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Chapter 5

## Multiculturalism and *mélange*

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In order to think clearly about multicultural education, we need to think what it is for a person to grow up and form an identity in a culturally plural society. Official prescriptions for the study of history and social studies give a lot of attention to the multiplicity of cultures in the United States; but they say much less about what that diversity implies for the identities of particular individuals. This is a pity because questions about community and identity are complex and illuminating, and the array of possible answers poses an interesting challenge to our preconceptions about the role of culture in individual lives. Does cultural plurality at the social level imply cultural plurality in the constitution and identity of each individual member of the society? Or does it rather presuppose cultural homogeneity at the individual level, so that even though the society emerges as a patchwork, each constituent person or group is cut from whole cloth? If "[t]he United States is a microcosm of humanity today,"<sup>1</sup> does that make each citizen also a microcosm, so that she reflects in her relationships, aspirations, and experiences a little of each of the country's constitutive cultures? Or is the United States a microcosm in which the integrity of each person's identity is secured by the culture and ethnicity of some group in particular?

The questions are not just about the existing characteristics of a multicultural society; they are also about what a society of this kind should aspire to. The aim, we are told, is to reconcile national unity with respect for difference: *e pluribus unum*.<sup>2</sup> Does the hope for this unity-in-diversity lie in the synthesis that each individual forges among the various cultural experiences and encounters that make up her life? Or is it to be purely a social and political synthesis, welded externally among culturally disparate individuals and groups? If the latter, how is the social synthesis to be sustained? How, for example, can it be rooted in the consciousness of the various persons that make

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up the society in question without at the same time undermining and compromising the integrity of the particular cultures and ethnicities that secure each person's identity? How, as a matter of identity, can one belong to one culture in particular and still be a good citizen of a multicultural society?

### TWO MODELS

In this essay, I want to explore two models of the relation between culture and identity in the context of ethnic plurality. The first is the "One Person: One Culture" model (I shall call it "the One Culture model," for short): it assumes that each individual constructs her identity within the framework of one culture, the culture of the particular group or community to which she belongs. The second is the "One Person: Many Fragments" model (I shall call it "the Many Fragments model," for short): it assumes that each individual constructs her identity in the wider society in which she lives and that, if the society is multicultural, her identity will comprise a multiplicity of cultural fragments, bits and pieces of various cultures from here and there.

The two models are of course "ideal types," in Max Weber's sense.<sup>3</sup> They are intended as polar guides to thinking these issues through, rather than as exhaustive categories for social taxonomy. For many of us, the truth lies somewhere in between: a person's identity may be *predominantly* of one culture, for all that it is "supplemented" or "contaminated" by fragments of, or influences from, other cultures existing adjacently in the same society. All the same, it makes a difference what ideal types we have in mind when we approach the complexity of real-world cases, and it is worth exploring that difference even when we accept that, of course, a sensitive approach to particular instances will have to be much more nuanced than either of these ideal types suggests.

My hunch is that many who favor replacing traditional modes of education with multicultural curricula tend to adopt the One Culture model quite uncritically as the basis of their thinking about the respect that is owed to different cultures.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, I believe the Many Fragments model is both more realistic and more attractive as an account of individual identity. By "more realistic," I mean that it offers the analytical basis for a more accurate account of how most people in fact form an identity for themselves in a society of this kind. By "more attractive," I mean that the processes it describes offer a better prospect for society and for the individuals who have to live in the world. The Many Fragments model is, I think, one that we would do well to recognize and promote, instead of disparaging it as a deviant case of

impurity or eclecticism. To articulate principles of respect for persons in terms of that model is wiser than persisting in the assumption – implicit in the One Culture approach – that cultural purity and solicitude for particular ethnic frameworks should be the key to public policy in these areas.

Clearly the Many Fragments model has a provenance in liberal individualism. It does not follow, however, that the model justifies complacency about modern education, or a rejection of multiculturalism and a return to “Great Books” and courses on “Western Civilization.” The Many Fragments model calls in question the purity and hegemony of the dominant culture as much as that of any of the minority ethnic traditions: the identity of most white Anglophone persons is to be regarded as no less of a *mélange* than that of anyone struggling to make a life in this cultural bazaar.<sup>5</sup> Instead, the Many Fragments model may provide a different way of thinking the issue through. If we are less concerned about cultural integrity as the key to human identity, we may be less hung up on the issue of what it is to acquaint students fully and faithfully with a variety of cultures in the classroom. By the same token, we may (if this ever worried us) be less alarmed at the thought that some “essential” ingredient of our culture (*Billy Budd*, perhaps, or Plato’s *Republic*) is being neglected in favor of a reenactment of the Bantu migration.

Above all, I hope the Many Fragments model will help us to reconsider the essentialism that is associated with the individuation of cultures, and the artificiality that this tends to engender in the bright lines we draw between one culture and another, and between different ethnic groups. If we are less insistent that each person is to be located in just one culture, there may seem less point in individuating cultures from one another. I am sure that will be a tremendous improvement from a sociological point of view: it will lead quite simply to saner social science. But it will be morally valuable as well. At the moment, respect too often takes the form of reverence for the culture *imputed* as a basis of identity to the person we claim to be respecting. A shift to the Many Fragments model portrays each of us as making what she can, alone or with others, in a veritable sea of cultural materials that often have little more to bind them together than that they are the ones that in fact impinge upon us. To respect a person is to respect her effort in that regard, rather than to respect some particular aspect of her background with which we insist she must “identify.”

#### ONE PERSON: ONE CULTURE

Let me begin the discussion, now, by outlining the constructive and normative features of the first of the two models we are considering.

The first step in the construction of the One Culture model is to posit a multicultural society as one in which a number of distinct cultures coexist. I shall say more about what “culture” means or is taken to mean at the beginning of the next section; for now, we may take the term to refer to a number of ways of living, acting, and relating, affecting many or most of what are taken to be the more important as well as the more mundane aspects of life, and integrated more or less tightly into a single shared set of meanings, that is, a single way of life.

Cultures, of course, do not exist in the abstract; they characterize communities of people. “Community” refers to the sociological infrastructure of culture: a community is an enduring human group in which membership is taken to have ramifications for one’s life and actions across the board and in an open-ended sort of way, in virtue of the sharing of a set of practices that can be regarded as a single culture. So the second step in constructing this model relates persons to cultures through the notion of community. Each community comprises several generations of persons. The idea is that, as youngsters begin to make lives for themselves, they find that they belong to a community and that its culture is their culture in virtue of that belonging. This is the basis of the “One Person: One Culture” correlation I have referred to in the label attached to this model.

The third step is to insist that it is normally within the framework of one’s own culture – that is, the culture of the community to which one belongs – that one thinks about making a life for oneself, and that it is within this framework that one leads the life one has embraced.<sup>6</sup> Those who use this model do acknowledge that people sometimes incorporate influences into their identity which are alien to the culture their community has furnished for them. But often they see this as a special case, and they regard it as a quite unsatisfactory starting point for thinking about what people and communities need in a multicultural society.

