CA☆ FORUM ON ANTHROPOLOGY IN PUBLIC

Rhinoceros 2

by Jonathan Friedman[1]

In a 1998 review of a book I published in 1994 based on articles some of which were ten years older, a friend, Richard Wilk, wrote (CA 93:287):

> It is dangerous to depict the rise of new forms of nationalism, ethnic identification, and aspirations for local cultural autonomy as symptoms of decline and disorder. While Friedman is neutral about these changes, seeing them as symptoms of an inevitable global development of capitalism, his conclusions are uncomfortably close to the ideas of reactionary cultural purists who blame minorities and immigrants for the destruction of Western society.

I propose to describe here how a vast network of associations might have led to this suggestion, one which no previous reviewer of the book or discussion of any of the articles it assembled had ever expressed. As I was surprised by the remark, I contacted Wilk, and he explained that he had in no way meant to imply that I was reactionary or racist. On the contrary, he had meant to highlight the dangers of language, underlining that he had himself been involved in such accusations. Below I recount a history of happenings in Sweden in 1997 in an attempt to gain some insight into how this accusation could come to implicate what I had written so many years before. It is a commentary on the state of academic elites and their clients in the contemporary world and, by implication, on political correctness and its relation to social instability and ideological transformation. It is also a plea for research into a phenomenon that is as fascinating as it is frightening.

Ionesco's play Rhinoceros (1960) is not performed very often nowadays, especially not in Sweden, which is the arena for much of the following discussion. The play deals with epidemic conformity and with one man's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to warn an entire society of an impending catastrophe. It is based on Ionesco's experience of the emergence of fascism in Europe[2] and how conformity and fear of being different figured in that

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2. It is, of course, meant to apply to all totalitarianisms as they work "on the ground," so to speak.

process. The difference referred to here is not cultural difference, of course, but difference of opinion. I say this to emphasize that not all differences are equal, and since associative thinking is the problem here it is important to be clear about this from the start. Differing points of view, whatever their source, define a certain arena of discussion and debate. This is not the same as being ethnically different, and it implies that total conformity in thinking is perfectly compatible with any political or cultural political regime, including one that stresses cultural plurality. This may sound trivial to many, but I find it necessary to say it because I have constantly been confronted by the extraordinary conflation of plurality of points of view and plurality of cultures. What follows describes a situation that occurred and that I have been analyzing for the past year, not least because I was shocked by it. This shock contains elements of what Agar (1986) calls "breakdown," in which cultural schemes collide, as well as the impact of political attack and witchhunting.

The issue is of critical importance for what we refer to as the practice of understanding—of science—or, for those who would refrain from such modernist terminology, of its intellectual equivalent. The first and central distinction on which this discussion is predicated is one between what might be called associationism and rational argument or rational critique. Rational argument is based on the content of statements, on their semantic and logical properties and on their intentionality. Associationism is based on the social sign value of statements—on those properties which can be used to classify them or their enunciators into preexisting categories. Critical rationality focuses on what is meant by a statement; associationism is based on the meaning of what is meant in the wider social field. Associationism involves the linking of statements by means of semantic overlap and spatial contiguity. As an intellectual practice it is incompatible with rational argument because it is focused on a different set of properties. The two, however, can and certainly do coexist in the larger communicative processes of social life. We always categorize our fellow interlocutors, adversaries or allies, in the social worlds in which we move. This classification interferes with the more rational and critical practices, however, when the public sphere of rational critique is weakened by extreme social instability, a crisis in which subjects begin to lose their footing and self-identity. The decline of modernism creates insecurity which leads to an increasing dependence on other people's recognition of one's selfhood, in other words, of increasing narcissism. In such situations relative identification becomes more important than the content of communication. Social sign value increases in power over semantic content. Being on the right side, doing the right thing becomes an ever more powerful means of intellectual control. These are also situations in which new ideologies can rise to dominance and old ideologies are threatened.

Such situations are precarious for the practice of science, whether or not one believes that this is a good thing. And as rational critical thinking declines it is re-

placed by moral, religious discourse which is a form of moral politics insofar as it is practiced against people. I would suggest that associationism flourishes in the context of social fear and insecurity, in which identification becomes the major form of social maneuvering.

Events and Happenings

Since 1993 we have been doing research in an area that is considered perilous in Sweden—the area of immigration, immigration politics, and what we have referred to, politely, in terms of the "transformation" of the nation-state. The argument we have developed in this project links downward mobility in conditions of large-scale immigration to conflict and ethnification within the nation-state. This project was financed not by Swedish government agencies, which turned it down on two occasions, but by the H. S. Guggenheim Foundation. The empirical basis of the project was interviewing and fieldwork and the study of media documents and government policies. A major focus of the work was on Swedes representing different positions from more liberal and anarchist to more nationalist. I do not intend to discuss the results of this project, which are at present in the write-up stage.

The whole affair began when my wife and colleague, Kajsa Ekholm Friedman (hereafter KEF), was invited by a group called Folkviljan och Massinvandring (The People's Will and Mass Immigration) to give a talk in Stockholm. The audience was primarily elderly, and they were concerned about what they think is happening to Sweden as the result of what is experienced as mass immigration. These are not altogether wild fantasies. The population of Sweden, formerly considered to be so homogeneous, has changed drastically. Eleven percent of the population is first-generation immigrant, and first- and second-generation immigrants together make up 18% of the population.[3] In the urban areas these percentages are much higher. For example, in the southern city of Malmö, foreign-affiliated persons make up 28% of the total.[4] The worried Swedes are people who experienced the development of Sweden from poverty to unparalleled wealth and equality and who are now experiencing rapid disintegration of a social project in which they believed and whose deterioration profoundly disturbs them. These people experience and link increasing ethnic politics, immigrant overrepresentation in increasing criminality, and the formation of ethnic enclaves of largely unemployed immigrants who live on welfare payments at the same time as pensions are declining relatively and other welfare institutions are in crisis.[5] When people feel threatened they often associate the threat with the foreign, the "body under siege" (Bauman 1995:120), but these are not, according to our interviews, simply frightened people. They are aware and worried about increasing conflicts and violence and more generally about the breakup of the political public sphere as they have known it. KEF's talk was very much about the relation between immigration, ethnification, and the potential disintegration of the nation-state as a welfare project, and it suggested that the problem should be taken seriously by politicians. There is no evidence that any journalist ever investigated this group, but they were immediately stamped as anti-immigrant by the media.

