

# Multicultural Nightmare Is Antithetical to Tolerance

By Neomi M. Rao

**W**elcome to the multicultural college campus. Here you will be defined by your race, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation even before you enroll in classes. The labels come quickly and stick hard.

Arriving at Yale three years ago, I thought diversity on campus would mean that racial and gender differences would be taken in stride. I was wrong. Though the diversity bean counters consider me a minority (Asian Indian, if you're curious), I find myself in the awkward position of not considering my race and gender very important. To the "multicultural police," this means I'm a traitor. According to them, I'm supposed to be out there marching to "take back the night," demonstrating for more Asian-American deans or throwing myself on the ground, covered with ketchup, to protest the mistreatment of Haitian refugees. Apparently, these preachers of tolerance cannot tolerate a minority woman who claims an identity independent of race and gender.

Today's multiculturalists are the self-appointed heirs of the civil rights movement, but their message is worlds apart. It is a message of divisiveness, not togetherness. Rather than seeking to reconcile differences and focusing on the humanity common to all people, multiculturalism fans the flames of minority resentment against everybody else, including other minorities. Thus, blacks are taught to resent Hispanics because Hispanics supposedly

are taking away their jobs.

Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed that one day people would be judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin. This dream has no meaning to the multiculturalists, who separate and classify everyone according to race, gender and sexual orientation.

Those who reject their assigned categories are called names. So-called conforming blacks are called "oreos" by members of their own community; conservatives become "fascists." Though they preach tolerance, multiculturalists seldom practice it.

Some people believe the multicultural movement exists only on the radical fringes, but it infects nearly every area of college life. At the administrative level, Yale has four "ethnic deans," including separate deans for Puerto Rican and Chicano students. More than one-third of all undergraduate organizations are based on race, gender or sexual orientation. Groups ranging from women of color for reproductive rights to CISPES, a hold-over from the 1980s Committee in Solidarity with the Peoples of El Salvador, are engaged in protests against American "imperialism." Every year during BGLAD week (that's Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Awareness Days, for the uninitiated), a publication called *My Tongue* appears, filled with pornographic pictures of homosexual couplings.

The multiculturalists are not simply after political reform. Underneath their touchy-feely talk of tolerance, they seek to undermine American culture. They argue that culture, society and politics have been defined — and presumably defiled — by white, male heterosexuals hostile to their way of life. Homosexuals want to redefine marriage and parenthood; feminists in women's studies programs want to replace so-called male rationality with more sensitive responses common to "womyn." It may be kinder and gentler, but can you build a bridge with it?

Understanding your roots is important, but it can become a dangerous obsession. At Yale, as elsewhere, ethnic fraternities and sororities make separation a requirement for membership. For example, pledges in the Hispanic fraternity are required to dress alike and talk only to their fellow brothers. Such groups teach students that racial and ethnic identity cannot coexist with the dominant U.S. culture. Members must choose one or the other, but they cannot have both. To the multiculturalists, King's message seems naive and idealistic.



We actually were much more comfortable and relaxed about these things in high school. Differences were appreciated and discussed, but they were not the focal point of student activity. We appreciated diversity, but it was not the focus of our lives. People could identify with their race or choose not to.

At Yale, on the other hand, we are forced to accept separatist identities — and watch out if you don't want to play their silly little game. Instead of marching to "take back the night," reading *My Tongue* or fasting in a cage for Haitians, those truly concerned with tolerance should be fighting for individuals who want to escape the multicultural nightmare.

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