The normative implications of the One Culture model rest in various ways on this connection between identity and the sharing of a culture. In the first place, the model suggests that great harm can be done to persons if a culture or a traditional way of life is allowed to die out, or if the conditions that make possible the practice of that way of life are allowed to degenerate. Since each person belongs to just one culture, if her culture is dying out, her opportunities for the construction of an adequate identity will die out with it. The alienation or anomie of the members of some Native American groups is often cited as an example of the experience of people who have difficulty establishing an identity for themselves, because the cultural framework of their community is withering away.<sup>7</sup>

In the second place, if (as the first model suggests) my culture is implicated in who I am, then to cast aspersions on my culture (to make fun of its religion, for example, or denigrate its traditions) is to attack *me*, at the core of my being. Respect for a given person, on this model, entails respect for the particular culture that has made her who she is.

Moreover, the fact that the culture that makes me what I am is one that I share with others means that I am also vulnerable to attacks upon others. If I am an Irish-American and I become aware that another Irish-American has been discriminated against because of her Irish background, then I suffer at least indirectly because there is an affront, via the attack on her Irishness, to the group to which both of us belong, the group deeply implicated in our individual identities. Because parts of our identities are *shared* in this strong sense, the model implies certain limitations on a purely individualistic account of rights and wrongs. It indicates that we should talk perhaps of group rights, and of the possibility that groups may be harmed in various ways, and that this should be incorporated into our social morality and our jurisprudence.<sup>8</sup>

The third normative implication concerns *difference* so far as the treatment of individuals is concerned. It has long been an assumption of liberal philosophy that whatever rights we have are either universal in character (i.e., *human rights*) or (in the case of contractual, promissory or other "special" rights) generated on the basis of universal principles.<sup>9</sup> This means it is possible to tell pretty quickly what rights another person has: she has just the rights that I have. The duties and the respect that I owe to her are simply the counterparts of the duties and respect she owes to me. But that tidy assumption presupposes that all persons share enough, by way of a common "human nature," to ground such universal rights. If identity is instead an artifact of culture, and if people forge their identities in distinct cultural settings, it may be a mistake to insist that rights remain the same. The job of rights is to protect crucial interests, and if the structures of people's interests vary according to the community to which they belong, the rights it is proper to attribute to them may vary accordingly.

An example may help here. For someone who has been brought up in a traditional church, it may be important that she have a right to freedom of worship – the freedom to come together with others to engage in religious ceremonial – whereas a person brought up in a secular, materialist culture, never having had anything to do with a church, may have no use for such a right. If the latter is asked whether freedom of worship is an important liberty for *every* human individual, she may quite reasonably answer, "No," saying that it depends

on how important practices like worship loom in one's culture, community, and conception of the good. No doubt, we could abstract from the term "worship" and find some very vague description (freedom of conscience, perhaps conjoined with freedom of assembly) which could be recognized as a right that everyone needed. But – and this I think is the crucial point about difference – such an abstraction might end up being distracting and unhelpful in the process of working out what respect for particular others really requires.

Other examples spring to mind under the heading of religious freedom. Some of us value the freedom to revise or rethink one's faith and we take this freedom to be opposed to the idea that "apostasy" should be a matter of concern or condemnation. But many fervent adherents of Roman Catholicism or Islam deny that such a freedom is to be valued at all, and certainly they would not claim it for themselves. To do so would amount, in their eyes, to a weakening of their religious commitment. Those same adherents may, however, claim other rights that secular atheists are happy to disown. They may claim, for example, the right to be protected from blasphemy or from demonstrations of disrespect for their cherished beliefs. If the line of argument I am exploring here is correct, it is no reply to this claim that secular atheists are willing to disown any such protection. The fact that I do not need to be protected from cultural ridicule, for example, in order to pursue my own good does not show that others don't need such protection in order to pursue theirs. Different aims may require different liberties and different protections.

The consequences of this concession are interesting. In a simple two-person case, we may have a situation in which the rights claimed by P, as necessary to protect her identity, are different from the rights claimed by Q, as necessary for the protection of his. Now of course the rights claimed by Q will be correlative to duties imposed on P, and vice versa. The picture I have in mind is this:

P	Q
RIGHTS	rights
duties	DUTIES

with the difference between upper-case and lower-case indicating the difference in content between the two sets of rights and duties. Though P's rights are correlative to Q's duties, and P's duties correlative to Q's rights, Q cannot simply take the set of rights that he has and the set of duties that he has and, replacing proper names with variables, regard them as correlative. He is therefore no longer able to work out what duties he has simply by considering what would be correlative to the rights that he claims. He must really pay attention to the rights and needs of the other person, P, because what counts as

respecting her may differ significantly from anything he can extrapolate from his own case.

In the extreme individual case, this means that respect for rights requires a high degree of sensitivity to the distinctive needs and interests of others.<sup>10</sup> In the context of the first model of multiculturalism, however, what it requires is sensitivity to other *cultures*. Hence the link with education. We need to learn about other cultures in order to learn what our fellow citizens are and how to respect them.

#### A PLURALITY OF DISTINCT CULTURES?

To say that a society is pluralistic is not the same as saying it is multicultural: pluralism may relate to individual lifestyles, vocations, religious faiths, ethics, politics, and experiences, with no assumption that these differences coalesce into the shared and abiding entities we call "cultures." Pluralism is the genus; cultural diversity is a species of it.<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of the first model, "culture" and "community," as we have seen, are defined in an interlocking way. "Culture" refers to a set of related practices and traditions associated currently and historically with a community – that is, with a human grouping larger than a family or a village, abiding longer than just a few generations, permeating the lives of its members in a constitutive way, and amounting in some sense to an *ethnos*, a people or a nation. Membership in a community, unlike membership in an organization, a club, a party, or a church, is usually taken to be ascriptive rather than voluntary, and to have implications across the whole range of one's actions and relations with others, not just some specialized activity or concern. The culture of a community is a way of doing things, particularly the things that are done *together*, throughout the whole course of human life: language, governance, religious rituals, rites of passage, family structures, material production and decoration, economy, science, warfare, and the sharing of a sense of history. It is a way that its members have, as they think their ancestors had and as they hope their descendants will have, of enjoying and enduring the joys and vicissitudes of human life together.

If culture and community are tied together in this way, what is it (on the first model) for *several* cultures to coexist in a single society? The notion of such coexistence makes sense only on the assumption that society is not necessarily coextensive with community (in the sense of "community" that refers to the human grouping whose traditions and practices are identified as one culture). "Society" may be characterized as a loose and abstract term, referring to *any* human grouping whose characteristics (as a grouping) are important to us for some reason: thus we may veer easily between talking of world soci-

ety, or North American society, or United States society, or high society in Beverly Hills. A use of the term "society" may refer to a community in the sense we have been discussing, but it need not. Usually, when we talk about a multicultural society, "society" refers to a large-scale human grouping delineated purely in terms of its being under the authority of a single sovereign state. We say, for example, that the United Kingdom is a multicultural society, meaning roughly that the British state presides territorially over a human grouping in which a number of cultures (and thus a number of communities) coexist. Or to put it another way, those who live together in the British Isles in the sense of being subject to a common political authority find that they do not share a single culture, but that many cultures coexist among them.

