

# Multiculturalism bill will obstruct education further

## Assimilation is key to success

**Sam Kepfield**  
Diversions Contributor

"Diversity."  
It is, without question, the single word in the English language which I have come to loathe.

This seemingly innocuous word is coming to be the mantra of the New Tribalism, seeking to undo two centuries of laboring to build a more just, equal and American society.

Notice I said American. Not Euro-American, not African-American, not Jewish-American. Just American, period. That is the problem with the New Tribalism — it seeks to classify us all according to some hyphenated category based on ancestry.

So why worry?  
Currently under consideration in the Legislature is LB 179, sponsored by Sen. Ernie Chambers. The bill is a follow up to last year's LB 922, which established multicultural curricula in schools. LB 179 calls for establishment of a Multicultural Education Advisory Committee to implement multicultural programs, with a permanent office to monitor the programs.

It's not as if we don't have enough bureaucracy stifling our schools. Adding yet another layer to ensure that the politically correct New Tribalism is taught will further hinder education.

Multiculturalism, as an end in itself, detracts from the primary mission of schools. For those who have forgotten, that mission is to teach our children to read, to write, to do arithmetic and — most importantly — to educate them in American history and culture, that they might be better citizens.

It is a task in which schools have failed of late. Kids come out of high school dead last in knowledge of the basic facts needed to sustain them in a technological, information-based world.

Multiculturalism is based on "feelings," making students "feel" better about themselves and their ancestry. It detracts from "thought," i.e., knowledge of math, science and language. And then we wonder why minority students don't do as well as their non-minority counterparts, why they don't

have management jobs at IBM or partnerships in law firms.

It's simple — in order to get those jobs, you have to assimilate into the dominant ethos of a culture. This is what multiculturalism opposes.

Furthermore, the New Tribalism's insistence on turning every question in history and society into one of black vs. white, of "Euroman" conquering and enslaving various indigenous peoples, takes a simplistic view of the world. Within each monolithic bloc are endless variations on the pattern of adjustment to American culture.

For example, take Asian students. Their parents arrived here in the 1970s, speaking no English, with little or no money to their names.

All they had was a dream, that America was the one place in the world where, with a little luck and a lot of hard work, they could make a decent living. Moreover, they could send their children to schools, to become doctors, lawyers, and engineers.

Their success is phenomenal. Asian students top out on SAT scores, bust the curves in their courses, and graduate at the top of their classes. They did it without any "Asian studies" courses, and without multiculturalism.

This is not to say that all students shouldn't be taught, as part of their history course, that blacks have made more contributions to America than the Emancipation Proclamation and Martin Luther King. It is not to say that this country doesn't have a few blots on its past — such as slavery, and the Indian wars.

It is to say that these things ought not to detract from the fact that America is great precisely because we have worked to overcome both legacies, and that we can even talk about them.

America is a mosaic, a gorgeous pattern of different colored tiles fitting together to form one large picture. The New Tribalism threatens to unglue the mosaic, letting the tiles fall away from the rest. One need look no further than Yugoslavia, the southern Russian republics, or South Africa to see what awaits us if we continue blindly down this path.

# Working class white male demands society to listen

## Not all whites are elitists

**By Todd Burger**  
Diversions Contributor

In the quest for multiculturalism, it seems that the group designated as white males is regarded as a monolithic whole. The whole lot of white males are casually disregarded as the elite, and that we as a group should be heard from less rather than more.

While it is probably true that white males, especially those loathed dead white males, have carved out for themselves a disproportionately large chunk of the area that is considered literature, there are many of us white males who are still normally denied a voice; not all of us are of the white male elite.

Working class documentarian Michael Moore explains this phenomena of ignoring the non-elite voice when he is introducing his friend, Ben Hamper, in the foreword to Hamper's autobiographical book, "Rivthead:"

"We were never supposed to get out, and you were never supposed to hear our voices. It all comes down to a matter of class, of knowing our place..."

"I am glad that Ben and I finally ran into each other and, in our own ways, held on to that belief that we were not invisible people with inaudible voices simply because our fathers ate out of a lunch bucket and shopped at Kmart."

I relate to this plainly spoken message from Moore because I as a white male from humble origins can agree with this feeling that people like me are not adequately represented in literature and the media. There is plenty out there from and about the elite white male, but how often is the non-elite white allowed to offer his story to the world in his own voice?