Following the very sparse media coverage, I tried to obtain information about the group and found a homepage on the Internet. Folkviljan in its official statement is critical of the government's immigration policy. It wants Sweden to establish a policy that is more in line with those of its neighbors, such as Denmark and Norway, and those of the other countries of Europe. They are forthrightly antiracist and dissociate themselves from claims that they collaborate with racist or right-wing political groups.[6] The media, in contrast, do not seem to have been interested in the available material or in the members of the organization. It was and continues to be assumed that the categorizations are self-evident.

The Media Attack

The evening before KEF was to speak for the Folkviljan, the national television news declared that KEF was a leader of the group and that the group was anti-immigrant, implying that it was racist as well. *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's largest national newspaper, published a short report of the meeting in which the group was labeled as anti-immigrant. In spite of the fact that KEF presented a substantial paper, she was quoted only as saying, in a subsequent informal discussion, that it was easy to buy a diploma in Africa. Following the news reports, three Ph.D. students from the department of social anthropology in Lund wrote to the local paper attacking KEF for inciting and supporting racism, citing the "fact" that the group to which she spoke was anti-immigrant and the fact that she had said certain things on television a year before that they interpreted as anti-immigrant. She had said then, on the basis of her interview material, that Swedes were not interested in multicultural integration but tended to withdraw instead and that immigrants took a similar position—in short, that

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3. It should be borne in mind—and this is central to my argument—that it is not immigration as such that changes the composition of a population but the way origins are identified and maintained. Thus the very category "second-generation immigrant" represents an official ethnification, *jus sanguinus.* of the immigration process.

4. The statistics are always complex, but the breakdown is as follows: foreign citizens, 11%; foreign-born citizens, 12%; children under 18 with at least one foreign-born parent, 4%. The total is 70,657 in a total population of 251,408, or 28%.

5. Such situations generate associative thinking, of course, and are the subject of some major studies (Van Dijk 1984, 1991).

6. This, of course, can be denied by those who wish to see motives underlying their democratic and antiracist national positioning.

integration was not happening.[7] This was taken as explosive and provocative rather than conducive to constructive discussion, but, as I shall be arguing here, constructive discussion appears to be premised on the acceptance of multiculturalism as both progressive and successful. Recent statistics indicate that a majority of nationals in Sweden as in other European countries have a negative attitude to immigration. Evidence in Sweden and other countries is that integration is not occurring and that enclavization and conflict are serious and growing problems. A recent collection edited by the well-known sociologist Michel Wieviorka, *Une société fragmentée? Le multiculturalisme en débat* (1996), would presumably have been outlawed in Sweden on the grounds that its very title is inflammatory.

KEF made a formal complaint to TV2, and it responded, in a somewhat clandestine comment in a late-night edition of the news, by saying that it had talked to her by phone and that she "claimed that she wasn't even a member" of the organization as it had asserted. It did not think it necessary to say that it had made a mistake or to apologize.

Some days later, and after consulting with one of her four children, who was worried about the coverage, KEF stated publicly that she had made a mistake by participating in the meeting. She said she had thought she could make a contribution and that the audience did not seem to be racist at all but that if it truly was racist or anti-immigrant then she had erred. As I have said, there was no investigation by the press, and my own investigation leads me to believe that such was not the case. An interview with two of the leaders of this group revealed that they had both been engaged in Third World aid and working-class politics. One of them, furthermore, was a sponsor parent to several African children. Could this be a mere cover-up operation?

KEF published an attempt to redress the situation by taking up the core of her presentation in *Dagens Nyheter*, which dealt with the serious problems of ethnification and ethnic politics in a period of increasing unemployment and economic decline. The headline for the article (Ekholm Friedman 1997b), created by an editor at *DN*, was "Invandringen leder till sönderfall" (Today's Immigration Is Leading to Social Disintegration)—suggesting that immigration and even immigrants themselves are the cause rather than a component of the process of decline which the article quite clearly describes. Thus the headline can be interpreted as saying that immigration is the cause of disintegration while the article clearly states that it is the incapacity to integrate immigrants in periods of economic decline that is the main problem. To top it off, the headline is in quotation marks, implying that KEF wrote it. When I called the editor and said that if it were the States we could sue the newspaper

for libel, he replied, musingly, "Not in Sweden!" I understand that there has been discussion in schools of journalism concerning a decision that gives journalists the right to interpret what other people say and to place the *interpretation* in quotes at the head of another person's article, thus contradicting the usual implication that quotation marks indicate statements by the author. This certainly influenced the way people read the article, since many referred to the headline alone as if it epitomized the content of the article. The editorial interpretation was reinforced by the use of a photo of "boat people" as an illustration of the article's purported meaning. Many readers were taken aback by the illustration, immediately associating it with the headline.

This article, via its headline and photo, set off a series of collective acts of distancing from KEF (see, e.g., Agrell 1997, Lewin and Rothstein 1997). No one discussed the content of her article or her lecture. They were content to associate the headline with certain key words in the article, such as "tentacles" in reference to the formation of transnational enclaves, a word KEF had used instead of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) "rhizomes" for the horizontal links that transcend boundaries as opposed to the vertical arboreal structures that create boundaries. These acts included everything from charges of defamation to an abortive move by a small group within the university to have KEF relieved of her duties and rescind her professorial title.