Such plurality may come about in a number of ways. The four with which we are most familiar are the following: (1) A single culture may split into separate cultures as the community it characterizes grows and becomes differentiated. An example of this process is religious differentiation in European communities in and after the sixteenth century, but it may also include the development of what are known as "subcultures" in modern societies, of which the growth of gay culture and the self-conscious evolution of African-American culture in the United States are two prominent examples. (2) A community with one culture may conquer a community with another culture, either moving into the latter's territory or expanding its own domain to include that territory. The subjugation of the aboriginal communities of North America by European colonists is a clear example of this. (3) Two or more communities may voluntarily confederate for political or security reasons, coming sufficiently to terms with one another to constitute a common polity or state. The Act of Union between England and Scotland is one of the best-known examples of this. (4) Finally, members of a given community may migrate to another society, and when they arrive, they may join with other migrants to preserve what they can of the culture of their provenance. This is typical of many communities in the United States: Chinese, Italian, Jewish, Amish, Korean, Irish, and so on.

This last way of constituting a multicultural society may seem more problematic than the others, inasmuch as the migrants are attempting to sustain a sense of shared culture among themselves without the infrastructure of enduring community which originally bore that culture.<sup>12</sup> Their community may have evaporated with their diaspora or they may have a sense of having left their community behind in their homeland and of having brought with them at most just a homesickness, a longing, or an aspiration to re-create or reproduce it in their new environment. It would be a mistake, however, to draw too sharp

a line between those cultures and ethnicities that remain rooted in a located and enduring community, and those that have been, so to speak, "cut adrift" from a sociological point of view. We are dealing with a spectrum of cases, ranging from North American aboriginal nations at the one extreme, which combine a shared culture and ethnicity with a highly concrete and comprehensive embodiment of community, to (say) Irish-Americans at the other extreme, clinging gamely to some relics of a shared heritage and shared grievances while being largely integrated into the polyglot mainstream of American society without much social structure of their own. In between there are cases like Chinese-Americans or Pakistani Muslims in the U.K. – peoples who have managed to re-create quite formidable and enduring structures of community in the lands to which they, their parents, or their grandparents migrated.

However it comes about, the characterization of a society as "multicultural" is in the first instance simply a matter of fact. The coexistence of separate communities implies only that these various cultures and their respective communal infrastructures are *here*. It does not necessarily imply that they are all flourishing, nor that they are in any sense equal or mutually tolerant. Equal respect and toleration are often the aims of those who deploy the One Culture model; but in their view the hegemony of one culture in particular is often the ugly reality.

It is a crucial feature of the "One Person: One Culture" model that the cultures coexisting in modern society be seen as distinct. Certainly users of the model will concede that the differentiation is not absolute: the mere fact of coexistence militates against that (and I shall argue later that this point needs to be taken much more seriously than it usually is). Nonetheless, it is expected that the sets of traditions and practices that constitute the various cultures will be qualitatively different from one another in many important respects. The languages will be different; there will be quite different approaches to religion and faith, and different ways of thinking about family, sexuality, gender, and the passage from one stage of life to another.

Everyone acknowledges, of course, that in reality there will be similarities. Quite apart from cultural interaction, there is the fact that the communities in question are *human* communities, and there are likely to be broad similarities in the way things are done in community which reflect the fact that all humans are organisms of a similar kind facing similar problems, opportunities and vicissitudes. For example: all communities have to come to terms with disease; all communities have to deal with the vicissitudes of the human life cycle, of reproduction and the special needs of infancy; most communities meet their economic needs with some sort of division of labor; and so

on. Sometimes the similarities are much more concrete than this: metallurgy developed in many different regions as a similar and intelligible human response to a naturally provided opportunity and resource; all communities explore their natural habitat for what we call pharmaceutical materials; children pursue at the level of play safe versions of adult activity (such as hunting, housekeeping, and warfare) as part of their recreation and preparation for adult life; all societies seem to have a conception of the spiritual or the divine; all societies organize some structure of collective memory that has an authoritative impact on collective and individual decision-making.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, most of the individual communities in question have consciously shared a world with at least some other communities. Culture, we know, does not stay local; ideas and practices, ways of doing things, are propagated and transmitted. Persons and peoples are curious and gregarious: they find ways of talking and trading across cultural divides, as well as fighting, conquering, or attempting to insulate themselves from adjacent cultural influences. Thus we would expect neighboring communities to have many similarities in their respective cultures: Breton culture and Irish culture will not be exactly the same, but they may be very similar in a number of important respects (a common Christian heritage, for example).

One sometimes hears it said that what is important about each culture is its *distinctiveness*. "Diversity" is commonly used as a synonym for "pluralism."<sup>14</sup> That view, I think, is characteristic of the model we are considering. If diversity *per se* is important, then what is to be taught under the auspices of multicultural education is *respect for the qualitative distinctiveness of each culture*.

It is worth noting, however, that this view may be seriously mistaken, both as a description of the consciousness of the communities in question and as a prescription about what respect ought to involve. Consider the example I just mentioned: the Breton and Irish cultures. These cultures are markedly different in a number of respects, but there are also marked commonalities. In both, for example, the Catholic Church plays a crucial – and a remarkably similar – role in people's lives. That prompts the following question: to the extent that a Breton or an Irish person actually thinks self-consciously about her culture (a problematic notion to which I shall return in a moment), is it the *distinctiveness* of the culture that will be important to her – that is, the respects in which her culture differs from others (in the region) as opposed to the respects in which it is similar? I doubt that we can assume this. It seems not only possible but probable that an inhabitant of Brittany would regard the teachings and sacraments of the Church as the most important aspect of her culture. If so, it is likely to be both implicit in and essential to that thought that her Church be

regarded as *catholic*,<sup>15</sup> in precisely the sense of being something shared by other communities. That feature of her life – that as a Breton she shares a faith and a church with Irish, Italians, Poles, Brazilians, and Filipinos – may be much more important to her identity than anything which (say) a Tourist Board would use to highlight her cultural distinctiveness.

More abstractly, one must not assume that thoughts about the distinctiveness of one's culture loom very large in one's own involvement in the cultural life of a community. What one does is simply speak, or marry, or worship. One does not in doing so assert anything or evince any particular attitude about, say, the distinctive features of the Breton tongue, or the peculiarities of the marriage dress. As I have argued elsewhere, one keeps faith with the mores of one's community by just following them, not by announcing self-consciously that it is the mores of one's community that one is following.<sup>16</sup>

What I am driving towards is the paradoxical suggestion that the "essence" of a culture – if there is one – need not consist in its distinctiveness. One culture does not need to be clearly and importantly *different* from another, either in its appearance to an outsider or in the consciousness of its practitioners, in order to be the culture that it is. A taxonomist may be interested in qualitative differentiation, and we may want there to be lots of colorful differences in costume, language and ritual so that we can, in a sense, *display* our commitment to multiculturalism to even the most superficial glance. But all this is beside the point so far as the culture itself is concerned. A culture just is what it is, and its practices and rituals are constitutive of it in virtue of their place in a shared way of life, not in virtue of their peculiarity.

