THE THREE PROCESSES & TYPES OF AMERICAN "INTEGRATION"

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I used to know what "integration" was, & I was for it. Now I must ask what is meant by it before I can say whether I'm for it or against it. For the sake of clearer discourse & the benefits therefrom, let's name the current processes-types of "integration."

1 But first a **biblical** note. HEBREW: As God is One (the last word of the Shema, Deut.6.4), so it's a joy for people to live as one, in unity-solidarity-togetherness-integrity-integration (the last word of Ps.133's first v.): the Hebrew root is the same. Psychology uses "integration" to mean the organization of the personality into a harmonious whole; Jer.32.39 (using our root) sees God, the honoring of God, as central to this unity, this integrity (Lat., "untouched," thus "undivided").. Further, the creation is one, & we are one with the rest of it, which we call "nature."....GREEK distinguishes "one" (ἑν- *hen*) from "whole-entire-complete" (ὁλο- *holo*), the latter sense produced in Hebrew by saying what would be literally translated "all-one." A further distinction in Greek is made by varying the suffixes to *hen*, one meaning "unity" & the other "union," an important difference in NT. "Integrity" is *hol* except when the reference is to character, when the usual word for "goodness" is used. In Eph., we are to maintain communal unity (4.3) & attain faith-unity (v.13; both *hen*).

2 **ASSIMILATIVE integration** produces your standard-brand, melting-pot American, speaking "Standard American" (linguists' term for what's spoken north of the South & west of Syracuse), with a signal system that gives entrée to "all the right places" & relationships. Almost all whites--Christians, Jews, & others--have melded, or assimilited-integrated, into this American type. (In this Thinksheet I'm speaking of culture-integration: power-integration is something else, & 'til recently has been difficult for all but WASPMs [white Ango-Saxon Protestant males].) This integration process has been more difficult for others, in this order of difficulty: reds (Amerinds), blacks (African-Americans), yellows, &--the easiest--browns.

I'm being descriptive of what has been the norm & for most Americans continues to be: I'm being critical neither of the norm nor of those disinclined to it, ie on some other path than blending in, assimiliating to the traditional American norm. Yet, since I was born into that norm, I'm sometimes attacked for trying to speak descriptively about it. But if not I, who would have the right so to do? Truth to tell, everyone has that right--& obligation. Not to speak together of the norm as objectively ("value-free") as we can manage gives it more power than it ought to have, & its opponents more power than they ought to have.

Biblical note: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev.19.18) is nonassimilative, for the context is "your own people," (TANAKH) "your kinfolk." OT does, however, make an advance by demanding charitable & legal treatment of "the foreigner, the stranger, in your midst." But the comprehensive assimilative word is from Jesus: "Love your enemies" (Mt.5.44).

3 **REDUCTIVE integration** is generic, eliminating anything anyone would find offensive. Its mathematical symbol is least-common-denominator. Sometimes it leads to biblical abuse, as in a "Pastoral Letter" of "a number of distinguished members of the clergy" in the 16 June 76 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD using Lev.19.18 as scriptural sanction for their appeal that the U.S. be kind, after the war, to the Vietnamese. Quoting Jesus on love of enemies would have been on the nose, but quoting the kin-love passage in Lev. was off the wall, inappropriate. So why didn't the group choose an appropriate scripture? Because it included Jews! But what Jews now disagree with Jesus on this? Yet the reductive principle is "Don't mention Jesus in Jews' presence, or God in the presence of nontheists." And don't mention God the "Father" or the "Son" in the presence of women! Just how far this impoverishing silliness will go we don't yet know, but it's already gone too far. On NPR I just heard an ad for a Duke Ellington "sacred music" concert expressing "faith in the brotherhood (sic) of man (sic)": the Duke wouldn't have thought it funny to leave God out.

4 **EXCLUSIVE integration** is group-specific. Call it hyphenism, the inward turning of enclaves on themselves. It's on the increase & bodes ill for American unity.