The producer of the evening news took it upon himself to contact the Guggenheim Foundation, which has funded our project. He had the article translated in a hurry and faxed it to the Foundation, asking how much money we had received and whether it knew what we were up to. The Guggenheim looked at the article and replied wondering what all the fuss was about and asking whether Swedes were unaware that such issues had been under discussion in these kinds of terms for a number of years. The *Atlantic Monthly* had done a whole number on the issue (see, e.g., Schwarz 1995) containing much tougher articles, and even *Der Spiegel*, after years of relative silence on the matter, had recently published a feature number with the title *Zeitbomben in den Vorstädten* (Wievorka 1997). The producer, on receiving the Guggenheim's reply, called KEF and talked to her for almost an hour, telling her that he had been in touch with the Guggenheim but without offering any explanation. He finally admitted, in a more modest tone than he had employed earlier, that he might have misjudged her and would have to read more about the issue.

The events spelled out here are encompassed in a larger set of representations organized but not produced by the media. The latter do have a certain kind of power consisting in the fact that when they describe reality by labeling and defining relations they produce that reality for those who consume their texts in printed or the stronger visual form. In a scathing critique of television talk shows, Bourdieu (1996) refers to the way in which "fast-think" in the media reorganizes reality, eliminating intellectual insights. But, I would suggest, the power he ascribes to the media is not creative but catalytic. The

7. To say "Swedes are X" was itself explosive because of its *associative* potential. While it is grammatically correct to interpret this as "Some Swedes are X," it can easily be associated with the stronger "All Swedes are X." This, of course, is what makes such statements dangerous.

ideological framework within which fast-think works already pervades the intellectual world, the academy, the publishers, and much of the cultural elite. The media aid in this by having a virtual (in all senses) monopoly on all reality that is not immediately accessible. But even here there are contradictions that relate to the degree of trust in the media and its journalists. While in totalitarian regimes the media are rarely trusted ("If it's not in the papers then it must be true," goes a Polish saying from the communist era), in the democracies there is usually an implicit trust in the relative transparency of media representations of reality. This is because it has been assumed that the representatives of the media are disinterested and honestly concerned with finding out what is actually happening in the world. In periods of crisis this situation is often overturned.[8]

Politically Correct "Intellectuals"?

The media are not, then, the cause of the categorization process described here. The reaction formation is one that translates the statement that ethnification is a serious problem into an expression of racism. How can this occur? If I say that multiculturalism as a political strategy is dangerous and that a nation-state that begins to be organized in such terms is bound to generate serious conflict, why does this make me a racist? A recent discussion in a government publication suggests that the meaning of racism be extended to cover a broader range of phenomena that the author has decided are dangerous. Racist convictions are now to include "extremely positive attitudes towards one's own cultural identity" (Sander 1995). It then becomes officially possible to equate questioning of multiculturalism with racism, just as, for others, not to be convinced of the positive inevitability of a transnational world is to be a conservative.

The intellectual reaction focused on the headline of KEF's article and on the linkages that the headline and photo elicited. Several articles voiced praise for Californian multiethnicity, contrary to most descriptions from the United States. One tried to argue that it was the nation-state and not ethnicity that was the problem in the former Yugoslavia and that to talk of a problematic multiethnicity was a throwback to the 1930s. Another tried to suggest that the literature dealing with such conflicts in both political science and philosophy showed that there was no problem with multiethnic society. Throughout all of these reactions a number of salient associations were made, most of which dealt with the potentially conflictive nature of large-scale immigration in periods of crisis: "Multiculturalism is no problem (in spite of the U.S. debate and the French debate). Homogeneity means racial purity, thus turning Gellner's interpretation of national unity into crass racism. The nation-state is the source of all problems and should be

superseded by a multicultural or hybrid world." This is a well-known list.

Not everyone agreed with this onslaught. KEF received upwards of 600 letters thanking her for breaking the imposed silence on these issues. Two letters did come from nationalists, and several attacked and even threatened her, but the majority seemed to come from *ordinary people*, another dangerous category for any elite. A series of newspaper articles began to appear in the following months which were critical of the multicultural policy of the state and concerned by the increase of segregation, increasing violence, etc. One well-known foreign correspondent and editorialist chastised the incapacity of Swedish intellectuals to discuss problems that face the country—problems that had been taken up in most other countries (Lindqvist 1997). A professor of history wrote that the reaction was primarily the result of the fact that KEF had wounded Swedish official intellectuals' moral self-identity by problematizing the taken-for-granted utopian vision of multiculturalism (Arvidsson 1997). The politically active journalist and wife of a former Social Democratic finance minister had already written a potentially explosive attack on the contemporary politics of difference in Sweden and argued a strong assimilationist line. This response continued for several months, and one politically correct social psychologist warned of the potentially explosive situation in the increasingly ethnified suburbs (Dencik 1997). KEF had said that multiethnicity was a real social and potentially explosive problem that had to be taken seriously, and she had attempted to account for the mechanisms involved. She was attacked and threatened by various organizations and individuals and certain colleagues and other academics, some of whom moved for ostracism. Once the door was open, however, others seem to have been able to write things that would have been unthinkable earlier and to make all kinds of statements of policy which were well beyond her purpose.