Why, then, the emphasis on diversity? It has to do, I think, with the way cultures and communities overlap in a multicultural society. Suppose there are Breton and Irish immigrant communities in an American city and they have managed to preserve large parts of their cultures. The faith and worship that the two communities share in common may well mean that instead of having two distinct communities, each with its own Catholic church, we have a single Catholic church that serves the needs of both communities. The similarities between the communities' practices and traditions lead to actual social overlap between them. If this happens often enough or on a broad enough front, it may be hard to discern the separateness of the communities except in terms of their differences. For epistemic and taxonomic purposes, then, it will seem that the key to cultural identity is distinctiveness. But that is a kind of optical illusion. The fact that its members involve themselves in the lives of the local Catholic

church remains a crucial part of, say, Irish culture, even if that church is one they share with Catholics from other communities.

Another way of putting this is to say that what I have called "overlap" is not the same as assimilation. The latter term means something like being compelled by force or circumstance to come to terms with practices and traditions that are not one's own. But for an Irish Catholic to worship in a Catholic congregation which comprises people of many cultures and which is even perhaps dominated by people of the dominant culture in the society is not assimilation. For even at home in Galway the Irish person's faith and attachment to her Church is understood to be an attachment to an institution which admits of – indeed, which treasures and is organized around – just such universality.

#### WILL KYMLICKA ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL MEMBERSHIP

The "One Person: One Culture" model is characterized not only by the assumption that plurality is diversity, that our pluralistic society divides neatly into an array of different cultures, but also by the assumption that what every person needs is just one of these entities – a single, coherent, distinctive culture – to give shape and meaning to her life.

In this section, I want to criticize that second assumption, and I shall do so in the context of a critique of Will Kymlicka's recent book, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*.<sup>17</sup> Kymlicka's aim is to rehabilitate liberal political philosophy, and make it more sensitive to communitarian concerns. He wants to show that liberal theorists, such as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, have radically underestimated the importance of culture as a primary good for the self-constitution of individual lives. He wants to fill that gap and enlist liberal theories in the cause of the preservation of minority cultures. Thus Kymlicka's starting point is not so much a communitarian commitment to the intrinsic value of community and culture, but a Rawlsian conviction about the importance to persons of the freedom to form, reform, and revise their individual beliefs about what makes life worth living.<sup>18</sup> He concedes that in order to sustain that freedom, one needs a certain amount of self-respect, as well as familiar protections, guarantees, opportunities, and access to the means of life – all the things that figure already on Rawls's list of the primary goods to be governed by a theory of justice.<sup>19</sup> To make the case that culture is also one of these primary goods, Kymlicka argues that people cannot choose a concep-

tion of the good for themselves in isolation, but that they need a clear sense of an established range of options to choose from:

In deciding how to lead our lives, we do not start *de novo*, but rather we examine "definite ideals and forms of life that have been developed and tested by innumerable individuals, sometimes for generations." . . . The decision about how to lead our lives must ultimately be ours alone, but this decision is always a matter of selecting what we believe to be most valuable from the various options available, selecting from a context of choice which provides us with different ways of life.<sup>20</sup>

Kymlicka elaborates the point by insisting that what we choose among are not ways of life understood simply as different physical patterns of behavior:

The physical movements only have meaning to us because they are identified as having significance by our *culture*, because they fit into some pattern of activities which is culturally recognized as a way of leading one's life. We learn about these patterns of activity through their presence in stories we've heard about the lives, real or imaginary, of others. . . . We decide how to lead our lives by situating ourselves in these cultural narratives, by adopting roles that have struck us as worthwhile ones, as ones worth living (which may, of course, include the roles we were brought up to occupy).<sup>21</sup>

It follows, he argues, that

[l]iberals should be concerned with the fate of cultural structures, not because they have some moral status of their own, but because it's only through having a rich and secure cultural structure that people can become aware, in a vivid way, of the options available to them, and intelligently examine their value.<sup>22</sup>

On the face of it, the argument is a convincing one. Of course, choice takes place in a cultural context, among options that have culturally defined meanings. But in developing his case, Kymlicka is guilty of something like the fallacy of composition. From the fact that each genuine option must have a cultural meaning for the person who faces that option, it does not follow that there must be *one cultural framework* for that person in which each available option is assigned a meaning. Meaningful options may come to us as items or fragments from an incommensurable variety of cultural sources. Kymlicka is moving too quickly when he says that each culturally meaningful item is given its significance by some entity called "our culture." It may be a mistake to infer that there are big things called "cultural structures" whose integrity must be guaranteed in order for people to have meaningful choices. Kymlicka's argument shows that people need cultural materials; it does not show that what people need is "a

rich and secure cultural structure." He shows the importance of access to a variety of stories and roles; but he has not shown, as he claims to have shown, the importance of something called *membership in a culture*.

Kymlicka's claim about the difference between physically and culturally defined options is an echo of an argument made earlier by Alasdair MacIntyre, and it may reinforce my point to discuss that argument as well. According to MacIntyre:

We enter human society . . . with one or more imputed characters – roles into which we have been drafted – and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons who receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance on riotous living and go into exile to live with the swine, that children learn or mislearn both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutters in their actions as in their words.<sup>23</sup>

Again, it is important to see that MacIntyre's roles are performed by heterogeneous characters (and none the worse for that) drawn from a variety of disparate cultural sources: from first century Palestine, from the heritage of Germanic folklore, and from the mythology of the Roman Republic. They do not come from some *thing* called "the structure of our culture." They are familiar because of the immense variety of cultural materials, various in their provenance as well as their character, that are in fact available to us. In correspondence on this issue, Kymlicka has written to me that "the fact that these stories originated in different cultures does not show that they have not been integrated into our culture or that their availability to us does not depend on this integration."<sup>24</sup> He is right about that as a matter of inference. But we must beware of defining the term "culture" so that the bare fact that a person has access to or is familiar with a given set of materials constitutes those materials as part of a single cultural framework. Indeed, if we were to insist that they are all part of the same framework simply because there is an identifiable group of people (*us*) to whom they are in fact available, we would trivialize the individuation of cultures beyond any sociological interest. Any array of materials would count as part of a single culture whenever they were familiar to a given person or group of persons, whether those materials had internal relations of coherence and harmony among them or not. It would then be *logically* impossible for an individual to

have access to more than one cultural framework. The idea of a cosmopolitan heritage would have been ruled out by verbal fiat.

Kymlicka has also suggested that what matters for the integrity and identity of a cultural framework is *language*: "[T]he center of a community's cultural structure is its shared language."<sup>25</sup> In regard to the MacIntyre examples that I have mentioned, he writes:

I did not learn Grimm's tales by reading German, and if they had not been translated, they would not provide meaningful characters to me. . . . It's true that the practices which are rendered vivid by our language come from a variety of cultural sources, but what renders them vivid to us is that they are now part of the cultural structure centred on our language.<sup>26</sup>

I think, however, that it is a mistake to assume *a priori* that language is the key to culture in this sense. A global language like English – vast, voracious, and cosmopolitan – cannot plausibly be identified with a single cultural framework; in the modern world it operates more as a cultural clearinghouse, far outstripping the traditions and practices of any one community of users. The fact that something is translated into English means only that it is available to at least a quarter of the world's population; it does not mean that it has been integrated into a secure and harmonious framework of culture which is the peculiar property of Englishmen. It is true that for some smaller communities, a particular language may be a treasured part of a cultural heritage; it is true too that part of its being treasured may be that it is taken to provide an indispensable framework for the representation of the rest of the culture in question. But that is true of some languages, some cultures, some communities and not others; it may or may not be a distinctive feature of the way a given cultural heritage is conceived. Not everything that we might individuate as *one culture* has its own language; and not everything that is represented in a given language is constituted thereby as part of one culture.