Often, when there is a story to be told about a non-elite, a member of the elite will co-opt the story and tell it, eliminating the possibility the story will be told in the ringing-true voice of the more humble, though possibly less refined and eloquent, person.

I believe I can comfortably fit the informal criteria of Michael Moore's, whereby I was supposed to be an invisible person with an

inaudible voice.

My father is dead now — killed himself actually — but when he was alive he was a farmer and sometimes brought his lunch bucket out to the fields so he could save time.

And my mother has shopped at Kmart, though I believe she prefers Walmart.

What's more, my brother works as a wage earner in the meat department at Super Saver and I work as a humble pizza delivery man at a place that compels me to get the damn order to the customer in thirty minutes or less.

Some people stereotype the man under the absurd blue cap as stupid, possibly just because he has to wear a silly looking uniform and has to do what is perceived as a contemptible job, rushing from place to place and taking the accompanying abuse and ridicule from those same people, who think that it is a sport to deliver some cheap shots to a working man who isn't allowed to talk or fight back, lest the defeated bully/abuser call the manager and put the humble pizza man in danger of losing his job.

Yes, these people know that the delivery man should know his place, and never forget it. Exploitation works easier all the way around that way.

That man values holding on to his job so he effectively keeps his voice mute on the job, at least most of the time. That man is not stupid; he is simply denied a voice, in the interest of making a dollar or two. Oh, he will talk, but you won't hear him saying anything more daring beyond the "Thank you, Ma'am," or "Thank you, sir." If a service employee seems overly ingratiating, it is because he has to be obsequious to maintain management's idea of proper customer relations.

So I contend I am not part of the elite establishment, and therefore my voice comes from a group of people whose voices are normally not heard, the non-elite white male.

Thank you, Daily Nebraskan, for allowing me the opportunity for my voice to be heard.

"Attention, Kmart shoppers, are your voices being heard?"

# Multicultural education for practical use

Multicultural Education.

It seems this is a subject that is on the minds of many administrators and students, not only at UNL, but in communities and cities in the United States. It seems that people are either in favor or against it. Those that argue for multicultural education say that it is necessary to teach children at early ages, or when they enter college, about different cultures so that they will be more accepting of one another. By accepting one another, students will hopefully be able to tolerate others. This way they won't be so ignorant about the world around them, and they will realize that their race and culture is not superior to someone else's.

Those that are against multicultural education argue that they or their children are cultured enough and are not racist so it's not necessary for them or their children to take classes on multicultural education. They fear higher taxes

to implement such curriculums in schools. They fear their children will lose respect for their culture and adopt a different way of life that they don't approve of.

I don't understand why college students would be opposed to taking a class on multiculturalism. Isn't expanding one's mind and gaining knowledge part of the college experience, or education in general?

I think students in high school and college should be required to take courses on multicultural education. The simple fact that the Ku Klux Klan has regional, (if not national) headquarters in Lincoln, should tell us that there are many people around us that are dangerously racist and are bringing up their kids to believe that their race is superior, and instill a sense of hatred towards people of other cultures and races.

As a society, people in the United States haven't reached a social utopia. We are in the salad bowl stage

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—with separate cultures, while we try to convince ourselves that we are in the melting pot stage of existence.

This is evident in the fact that the Los Angeles riots stemmed from the mistreatment of minorities by the white majority. Too many majority students that attend UNL come to school with very little knowledge

of other cultures, have had very little contact with people from different races, and base their opinions on prejudices and bad experiences with limited members of another race or ethnic background. Many of them come from small, conservative towns in Nebraska where they know little of the world around them. Even people in the larger communities where there is more diversity have a lot to learn about other races and cultures.

The United States is a prevalent member of the world economy, as the global market expands, Americans are going to have to be knowledgeable of other races and cultures and learn different languages in order to stay competitive abroad. Many people in other countries are required to be bilingual in grade school while learning a second language in the U.S., is merely an option in most high schools.

Another aspect of teaching multicultural education is recog-

nizing the historical contributions that people from different races and ethnic backgrounds have made to our society. As a Mexican-American it is very disappointing to see how history has been interpreted in school books to exclude the contributions of my people, or their existence in the "American Drama" of history.

I grew up in the white society and know about its customs and norms. I know that many people in this society classify and stereotype me. I know what it's like to be different and be judged because of my ethnic background. I know how to survive in the "white man's world." I also know about another country, its culture, language, customs and traditions. I believe that being bicultural and bilingual has only helped me to understand people, myself and life altogether.

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