My interest in political correctness increased considerably during this period. I was offered similar material from Paris, New York, and Munich, and on this basis I decided to run a seminar on the subject. It dealt in part with the "events of May" 1997. The participants in the course were of various viewpoints—some multiculturalists, some not, and some indifferent. The course was an interesting experience for those involved. It aimed at an understanding of the communicative mechanisms involved (i.e., the associative mode) and the circumstances in which the phenomenon appears in different kinds of societies and historical situations, and it stressed, as I do here, that the particular content of political correctness is irrelevant to its form. After a month I was called by the local student newspaper for a phone interview (the office is across the street) and was asked, even badgered by the journalist about whether it was right for *me* to give such a course, since I was married to the person who had caused all the trouble. It should, she argued, be given by a neutral person who could be objective. She said that she thought I was giving the course simply to prove my wife's innocence. I answered by saying that

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8. This has begun to change quite rapidly. News media are often ranked at the bottom with regard to public trust. This is so in Sweden, which formerly had a very high level of trust in the media.

her approach to the interview was exactly what the course was about. She knew the truth about it all and was simply documenting by associations what she already knew. She began to accept my reasoning that I had a right to give the course. The article appeared with several insinuations, but I demanded to see it first and forced some corrections—something that was not obviously necessary to the journalist in question. Some months later the *Dagens Nyheter* also wanted to do an interview. A journalist came to my home and we talked for several hours, at the end of which she was much more positive to what I was trying to say than at the start. She wrote an article that approved of the need to take up these issues, not least in Sweden. The editors of the culture page were against it and even said that there should be a parallel column to counter or deny everything I said. They argued about it, and it was decided that the interview could go in with some modifications, probably so as not to make it too positive. Then things suddenly began to change. Another newspaper called to do an interview, and I received a large number of requests for copies of the course, which was repeated in the spring term. Finally, I was invited to talk for a national organization called the Press Opinion Council, which takes on complaints and cases against the press which in the United States would normally be handled by the courts. The very name of this organ may sound foreboding to many, since it conveys the sense of opinion control, but, then, Swedish journalists have openly discussed the degree to which their function should be to build or construct public opinion. In any case, I was invited explicitly to discuss the issue of political correctness, and several of the members of this group were very positively inclined to the idea of taking up the issue (although others were, of course, upset at what I had to say). From my perspective the tables were now turned, and it was possible to discuss these issues seriously—not, however, with certain anthropologists, and certainly with a certain anguished resistance.

The severe and increasing conflicts resulting from the situation of nonintegration were also discussed more openly. Very recently a book has appeared, *Politisk korrekthet på Svenska* (Political correctness in Swedish), in which a number of journalists and academics take up the problem, unfortunately rather superficially (Kullbom and Landin 1998). More important is that the issue is now being aired openly, even if the contributors to the book can be said to belong to an iconoclastic minority. One review of it assumed that "politically incorrect" meant against "multiculture, antifascism, feminism, and leftism" (Forser 1998), which was, of course, to miss the point entirely. Another review claimed that the very use of the name was a mere cover for reactionary tendencies (Kärnborg 1998:45). In spite of the continuity of such labeling, the situation has moved from a compact onslaught by the morally virtuous to something closer

to a debating of the issues, however nervous.[9] An interesting breakthrough occurred very recently when Swedish Television did a program on the costs of immigration (SvT 1, October 11, 1998) in which the issue of the costs of unemployment and welfare were taken up for the first time in a direct manner and in which several of the guests who participated had been previously stamped, by the same kind of associationism documented here, as racists.

The Moral Anthropologists Defend Their Field: A Hidden Agenda?

In the early stages of the ruckus a group of four anthropologists, professors whose titles were clearly of symbolic significance in the situation, signed an article published in the same newspaper as had published KEF's article.[10] This text is significant in that it conveys a symbolic meta-message that overshadows what I would characterize as its content, and this meta-message perfectly exemplifies my argument. An important aspect of the article, which is identical to the other negative reactions, consists in its collective distancing from KEF. Dismay at her behavior and ideas and claims that she is being unconstructive frame the commentary. We are then reminded that culture is not the same as ethnicity and should not be confused with it! A core argument of KEF's article was the distinction between multiculturalism as a purely cultural phenomenon and "multiculturalism in the sense of multiethnicity," so there is no disagreement here although one is led to believe so. Culture is about socially constituted meaning, whereas ethnicity is about social differentiation. But should we forget that it is precisely on the basis of the identification of cultural specificity that ethnicity differentiates, so it is not simply opposed to multiculturalism in cultural terms?[11]

A common argument in what I characterize as elitist multiculturalism concerns cultural enrichment via importation. Sweden is said to be the result of innumerable contacts and the acquisition of foreign cultural wealth. *Enrichment* concerns how many things, ideas, and people one can accumulate from different cultures. This is the cute, cozy, consumerist view of culture. It is inter-

9. A newly published article in *Svenska Dagbladet*, the main "conservative" newspaper in the country, which features editors and articles by persons who are usually identified as independent leftists, is an important example of the changes. The author, a left-wing historian of ideas, makes an argument for the superiority of the nation-state in terms of the maintenance of social solidarity with respect to social goals and the dangers of ethnic fragmentation (Nordin 1998).
10. The professors in question are Gudrun Dahl and Ulf Hannerz from the University of Stockholm, Kaj Århem from Gothenberg, and Karl Erik Knutsson of UNICEF, formerly from Stockholm (Dahl et al. 1997).
11. One should not, as these authors do, overdraw the distinction between the cultural and the social in discussing multiculturalism. The reason that ethnicity is not the same as culture is that it is more specific (i.e. a subset of) but not, of course, less cultural. At the same time, multiethnicity and multicultural politics are forms of *cultural politics*.

esting to consider the way in which the notion of creativity has been reduced to mere cultural mixture in much of the discourse of cultural studies and now anthropology—a cut-and-paste understanding of creativity as opposed to the older notions of gestalt, discovery of new forms, insight. It means—and it does for some—that the United States is a much richer place than Europe and that accumulation of multicultural wealth should be some kind of a goal—strange indeed, for North Americans, who used to come to Europe to get some "culture" when they already had it all! This is the mentality of the collector, but then, there has been an art-collector turn in anthropology over the years, one that is reflected in the diffusionism and the museological viewpoint inherent in this kind of language.[12] The largely poor immigrants who inhabit the megacities of the world do not think in such terms, but the wealthy elites may easily enjoy this variety by collecting objects and concepts and consuming ethnic foods. Many immigrants have also contributed to the Swedish economy over the years, as our professors state with alacrity, but they have not done so in their capacity as bearers of cultures or even of ethnic identities. The history of labor migration is all too clear on this point.