If this is correct, then the ethical importance of cultural wholes or integrated cultural frameworks is thrown in question. With it goes the idea that it is important for each person to be related to a secure and integrated framework *via* her membership in some community in particular. None of this has the importance Kymlicka claims it has, at least not at a general level. A person needs cultural meanings; but she does not need a homogeneous cultural framework. She needs to understand her choices and the options facing her in contexts in which they make sense, but she does not need any single context to provide commensurable meanings for all the choices she has. To put it crudely, people need culture, but they don't need cultural integrity. And since no one needs a homogeneous cultural framework or the

integrity of a particular set of meanings, no one needs to be immersed in one of the small-scale communities which, according to Kymlicka and others, are alone capable of securing this integrity and homogeneity. Some, of course, may still prefer such immersion, and welcome the social subsidization of their preference. But it is not, as Kymlicka has maintained, a necessary presupposition of rational and meaningful choice.

#### RUSHDIE AND MÉLANGE

So we come to the second of our models, the "One Person: Many Fragments" model (or "the Many Fragments model," for short). I want to begin my discussion of it, rather tentatively, with an extended quotation from an essay entitled "In Good Faith," which Salman Rushdie wrote in 1990 in defense of his execrated book *The Satanic Verses*:

If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's-eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity.

Standing at the centre of the novel is a group of characters most of whom are British Muslims, or not particularly religious persons of Muslim background, struggling with just the sort of great problems that have arisen to surround the book, problems of hybridization and ghettoization, of reconciling the old and the new. Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world*. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. *The Satanic Verses* is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves. . . .

I was born an Indian, and not only an Indian, but a Bombayite – Bombay, most cosmopolitan, most hybrid, most hotchpotch of Indian cities. My writing and thought have therefore been as deeply influenced by Hindu myths and attitudes as Muslim ones. . . . Nor is the West absent from Bombay. I was already a mongrel self, history's bastard, before London aggravated the condition.<sup>27</sup>

These remarks intimate a picture of the relation between culture and identity that is quite different from that asserted in the One



Culture model. It suggests that in the modern world – in the wake of imperialism, global communication, world war, mass migration, and frequent flying – people are not in a position to absorb their cultures whole and pure. We wake to a deafening babel of cultural materials, in a bazaar in which no prices have been fixed and no commensurabilities established for the bewildering variety of goods on offer. In what seems like chaos or anarchy from the point of view of the One Culture model, each of us makes a discovery about herself. We are not so lost or timid that we cannot build an identity for ourselves without the guiding hand of a pre-established framework. Indeed, we find ourselves with an identity – usually a coat of many colors – long before we have the chance to reflect on our ontological relation with community. The Maori *haka* and the Book of Common Prayer were already present in their different languages in my consciousness before I had a chance to wonder whether they could really fit comfortably within a single cultural frame.

That is the way in which we find ourselves constituted, and managing an identity is making the best of it. Of course, we are not always passive in the matter. As each of us grows up, we take more control of the materials to which we will expose ourselves and the interests and avocations we will pursue.<sup>28</sup> From time to time, each of us finds that the identity we have, partly given and partly constructed, is a source of unhappiness or anomie. But we do not, as we reflect on the various sources of this discomfort, turn naturally to purge from our identity those elements that do not conform to a pre-given pattern prescribed by a community as “our culture.” On the contrary, the pre-given pattern embraced by a person obsessed with the distinctiveness and integrity of “her” culture may be the least *comfortable* to live with in the world we face. The curious, anxious, and imaginative animals that we are may find it much easier to live with an identity that is appallingly compromised from the point of view of the first model, because the world around us elicits questions for our curiosity that radically disconcert any attempt to hold cultural or communal boundaries constant and impermeable.

When I discuss the Many Fragments model with my colleagues, I encounter two responses. The first is that the second model may be fine for an extraordinary individual like Salman Rushdie. But he is exceptional, say the critics; the idea that people will feel at home in a cosmopolitan *mélange*, they say, is bound to be confined to a tiny and privileged elite.<sup>29</sup> I am sure that is true, certainly in regard to the form in which Rushdie expresses this vision. Most ordinary people have neither the opportunity nor the inclination to engage in anything like the conscious cultivation or celebration of cosmopolitanism that my Many Fragments model has intimated. By the same token, however,

few people – other than the members of a somewhat *different* tiny elite – have the opportunity to worry very explicitly about the integrity, the purity, and the survival of particular cultural frameworks. As I acknowledged at the beginning of this paper, the models under consideration are ideal types in relation to the complexity of ordinary life. Each of these models has its explicit elite version, and each organizes an array of mundane, messy versions for ordinary use. The question is which of the ideal-typic models provides the better starting-point for understanding the complexity of the everyday life of (say) your average non-intellectual French-Canadian worker. In her more political moments, the *Québécoise* may loudly proclaim the importance of the One Culture model and refuse to speak anything but French. But such proclamations cannot always be trusted; given the *mélange* of Coke bottles, Levi jeans made in Korea, North American ice hockey leagues, Chinese food, Montreal folk singers, American movies, Japanese computers, Canadian politics, and Catholic guilt that might be taken to characterize her ordinary life and experience, my money is on the Many Fragments model as the more honest basis for understanding the cultural character of her identity.

The second response to the Rushdie picture that I encounter goes as follows: “There could not be a bazaar of cultural materials available to cosmopolitan intellectuals like Rushdie or their non-elite counterparts unless there had once been a variety of cultures and communities, each relatively pure and homogeneous, to serve as the sources for this *mélange*. So we surely owe *something* to the integrity of particular cultures, if only to preserve the sources for cultural diversity in the future.”<sup>30</sup>

That response is premised on a certain view of the history of cultural *mélange*. Once upon a time there were pure cultures, one to each community, existing in different parts of the world. Then, for the reasons we have previously considered, the members of various communities mingled, bringing their respective cultural heritages into relation with one another, and mixing them all up in the ways I described. The mixture is assumed to be rich now only because of the distinctive character of each pure ingredient. If the supply of pure ingredients ever dries up, the argument goes, the mixture will become impoverished.

