America had an unlimited capacity for assimilating immigrants from every conceivable cultural background, and on that basis they cheerfully opened our borders to the entire world in 1965 and have kept opening them wider ever since, turning America into an ethnically and culturally divided society whose long-term survival as a nation is now in doubt for the first time since the Civil War.

Which leads us back to the question of selfishness. Since millions of prospective European immigrants were kept out of the U.S. starting in the 1920s when most Americans believed that excessive immigration had become a threat to national unity, why should European-Americans feel it is selfish to exclude non-Europeans now for the same reason? Far from selfishness, it is simple fairness.

The uncompromising pro-immigration stand of various ethnic organizations presents an even more pungent irony. If all descendants of immigrants, particularly ethnically diverse immigrants, have a hereditary obligation to crusade for open borders, then as soon as a nation lets in any diverse immigrants at all, it has spawned a domestic pro-immigration lobby that will (1) work incessantly to expand the numbers and power of its own group; (2) agitate to expand immigration generally; and (3) deny the society any moral right to restrict immigration in the future. If those are the rules of the game, i.e., if a society by admitting immigrants automatically loses its right to control future immigration, then what rational society would want to admit any immigrants? The “my-grandparents-were-immigrants” crowd do not realize that in their strident open-borders moralism, they are making the most devastating possible case against immigration, including the immigration that brought their own grandparents here.

“While other countries have the right to defend their national identity, the U.S. does not.”

Commenting on anti-refugee riots in Germany some years ago, liberal columnist Michael Kinsley may have surprised his readers when he did not condemn the rioters outright:

Germany is different from the United States. Like most countries, ... its sense of nationhood has a large ethnic component. This is neither good nor evil; it's just a fact.

Although any civilized nation should take in refugees from oppression, in other countries the concern about diluting the nation's ethnic stock has a certain validity.

Such concerns have no validity in America. In fact, they are un-American. If applied in earlier times, when they were raised with equal passion, they would have excluded the ancestors of many who make the ethnic/cultural preservation argument today.²⁹ [Italics added].

The idea that other countries have an ethnic component in their identity, but the United States doesn't, is demonstrably false. Throughout our history (at least until the advent of multiculturalism), the U.S. has been a European nation, in religion basically Christian, in culture basically Anglo-Saxon. While America has always contained racial minorities, most importantly the black minority, multiracialism *per se* has never been the basis of our national identity. The basis of our national identity was a shared ethos, historical memory, and way of life that made us *Americans*. The explicit multiracialism that Kinsley sees as America's defining feature is a quite recent innovation, a radical experiment that has resulted in multiculturalism, minority group privileges, and the delegitimization of American identity. Our ever-increasing diversity, far from being the essence of the American nation as Kinsley believes, means its dissolution.

Kinsley's other precept, that people who are descended from immigrants have no moral right to oppose immigration, is dubious coming from a liberal. Liberals support the right to abortion, a practice that prevents a human being from coming into the world. Yet those same liberals were not aborted themselves. They were allowed to be born—which would not have happened in millions of cases had abortion been freely available. Applying to the abortion debate the same logic that liberals use in the case of immigration, we might ask: since the liberals were permitted to enter the world as newborn babies, what right do they have to prevent *other* babies from entering the world?

I am not suggesting that the above argument be used by abortion opponents. I am saying that the issue of abortion, like that of immigration restriction, should be decided on its own merits, not on the basis of the personal history of those participating in the debate.

“Immigration is the essence of America. If we restrict immigration, we stop being America.”

Even if we accepted the premise that America's whole identity depends on immigration, where would that leave us? If immigration continues as at present, the nation will continue to lose more and more of its historical character and political cohesion, which *also* means that we will “stop being America.” So, which manner of “ceasing to be America” do we prefer? By reducing immigration *now*—or by keeping the floodgates open and turning ourselves into a balkanized, Hispanicized, Islamicized, impoverished society?

Ironically, the decision to maintain our reckless open-borders policy must also eventually lead to the end of immigration—either because America (or what's left of America by that point) will finally be forced to close its borders in order to prevent further chaos and deterioration, or

because foreigners will no longer be attracted to the conflict-ridden, degraded, and Third-Worldized society that America will have then become. So, to repeat the question: wouldn't it be better to "stop being America" *now*, when the country still has a salvageable political system, way of life, and national identity, than to "stop being America" *later*, when things will have gotten infinitely worse?

Conclusion

As we come to the end of this essay, it is time to admit that the task we have set ourselves may be ultimately futile. Even if we succeeded in exploding the entire open-borders ideology, there are many people who would still feel the same irresistible compulsion to embrace, or surrender to, the grand immigration project and everything it implies. Appeals to reason and to the desire for collective survival can only persuade reasonable people who want to survive. But what if Americans, in their heart of hearts, don't *want* to survive? What if they are indifferent—or numbed—to the prospect of being displaced, dispossessed, and marginalized? What if the European American majority doesn't care if it becomes a minority in a racially divided, ungovernable country, and if its identity, history, and way of life disappear from the face of the earth?

And if this is so, *why* is it so?

An attempt to answer that question must take us into the heart of the moral, religious, and racial misconceptions that define modern American democracy.

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