They say that they are for a multiculturalism that doesn't "build walls" but is culturally open. Who would disagree? The only problem is that reality just hasn't conformed, as is clearly reflected in the enormous literature concerning precisely the problems of enclavization, conflict, vertical mosaics, etc., that characterize today's multiethnic societies. The fact overlooked by our anthropologists is that ethnicity as a *cultural* practice of social bounding leads to the social reality of multiculturalism as a politics of difference, an ethnic politics. KEF distinguished, as I have said, between multiculturalism as a plurality of influences, recipes, styles, and objects and multiculturalism as a social phenomenon. Wouldn't it be nice if multiculturalism were only about the accumulation of cultural differences without any social baggage? Ethnicity, as opposed to culture, here has both a good and a "darker" side. It is internal solidarity but can also express itself in racism. Here again, who would disagree? The problem we have taken up in our research is the way in which conditions of instability in the larger world arena transform ethnicity into a mode of agonistic differentiation. To insist that ethnicity can be both positive and negative is to trivialize the problem.

If there is a difference in style here between KEF and this self-distancing article it lies in the fact that KEF issues a warning: multiculturalism as politics is leading to social fragmentation. Now this may be wrong and may deserve criticism, but no such criticism is forthcoming. These writers simply state that multiculturalism is both good and bad depending on the situation, but which situation we are not told. Instead of insisting that KEF is

wrong, they attack her for saying things that might be inflammatory. Here there is an excellent example of the essentialism implied in associationism. We "should not aid in the spreading of prejudice," as they accuse KEF of doing by putting the following words in her mouth: "It is typical for 'Africans' to be in possession of false degrees." KEF never said such a thing, of course, nor was she reported as having said such a thing. We may, I think, attribute this misrepresentation to the way in which, with surprising lack of reflection, our professors are able to insinuate by associating. KEF said in a discussion following her paper, when asked about the coexistence of reports that many immigrants had higher degrees with reports that they had limited education, that from her experience in Central Africa it was not difficult to buy a university degree. And to what experience was she referring here? That of African friends at universities who had complained bitterly about the phenomenon. They and she and I understand this literally, and the statement concerns a political situation, a structural situation, not a cultural one. Just as this debate was occurring, a major university in Spain expelled several students from South America who had false secondary degrees. There are, of course, plenty of places throughout the world where degrees can be obtained by less than acceptable means. But to say that one can buy a degree in Africa is here reduced to culture—it is typical for Africans to have false degrees. KEF had been attacked when she suggested many years earlier that Congo and other Central African states were dominated by state-classes and clientelistic hierarchies, since this was also criticizing African culture. She had been attacked again for arguing that democratization in Africa, to which Swedish development experts were religiously devoted, was more a feudalization into smaller clientelistic networks that might lead to violence, again because this was a critique of Africans. These attacks have subsided now that reality has forced its way into the everyday reports from this area. African scholars themselves have been saying these things for years. I would claim that the intellectual reaction is similar in all of these cases. The culturalization of social structures, political power, and institutions is archetypical of what is today criticized as a morally dangerous essentialism, which has in its turn been associated with racism. And yet this is precisely what our correct anthropologists are engaged in.

The issue of ethnicity as problematic—of the rhizomic or tentacular nature of diasporic formations—is treated with a certain horror. Can such things be mentioned without running the risk of stigmatization? If the word "tentacles" is used to describe both imperialism and its implosion we are on shaky ground.[13] This metaphor, which has taken on associations with the 1930s, chauvinism, and anti-Semitism, is apparently to be avoided.

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12. It is a far cry from the notion, more common in anthropology, that culture is not where you get things but the way you put them together. I have criticized this implicit diffusionism elsewhere (Friedman 1994).

13. It is extraordinary that the following quote can be found in UNESCO's own *Our Creative Diversity*: "While in earlier centuries European settlers colonized many areas of the world, in recent decades the flow of migration has been reversed and immigrants are now settling their former metropolitan countries and forming ethnic enclaves there" (1995:74).

As a result of this apparent misunderstanding, KEF went to some length, as I have indicated, to explain what she meant by using the word, there being no Swedish translation for Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizomes" that was adequate in the context of a newspaper article (1997c).[14] Rhizomes, of course have no source, but transnational ethnic groups do! But, then, it is not content of thought that is at issue. This is obvious if we merely glance at similar statements made by Arjun Appadurai. He refers, for example, in his evolutionary reductionism to a "process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place"(1996:169), a process that is not smooth but bloody: "It [the nation-state] is certainly in crisis, and part of the crisis is an *increasingly violent relationship between the nation-state and its postnational Others*" (my italics). Relying as he often does on films, he emphasizes an urban scene "where a general desolation of the national and global landscape has transposed many bizarre racial, religious, and linguistic enmities into scenarios of unrelieved urban terror" (p. 193).