But what if these historical assumptions are false? What if there has been nothing but *mélange* all the way down? What if cultures have always been implicated with one another, through trade, war, curiosity, and other forms of inter-communal relation? What if the mingling of cultures is as immemorial as cultural roots themselves? What if purity and cultural homogeneity have always been myths? I don’t mean that all cultures have always been implicated with all others;

certainly there are some that have developed in relative isolation. But that may be an anomaly, with purely geographical explanations. Perhaps we should not make too much of it so far as our general ontology of culture and community is concerned; perhaps we should not make it our point of reference in thinking about how to live in a society of which it is evidently false. Maybe cultural homogeneity is not, in any interesting sense, the *normal* state of a human community at all, but simply something that happens when, for whatever reason, the members of a given community do not have the opportunity to interact with others on a basis that enables them to indulge what appears to be a hard-wired human curiosity and to learn from each other and appropriate or copy various practices and traditions.

In any case, it should be clear that the key to the richness of Rushdie's *mélange* is not necessarily original purity. The key is sheer plurality. What matters is the experience of human curiosity, creativity, and ingenuity: new and startling ways of dealing with the world. We know enough about new beginnings to understand that they do not necessarily have to be nurtured in a cradle of cultural purity. As Rushdie suggests, the newness that enters the world enters as often in the clash of old materials as in the immaculate conception of the raw materials for such a clash.<sup>31</sup>

It is true that in the world Rushdie describes, the category of *the exotic* may eventually fade away;<sup>32</sup> we may less and less have the experience, so dear to nineteenth-century anthropology, of being confronted with cultural materials *wholly different* from those with which we are familiar. But, again, novelty is not the same as newness. The constitution and dissemination of human creativity – the emergence of new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things – can go on from within a given society. It does not appear to need a constant input of exogenous materials. As John Stuart Mill noted, whether a society continues as creative or lapses into a stationary condition depends on how it organizes itself in regard to the choices, the courage, and the creativity of its members, rather than on the continual accumulation of essentially “foreign” experience.<sup>33</sup>

In general, then, we should not be beguiled by images such as “the melting pot” into thinking that the upshot of the mingling of cultures is eventual homogenization. Homogenization under the influence of fashion, consumerism, and conformism is always a possibility. But, again, avoiding it seems to be a matter of how we organize ourselves and not a matter of the relative purity of the cultural materials we are dealing with. It remains the case that the most strikingly new ideas are hybrids of the old. There is simply no correlation between the creative value of the hybrid and the proximity (in time or purity) of its raw materials to any allegedly pristine cultural roots. The American

image of the melting pot does suggest that under certain conditions the blend may become bland. Under other conditions, however, the heat of the pot might cause the diversity of materials to proliferate. Neither possibility is guaranteed. Which one is realized depends in part on the respect we accord to each other's imaginative ability to develop new and disconcerting combinations. It depends, in other words, on our respect for precisely those human capacities that challenge the bonds of cultural purity.<sup>34</sup>

#### THE MONGREL SELF

The second model, like the first, is supposed to depict the relation between culture and the constitution of individual identity. But what in fact *becomes* of identity, on the second model? If we draw our communal allegiances from here, there and everywhere, if bits of cultures come haphazardly into our lives from different sources, where is the guarantee that they will all fit together? At least if a person draws her identity, as Kymlicka suggests, from a single culture, she will obtain for herself a certain degree of coherence or integrity. The coherence which makes her particular community a single cultural entity will confer a corresponding degree of integrity on the individual self that is constituted under its auspices.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, identity constituted under the auspices of a multiplicity of cultures may strike us as chaotic, confused, incoherent. Such a self is surely going to require *management*, just to keep its house in order.

The trouble is that if we talk too much in this way about management, we will fall into the trap of postulating the existence of the self as a managerial entity, an agent existing in distinction from each of the disparate elements that constitute the person in question. We have to postulate the “I,” the true self who somehow contrives to keep the whole house in order. Listen, for example, to the following passage from George Kateb:

One must take responsibility for oneself – one's self must become a project, one must become the architect of one's soul. One's *dignity* resides in being, to some important degree, a person of one's own creating, making, choosing rather than in being merely a creature or a socially manufactured, conditioned, created thing.<sup>36</sup>

But who is this entity that takes responsibility for its self-creation? How does it make its decisions? How does it know what sort of being to create?

Certainly, the self imagined in the second model does not answer to the more earnest or high-minded characterizations of the liberal individual in modern political philosophy. Modern liberal theorists

place great stress on the importance of an autonomous individual's formulation and execution of a life-plan. Liberals stress the importance of each individual's selection of a particular conception of the good, a view about what makes life worth living; and they define a person's rights as the liberties and protections she needs in order to be able to choose and follow such values on equal terms with others who are engaged in a similar enterprise. The approach to life sketched out by Rushdie in the passage we quoted earlier has little in common with this, apart from the elements of freedom and decision. It has none of the ethical *unity* that the autonomous Kantian individual is supposed to confer on her life: it is a life of kaleidoscopic tension and variety. It is not the pursuit of a chosen conception of goodness along lines indicated by Ronald Dworkin,<sup>37</sup> nor does its individuality consist, in Rawls's words, in "a human life lived according to a plan."<sup>38</sup> Instead, it rightly challenges the rather compulsive rigidity of the traditional liberal picture.<sup>39</sup> If there is liberal autonomy in the model of *mélange*, it is choice running rampant, and pluralism internalized from the relations *between* individuals to the chaotic coexistence of projects, pursuits, ideas, images, and snatches of culture *within* an individual.<sup>40</sup>

Given the ontology of the Many Fragments model, the liberal self would be suspect in any case. One dominant theme in recent communitarian writing has been a critique of the idea of the independent self – the homunculus manager, standing back a little from each of the items on the smorgasbord of its personality. In order to manage the disparate commitments and see that they fit with one another, in order to evaluate each item and compare it with others on the cultural menu, the self would have to be an ethereal sort of entity, without any content or commitments of its own. Michael Sandel has quite properly raised the question of whether this is the way we should view our personality and our character:

[W]e cannot regard ourselves as independent in this way without great cost to those loyalties and convictions whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are – as members of this family or community or nation or people, as bearers of this history, as sons and daughters of that revolution, as citizens of this republic. Allegiances such as these are more than values I happen to have or aims I "espouse at any given time." . . .

To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as these is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth. For to have character is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences none the less for my choices and conduct.<sup>41</sup>

Sandel's critique seems to present the defender of the Many Fragments model with an unhappy dilemma. Either she must embrace the ethereal self of liberal deontology – the self that chooses but is not identified with any of its choices; or she must admit that the self can have a substantial character of its own, a character essential to its identity. If she adopts the former, she gives a wholly unrealistic account of choice, for on what basis can this ghost choose if it has no values or commitments or projects of its own? If, however, she tries to avoid the imputed shallowness of this approach by adopting a conception of the self with a substantial essence of its own, then the model itself begins to look unsatisfactory. For now the self must have, not just cultural characteristics in all their plurality and variety, but *a character*, and it has not been proved that this is something one can have except in the framework of a particular given culture.<sup>42</sup>

To avoid the dilemma, we should go back and question the image of *management* and the assumptions about *identity* that are presupposed in this critique. So long as we think that the management of the self is like the personal governance of a corporation, we will be driven to ask embarrassing questions about the specific character of the "I" in its capacity as CEO. Suppose we think instead about personal identity in terms of the democratic self-government of a pluralistic population. Maybe the person is nothing but a set of commitments and involvements, and maybe the governance of the self is just the more or less comfortable (or at times more or less chaotic) coexistence of these elements. The threat, of course, is what we vulgarly term schizophrenia; but that may be better understood as radical conflict or dissonance rather than mere unregulated plurality.

