

THE INDIGESTIBLES

These NOTES, only enough to fill one page, are in danger of being (1) too cryptic for an adequate spread-out of the issue & (2) too easy a target for those who are ever ready to put down anything that looks/feels like chauvinistic nativism, but....

1 We Christians are commissioned/committed to **hospitality**, openness to the neighbor (widest sense, including the enemy). In its primary sense, "**nativism**" as protection of the natives from immigration would seem to be the diametrical of this Christian virtue. (And the secondary meaning, viz. the promotion of minority cultures, is a wild swing away from the primary meaning.) Native Americans (who prefer to be called "Indians") are now in the secondary-meaning category, but never were in the first: in American history, "nativism" means, most narrowly, the self-defense of WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) against immigrants who fail of being W, A-S, &/or P: Catholics, Orthodox, Jews, Hispanics, Africans, Asians, & (in an old phrase) "islands of the sea."

2 In the most recent sense, "nativism" means the protective (pejoratively called "prejudiced") attitude toward Americans & aliens (i.e., non-citizens) of non-European extraction. (Another cut on this is language, the primary medium of culture: "nativism" is protection of English (as in the present political "English Only" movement) against the audio-pollution of "the American way of life" by foreign sounds, other languages, & the politics of "bilingualism").

3 One ambiguous social right is **cultural-territorial**: if your nose limits my rights, does my cultural integrity, i.e. my culture's unhampered freedom of self-development, limit your freedom of movement, e.i. exclude you from my culture's geographical territory (roughly, the meaning of the 1648 ["cuius regio, eius religio"] peace ending the Thirty-Years War)?

4 Today's NYTimes has this: "The [U.S.] government is at least a year from making the student visa system safe from terrorists." The 9.11 terrorists slipped through the U.S. Immigration nets woven to exclude "undesirable aliens." "Exclusivism" is an synonym of "nativism," & most of us Americans would like to think of ourselves (because of biblical hospitality, & Enlightenment global-humanism) as inclusivists. This Thinksheet boldly ask you to think exclusively: who should be excluded (from U.S. soil, from..., from...)? And its title suggests that we exclude indigestibles, those who we think won't melt in our hegemonous cultural meltingpot (to mix metaphors).....

5but wait! With their intense tribalism, Jews have been & are indigestible almost everywhere (ancient Rome [excluded, AD/CE 40], modern Japan); in 1492, Spain excluded them from its territory; 1933-45, Germany excluded them from life. America has been greatly blessed by not excluding them; but their indigestibility has had, & has, its downside--true also of the non-Protestant Christians, who've been only partially digested into our Protestant spirit with its individual rights & democratic institutions.

6 Euramerica, the Atlantic world, in originating technological civilization, created a great sucking sound as it drew immigrants, many of them indigestible, from the outer world. Black Africans were drawn (literally) into "the West" (currently, the usual designation of Euramerica) for cheap labor--as were Jews after the AD/CE 70 fall of Jerusalem (again, literally, as slaves). After WWI, Turks came westward & except in Switzerland (where only males were permitted) had babies (who now are indigestibles in Germany).

7 In his just-published THE DEATH OF THE WEST, Pat Buchanan gives major attention to the womb-swamping of the West: Euamericans have far fewer offspring than do the indigestible immigrants into Europe & the Western hemisphere. Some immigrants propagandize against Christianity for their own religions. But Saudi Arabia's radical uniculturalism is a global warning against being too exclusive.