The diaspora is depicted here as an international social space that exists within the nation-state but is also opposed to it. Now, this is the same kind of language that our anthropological professors claim to be a contribution to "demagogy and the propaganda of fear," and yet it is here used by someone who would *never* be accused of the like. What are we to make of this? Well, there is a difference, perhaps, in the fact that Appadurai sees this violence as a transition to a triumphant diasporic world in which we will finally find that "cultural freedom and sustainable justice in the world do not presuppose the uniform and general existence of the nation-state" (p. 23). Here, perhaps, we can find the ideological core of their reaction. It is simply a matter of reversing the signs. Yes, the nation-state is under siege by global diasporic populations. Yes, its destruction in face of the new globalized populations is bound to be violent. But all of this is good, because, the nation-state *is* obsolete and in any case was a miserable idea. KEF in her newspaper article makes no policy statements, nor does she try to defend the nation-state in general. She merely argues that a social situation that was once taken for granted is coming apart at the seams. One may disagree with all of this, but to dismiss it as demagogic propaganda reveals that it is experienced as dangerous—dangerous, I suggest, to a newly emergent ideological core.

This ideological core,[15] I would argue, is the core of a new cosmopolitan identity among certain intellectuals, and it would appear to be quite unreflective. It generates a classification of KEF's remarks as nostalgic and nationalist. But while Appadurai is forthright in his transnationalism, the truly correct position is never to say anything that might be falsifiable or morally suspect. Thus, we are told, while nostalgia for the nation-state is not acceptable, neither should the borders simply be opened to anyone. In other words, while Appadurai's position is the right one, we must also realize that there are indeed problems—not make waves, so to speak. KEF does not present a balanced picture simply because she is not concerned with the supposed cultural enrichment that comes of large-scale immigration. Rather, she is very much concerned with the social consequences of enclavization for a society that has been organized around a strong sense of community. And the ghettoization is extreme. Unemployment among the ghettoized runs many times higher (commonly over 50%) than the national average, which is also very high (almost 12% as I write this). Ethnic violence has in fact increased, in the form of gang fights between various immigrant groups and between such groups and skinheads, the rapid increase of gang rape, most often interethnic, and an increasingly aggressive ethnic politics. But these are not, perhaps, the issues we should be discussing. We should focus on the issue of the rights and obligations of citizens. And here the question is whether citizenship need depend on the state framework. But what is a citizen without a political unit of some sort? In what does a citizen have membership? And as for access to public wealth, there must, of course, be an organ that can distribute such means and therefore can also accumulate such means. Isn't this obvious? And what are the political conditions under which this can occur? But rather than addressing such issues these critics obliquely proclaim, "Why, in today's world, should it be enough to have rights and obligations with respect to people who speak the same language and are born in the same place?" Unfortunately, no matter how we cut it, membership is always in reference to a collectivity, whether they speak the same language or not and no matter where they are born. Whether the larger collectivity is a diaspora or a world state, the situation is the same, unless we replace the notion of collectivity with a complex of contractual relations as in certain extreme liberal models. In such a case cultural identity loses its social significance and becomes equivalent to club membership.

14. The book in question is the popular *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), in which they discuss the complex relation between rhizomic and treelike structures in the constitution of state/nomads and violence. As the horizontal and the vertical are said to constitute one another, it is difficult to see how the one can simply replace the other, as is implied by Appadurai. "Tentacles" is a more adequate expression of a situation in which there is a homeland that is the source of migration as well as the target of remittances.

15. That this is a truly encompassing ideology, at least for those who partake of it, is clear in some of the writings of Appadurai, Malkki (1992), and others, where the postnational is not merely a state but a goal and where cosmopolitans are sought after in shantytowns and opposed to rednecked nationalists, who, for example, inhabit refugee camps. This trend has an older history in writers such as Chambers (1994) and even Hall (1996).

The Impoverishment of the Welfare State and Its Cultural Expression

The Swedish welfare state is predicated on a circular structure in which taxes, primarily from the working class, are used to maintain a system of state-financed health care, universities, and infrastructure and a redistributive equalization of general welfare. The notion underlying this is that a population should take care of itself and that this solidarity is related to the shared life of the inhabitants of a place. It is simply a question of a common social project. If this project is dismembered because of a multicultural politics that aims at a fragmentation of that nostalgic, homogeneous, and even racist project, can one expect people to agree to the redistribution of wealth, especially when the tax base is shrinking? Nation-state solidarity is based on a contract of sorts between the people who live within the bounds of a state territory and the state itself. It has to do with the reallocation of wealth within that territory. In the Swedish case this relation was particularly strong insofar as the state was represented as an instrument of the people and it was not unusual to equate "state" with "society" (Ekholm Friedman 1997a). This means not that the territory is self-sufficient but that the income generated in or imported into it is the source of its general public wealth. The cultural trappings of this kind of state imply a high degree of homogenization and a strong resonance between practices and objects defined as national and the general social project. This creates a rather strong equation of ethnic specificity and the nation. The latter may account for the tendency in the Swedish discussion to conflate homogeneity with ethnic purity and explain why KEF's reference to homogeneity was equated with such purity and therefore the exclusion of those of different ethnic origin. It is strange that in the classic discussions homogeneity refers to assimilation and to the forging of a new identity, practically the converse of ethnic purity since it is predicated on the change of identity. Similarly, the disintegration of this project is the result not of immigration but of the collapse of integrative processes, leading to a multiplication and reinforcement of projects—not just migrant ethnic but regional, class, and indigenous as well.[16] The very idea that migration implies diasporization is part of the ideological process, the culturalization and essentialization of identity. The entire framework is highly moralized by phrases such as "cultural enrichment," which has, as far as I can tell, little to do with the actual situation.

A more serious take on world migration is that it is part of a massive increase in exploitation in most of the West and part of a segregation machine in welfare states like Sweden. The multicultural politics that are so prevalent today might even be seen as instrumental in the formation of a new "structural pluralism," in M. G.