An image that may help to dispel the various threats that are operating here is that of the self-governance of a group of friends living and working together. Each friend has a character of her own, and strengths and weaknesses of her own; they are quite different, but their variety and their frictions may be the key to their association and to their ability to undertake different projects and enterprises. No one, I hope, thinks that a friendship can be sustained only if one or the other friend is recognized as being *in charge*, or only to the extent that all parties are agreed on some specific common purpose or charter. Friendship doesn't work like that, nor, I think, do the internal politics of the self. There may, on occasions, be antagonisms within the self (as indeed there are among friends). All of us, even the most culturally and psychologically secure, have the experience of inner conflict. But far from detracting from the self's integrity, the possibility of such conflict, and the variety and open texture of character that make it possible, seem indispensable to healthy personality. It may be this limitless diversity of character – Rushdie's *mélange* or

hotchpotch – that makes it possible for each of us to respond to a multifaceted world in new and creative ways.

These are speculations, and they need to be matched more closely to recent work in the psychology of personality. Still, I hope that thinking in these terms may help to indicate how misleading it is to indict a picture of human life or action, such as the Many Fragments model, on the basis of simplistic assumptions about what the self *must* be like. Human character is not a simple thing. The openness and diversity of the second model may well hold more of a key to understanding the role of character in a changing world than the simple assumption of Sandel's critique that character is to be identified compulsively with pre-established cultural role.

#### MANY FRAGMENTS AND MULTICULTURALISM

In a previous section entitled "One Person: One Culture," I outlined what I took to be the main normative implications of the first model of culture and identity. I want to conclude by doing something similar for the "One Person: Many Fragments" model. Some of the normative implications of the second model simply contradict those of the first. If individual identity is not constituted by the framework of a single culture, it is neither sufficient nor perhaps even necessary to understand a whole culture in order to respect an individual.

That it is not sufficient is obvious. Even if a person, P, is identified as a *member of* or as *coming from* a given community, still, respecting her involves understanding not only the aspects of that community's culture that are important for her identity, but also the way she has come to terms with the cultures of the other communities that surround her. Someone may object that this is unnecessary in the case where P has lived her life wholly within the confines of the given community; there would be no need for any other member of that sheltered community to take into account the cultures of the surrounding communities in her dealings with P. But even in that case, the other person's familiarity with the culture of their common community would not be *sufficient* for respecting P;<sup>43</sup> she would also have to know P's position in that culture, and increasingly, for almost all cultures under the pressure of (post-)modernity, she would have to know something about the cultural choices that P has made, choices which cannot easily be predicted simply by studying P's characteristics in relation to the given cultural frame.

Anyway, the question of respect usually only arises in a *multi-cultural* setting when the person who is according the respect does not hail from the community of the person to whom the respect is to be accorded. Suppose, then, the issue arises for a person whose back-

ground is in a quite different culture from that of P's community: what is it for *this* individual to respect a person like P? In order for that question to arise, it must be the case that the two cultural worlds *already* impinge on one another. It therefore follows from its being a question for the second person that she must consider what role elements of *her* background culture have played in the constitution of P's identity.

It might seem harder to establish that understanding a whole culture is not a necessary condition for respect in a case like P's. But if we agree that the natural condition of cultures and communities is interaction and overlap, continuous growth and development, the point is easier to accept. To think – as one does with the "One Culture" model – that in order to respect P one has to respect some *cultural framework* as the basis of her identity, means that one has to pin down a favored version of the cultural framework to be understood in this regard. But cultures and communities are developing things – their boundaries blur and their identities shift. If we try to solve the problem by specifying a favored version of the culture first, and then imposing that as a condition of respect for P, we run the risk of oppressing P's own identity in favor of some version of it *we* have constructed. This is what happens, for example, in those invidious cases where a member of some ethnic group is not permitted to benefit from affirmative action programs because she has not "self-identified" with some favored version of her ethnicity.<sup>44</sup> But if we come at it from the other direction, taking our cues from P herself, it will be an entirely contingent matter – dependent on what she says and thinks – whether it is necessary to understand the whole culture in order to understand and respect P.

This is not to say that the second model rejects the idea of *difference* (as discussed in the section "One Person: One Culture"). But difference is relegated now to the individual level, rather than to the level of group membership. It is genuine difference – sensitivity to the uniqueness of each person's self-constitution – rather than the bogus difference which takes refuge in the artificially constructed homogeneity of each of a variety of cultures.

With that in mind, we may also have to revise what the One Culture model indicated about group rights and wrongs. Each person's identity is given not only by the culture of the community to which she belongs (if there is such a community), but also by the effect on her of the other cultures that surround or impinge on her. That is partly a matter of her choices, and partly independent of her choices, but it is at any rate not something that can be predicted from a study of the culture that we call (in virtue of the person's background) "hers." Thus an attack on P in virtue of her ethnicity or

cultural background cannot automatically be assumed to be an implicit attack on another person with the same background, for we cannot assume that a common cultural heritage has played the same role in the constitution of their respective identities. What the attack on P does to the other person's dignity and self-respect will depend (at least in part) on what the latter has made for herself of the relations between the culture they share and the communities and cultures that surround them.

There is (as I suggested at the beginning of the paper) one respect in which the Many Fragments model and the One Culture model do overlap in their normative implications. Both reject the hegemony of the dominant culture as the key to understanding and respect in a multicultural setting. But they do so for different reasons. The Many Fragments model rejects it utterly, because it denies that any culture has a necessarily privileged place in the constitution of any individual, or in the determination of what it is to respect her. The One Culture model rejects it, but only contingently. Its logic is to suggest that something like "Great Books" and "Western Civ." *would* be appropriate for understanding and respecting "Anglos" if they were not in fact surrounded by members of other ethnic communities. Worse still, it suggests that something like a "Great Books" approach is the appropriate vehicle for understanding and respecting other cultures; the only difference is that it should be proliferated so that we can study a privileged version of *each* culture, rather than just a privileged version of the dominant one.

The advantage of the Many Fragments model is that it rejects all such nonsense. Under modern conditions, boundaries between cultures are permeable, and materials of quite disparate provenance make themselves available for the constitution of individual lives. We need a notion of respect for persons that is sensitive to those conditions, and to the fact that for every man and woman the construction of an identity under these conditions is a painfully *individual* task. We need, accordingly, a conception of multicultural education that is sensitive to the fact that *each individual's identity is multicultural* and that individuals can no longer be regarded in the modern world (if indeed they ever could) as mere artifacts of the culture of the one community to which we think they ought to belong.

## NOTES

1. New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee, *One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence* (Albany: New York State Education Department, June 1991), p. 1.
2. For example, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) "Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education," *Social Education* 55 (September 1992), p. 274: "Multicultural education seeks to actualize the idea of *e pluribus unum* within our nation and to create a society that recognizes and respects the cultures of its diverse people, people united within a framework of overarching democratic values. . . ."

3. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 19–22.
4. This seems to be the implication of the NCSS Guidelines, p. 277: "For individuals, group identity can provide a foundation for self-definition. Ethnic and cultural group membership can provide a sense of belonging, of shared traditions, of interdependence of fate. . . . When society views ethnic and cultural differences with respect, individuals can define themselves ethnically without conflict or shame."
5. There is an excellent discussion in David Bromwich, *Politics by Other Means: Higher Education and Group Thinking* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 55–97.
6. Lest this point sound too individualistic for the first model, we may add (i) that people make lives for themselves individually or together within the culture to which they belong, and (ii) that the process of thinking about a life for oneself (or themselves) need not be a matter of autonomous or existential choice, but may be a matter of, as it were, finding one's place in the life of the community, discovering who one is.
7. See, for example, Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 169, and Philip Selznick, *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 7ff.
8. See the discussion in Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), particularly chap. 2.
9. For the distinction between "general" and "special" rights, see H.L.A. Hart, "Are There Any Natural Rights?" in *Theories of Rights*, ed. Jeremy Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 83–8, and Jeremy Waldron, *The Right to Private Property* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 106–24.
10. See Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized Other and the Concrete Other," in her collection *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
11. That pluralism is not necessarily ethnic diversity is recognized in the NCSS Guidelines, p. 4: "For many persons, then, ethnic criteria may be irrelevant for the purposes of self-identification. Their identities stem primarily from, for example, gender, social class, occupation, political affiliation or religion." What is interesting, however, is that our conception of ethnic affiliation has the "totalizing" or "comprehensive" character associated with "community," whereas the other categories mentioned in the quotation I have just given do not have this character or have it to a much lesser extent. It may seem possible for a person to think of herself as a Navajo, for example, and have that be the key to a large part of her identity; whereas a person could not possibly think of her being a Democrat or a realtor as a key to her identity in this way. For a

- discussion of the totalizing tendency of community, see Selznick, *The Moral Commonwealth*, p. 358.
12. I am grateful to Will Kymlicka for making me think harder about this issue.
  13. See H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 185–95 for reflections, along these lines, concerning “the minimum content of natural law.”
  14. See, for example, the discussion of the first and second “Principles of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity” in the NCSS Guidelines, pp. 2–3.
  15. In the sense of the second meaning of “catholic” given in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary: “1 a . . . : of, relating to, or forming the church universal b . . . : of, relating to, or forming the ancient undivided Christian church or a church claiming historical continuity from it.” *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1993), p. 181.
  16. See Jeremy Waldron, “Particular Values and Critical Morality,” *California Law Review* 77 (1989), pp. 578–81 and 589, reprinted in Jeremy Waldron, *Liberal Rights: Collected Papers 1981–91* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
  17. Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). The argument that follows is adapted from Jeremy Waldron, “Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative,” *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 25 (1992), especially pp. 781–6.
  18. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 178. See also John Rawls, “Reply to Alexander and Musgrave,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 88 (1974): 641: “[F]ree persons conceive of themselves as beings who can revise and alter their final ends and who give first priority to preserving their liberty in these matters.”
  19. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 90–5.
  20. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p. 164, quoting also from Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 563–4.
  21. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p. 165.
  22. *Ibid.*
  23. Alasdair Macintyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981), p. 201.
  24. Letter from Will Kymlicka to the author, June 16, 1992.
  25. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p. 177.
  26. Kymlicka, letter to author, June 16, 1992.
  27. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), pp. 394 and 404.
  28. See the discussion by Joseph Raz in *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 387–90. See also Jeremy Waldron, “Autonomy and Perfectionism in Raz’s Morality of Freedom,” *Southern California Law Review* 62 (1989), pp. 1109 and 1113.
  29. Once again I am indebted to Will Kymlicka’s letter of June 16, 1992, for this criticism.
  30. I am grateful to Radhika Rao for pressing this point.
  31. On the topic of “new beginnings,” see also Hannah Arendt, *The Human*

- Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 8–9 and 176–8.
32. For the dangers of confusing the importance of the new with a depraved intoxication with the exotic, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), chap. 3.
  33. See John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1955), chap. 3.
  34. See also Waldron, “Particular Values and Critical Morality,” p. 586. See also Bromwich, *Politics by Other Means*, p. 182.
  35. This may be exaggerated. However we define and individuate cultures, can we simply assume that each culture is coherent in this sense? Aren’t some cultures, even some traditional ones, riven by contradictions? And isn’t the artifice of “cultural preservation” likely to heighten any contradictions that already exist as well as introducing new ones? Moreover, are we really in a position to assume that coherence means the same in the context of a social entity, like a cultural framework, and an individual entity, like a person constituting a life?
  36. George Kateb, “Democratic Individuality and the Claims of Politics,” *Political Theory* 12 (1984): 343. This passage was drawn to my attention by an excerpt in William Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues and Diversity in the Liberal State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 230.
  37. See Ronald Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 191.
  38. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 408.
  39. For less rigid conceptions of a liberal life, see J. L. Mackie, “Can There Be a Right-Based Moral Theory?” in *Theories of Rights*, ed. Jeremy Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 175: “People differ radically about the kinds of life that they choose to pursue. Even this way of putting it is misleading: in general people do not and cannot make an overall choice of a total plan of life. They choose successively to pursue various activities from time to time, not once and for all.” See also Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, pp. 370–1: “The autonomous person is part author of his life. The image this metaphor is meant to conjure up is not that of the regimented, compulsive person who decides when young what life to have and spends the rest of it living it out according to plan. . . . [Autonomy] does not require an attempt to impose any special unity on one’s life. The autonomous life may consist of diverse and heterogenous pursuits. And a person who frequently changes his mind can be as autonomous as one who never shakes off his adolescent preferences.”
  40. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 195–6, paragraph 618: “We usually endeavour to acquire a *single* department of feeling, a *single* attitude of mind towards all the events and situations of life – that above all is what is called being philosophically minded. But for the enrichment of knowledge it may be of more value not to reduce oneself to uniformity in this way, but to listen instead to the gentle voice of each of life’s different situations; these will suggest the

attitude of mind appropriate to them. Through thus ceasing to treat oneself as a *single* rigid and unchanging individuum one takes an intelligent interest in the life and being of many others."

41. Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. 179. See also Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 157: "The self which has arrived at freedom by setting aside all external obstacles and impingements is characterless, and hence without defined purpose, however much this is hidden by such seemingly positive terms as 'rationality' or 'creativity.'"
42. A similar suggestion is found in MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 204–5: "[W]e all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in part what gives my life its own moral particularity.  
"This thought is likely to appear alien . . . from the standpoint of modern individualism. From the standpoint of individualism I am what I myself choose to be. I can always, if I wish to, put in question what are taken to be merely contingent social features of my existence."
43. Could I possibly know how to respect a particular other, even one immersed in mainstream Anglo culture, simply on the basis of reading Plato, Augustine, Melville, and all the other "Great Books"?
44. See Bromwich, *Politics by Other Means*, pp. 23–6, for an example.