16. Soysal (1994:161), discussing the emergence of postnational models of citizenship, writes, "The multiplication of particularisms and subsequent fragmentation disrupt the presumed contiguities of nationness and undermine the territorial sanctity of nation-states."

Smith's (1974) words. But this must be seen as dangerously racist, according to our professors, since it implies that migration is part of a nefarious reconfiguration of global exploitation rather than the formation of a cultural cornucopia.

Emergent transnationally identified subjects in a still strongly nationalized society are bound to experience the suggestion of national fragmentation as a threat to that identity, something that they would like to forget. Further, in the Swedish context, the structures of sociality are heavily imbued with strategies to control potential disorder. This is why KEF says that "Swedes are special in their fear of saying what they think," a generalization that her anthropological critics refuse to accept. But the kind of self-contradictory discourse in which they engage is exemplary in just this respect: Immigration is enriching/Immigration is a problem. We have to take in refugees/It does not help the world to take in refugees. Sweden should work to guarantee that people don't have to leave their countries of origin (but this is precisely the policy of that evil group to which KEF gave her talk)/Immigration is the source of our cultural enrichment. The only unambiguous statement is that there is something wrong with what KEF did and said.

There is a revealing statement about the Swedish situation at the end of the article. KEF is labeled an agitator for saying that we are in a serious crisis and that the combination of large-scale immigration and economic downward mobility can lead to an explosive situation. This is the kind of view that "foments anxiety and conflict." It is interesting that it is precisely the fear of confronting reality head-on that is today finally being attacked in Sweden, where intellectuals have been shocked out of their slumber by waves of so-called revelations concerning Sweden's exploits in World War II, its forced sterilization campaign in the '30s, and the apparent misrepresentation of the Swedish hero Folke Bernadotte, who did not, as the ad would have it, take his Red Cross buses to Germany to save Jews. Much of this history has always been public but never discussed—not really dangerous except for an elite who in its fear of association would simply repress the past. Now, these are issues that ought not to be so difficult to discuss, that ought not to bring on moral crisis, but they are explosive in a society whose elites have made keeping the lid on into an ideology of what they call rationality. I have referred to this elsewhere as the "Freudian State."

The Life of Gossip

Gossip takes on a life of its own as it circulates around the world. Global gossip is an ideal situation for even looser associations than those that develop in the critical hot zones where political-correctness epidemics emerge. I was soon implicated in the scourge not so much on the basis of anything that I had written, done, or said (which was largely unknown in this case) as by marriage. One sociologist from Holland at a meeting in Stockholm said that he had heard that there was an anthropologist in

Sweden (presumably KEF) who thought that all immigrants should go home and that all Africans should stay in Africa. Another anthropologist in Paris said that I, in an article that I wrote about a social phenomenon called *la sape*, had asserted that Congolese did not distinguish between appearance and self and that I had been attacked by the Congolese in Sweden for this awful text and was therefore seeking a job in Paris. This free fantasizing is worthy of structuralist analysis. The text in question was presented in Brazzaville, and it was concerned not with cognition but with the interpretation of appearance and was based in large part on work by an African researcher (Gandoulou 1984) and never previously considered controversial. In any case, gossip thinks itself outside of individual minds, as Lévi-Strauss would have it.

The web spins on. I invited Arjun Appadurai to a workshop organized by the Guggenheim Foundation in September. After a lecture and a party that evening, he asked, the next morning, to speak before the meeting began. He read from a small piece of paper and said that he could not participate under the circumstances, since he felt that he was being used and that he had been unfairly criticized in the paper by KEF and had had no opportunity to reply.[17] He then walked out. I spoke to him at length, quite in shock, and later we had lunch. He said that he had heard in Stockholm, where he had been just previously, that KEF had been involved in racist-like activities, but he was not sure what they were about. I tried to give him a full account, and he *seemed* quite surprised, but he left immediately afterward saying that he hoped we could take up our discussion sometime in the future. Some months later, another anthropologist, Liisa Malkki, whom I had also invited to a Guggenheim workshop, told the program director of the foundation that she didn't think it was a good idea that I head the project with which I was charged because—she had heard—I was a racist. The extensions have now led to the criticisms of my own work referred to in the introduction.[18] But the logic of global gossip is no different from that of any other gossip.

The Logic of Witch-hunting

The logic of accusation is not related to the logic of rational argument. In periods of crisis in which individual identities are threatened, associative thinking increases in power. Rather than ask, "What does X say?" one asks, "Who is X? How can X be identified?" And the identification proceeds by means of associations. X was with Y. X had a connection with Y, therefore X is a Y. Y is predefined in this system or defined afterwards as possessing certain qualities. KEF spoke for an organization

that was stamped, on the basis of a chain of associations, as anti-immigrant. Therefore KEF is anti-immigrant herself. How do the people that I asked know that this organization is anti-immigrant? Its name is Folkviljan och Massinvandring. There are two associations here: First, whereas the *folk* in Folkhemmet is old and established and more or less conventional, new constructions using *folk* are suspect. "People's will" is a throwback to a more leftist popular ideology and seems positively frightening. The opposition of "the people" and the state is also suspect. This may be the core of the fear that many elitists have of the use of a *folkomröstning* (plebiscite) to decide an issue.[19] Then, the *och massinvandring* obviously questions the entire phenomenon of immigration. This position is clearly against current immigration policy, but it has been branded as anti-immigrant on the unreflective grounds that to be against immigration policy is anti-immigrant, which is racism and even Nazism.[20] It leads to a devaluation of the conceptual content of words as they are extended to include the most unlikely associations (see Sander 1995). The meaning of the word "racism" comes to incorporate increasing numbers of terms and phenomena, moving outward from its central propositional content. Xenophobia, isolationism, nationalism, immigration quotas, concern with ethnic conflict, concern with the maintenance of the welfare system where there is increasing unemployment and immigration at the same time, being Swedish, being white. To take an example from one of the editors of *Expo*, the self-identified antiracist newspaper whose "information" was the basis for the original chain reaction, "In my opinion, all white people, no matter what their sex or class, are racists insofar as they are socialized bearers of culture" (T. Hubinette in *Expo* 1 [1996]:10). And he continues, "Let the white race's West collapse in blood and suffering" (p.4).

The "white race" is the "racist race" that should be eliminated. The latter is the seat and cause of racism, so any decent antiracist should support a policy of extermination. Am I exaggerating here? Perhaps this is all hype. Perhaps Swedes should tolerate this kind of language, which after all may merely be an attempt to *épater le bourgeois*. It might also, however, be described as blatant racism.[21]

The politics of associative thinking has become dominant not just in the press and the other media but in the sheepish or, rather, "rhinoceros-like" style to which

17. KEF had in a rather short discussion taken issue with the notion that the postnational diasporic world would lead to a new freedom, and the purpose of the workshop was, of course, to discuss the paper.
18. It should be noted that Rick Wilk and I had discussed the "events" in Lund and that he is a colleague of other Swedish anthropologists.

19. Some of the interviews that I did revealed that the word *folk*, which was once connected to progressive politics in general, has among former left academics and professionals become increasingly associated with a dangerous "populism"—associated with the redneck, racist, and generally nationalist masses, who, statistically, as I have said, are opposed to multiculturalism.
20. But the notion of anti-immigrant is itself an essentialist reduction that transforms immigrants into a type of people.
21. In student interviews in an immigrant-dense neighborhood in Malmö in which ethnic opposition and conflict were particularly marked and particularly negative terms were used of "others," the reply to the question "But isn't that racism?" was, "Oh, no, the racists live in Limhamn," the other, Swedish side of town. "Racist" thus becomes an ethnic term.

so many intellectuals are drawn. Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* deals with the way free thought is obliterated in a society in which social fear and ensuing conformism strike down attempts to understand a frightening change in society. The condition spreads like an epidemic, with results that are by now classic world history. There are, as I have indicated, two central aspects of this phenomenon which are combined in what is called political correctness: a logic of association and a relation of power to be maintained by this logic. This relation is always of a top-down nature, and it is, I suggest, triggered by actions and statements that jeopardize an emergent order that is not clearly established in the larger population. The relation between political correctness and witchcraft is illuminating in this respect. Witchcraft concerns the order of the body, the integrity of the subject, ultimately, in a physical sense. Political correctness concerns the identity of those engaged in a moral order that is external to the body. It concerns not life force and the devouring of souls and flesh but an attack on an active identification with a collective definition of the world. The two phenomena are related not by their content but by the fact that the life-world is disordered by particular actions. This disorder is expressed as a personal disorder in both cases, and it is this experience which provides political correctness as well as witch-hunting with its force.

Political Correctness as an Anthropological Problem

The heightening of the importance of language in political correctness is one of the latter's principal characteristics. Acts of naming, classifying, differentiating self from other are highly emotional practices in situations of political correctness. This is why, as I have suggested, the signal and indexical functions of communication override its content. This is not unlike dreamwork itself, in which displacement and condensation combine to create universes of associations that are driven by anxiety and fear. The conditions under which this occurs are, I suggest, related to conditions of sociality. The signaling function of language provides metalinguistic information as to the nature and intensions of interlocutors, indexes of position. Indexing becomes all-important in situations of insecurity, but it can also be a normal situation in social organizations based on mutual social control. If we envisage a continuum of such control, many traditional societies might be found at one pole, and Sweden would, I think, be closer to the traditional than the United States, where verbal communication does not normally play a strategic social role and it is very easy to "take back" what one has said ("Nothing personal," "I didn't mean it").[22] It might be that political correctness becomes a recognized phenomenon only in socially heterogeneous situations and that it long went

22. The increasing danger and sensitivity of language in the United States in relation to political correctness has been elaborated upon by Jacoby (1994).

unrecognized in Sweden because there was only one rather centrally organized political discourse, a national doxa.

As a discursive process, political correctness categorization is a form of essentialism that links numerous categories by means of spatial or semantic association in a complex whole that helps maintain a moral order in conditions of the threat of disorder. Any anthropology of political correctness needs to deal not only with the phenomenon as a form of communication and control of meaning but with the conditions of its emergence. I have ventured that it is in periods of instability in which new ideologies emerge and hegemony is not clearly established that political correctness comes into play. New potential elites must establish their ideological dominance, and old elites may invoke political correctness to attempt to preserve such dominance when threatened. The results in terms of communication are similar even where the conditions are very different. The particular ideology which I have dealt with here is linked to globalizing elites and a global restructuring of elite consciousness. The transnational, multicultural, culturally enriched world is projected as "the only road" to the future. Any calling into question of this ideology is threatening and evokes fear and even hate. Those who would be local, love their "place," whether indigenous territory or nation, are classified as dangerous, reactionary, and evil. This core schema generates a vast array of associations that are used to classify the concrete world into the good, the bad, and the ugly, the latter being, presumably, the fellow travelers ("He's not a communist but"). The philosopher and political scientist P-A. Taguieff presumably made many enemies as a result of his brilliant analysis of antiracism as part of rather than a solution for racism (Taguieff 1988). In a previous publication (1994) I suggested that the new ideology is an inversion of a former modernism. Globalization, multiculturalism, hybridity, and border-crossing migration are all seen as revolutionary forces, but they seem to embody a more class-bound vision for a new mobile cultural elite and the revolted elites of the political, media, and capitalist classes whose aura they reflect. This is a statement that requires filling out and cannot be discussed in any depth here (see also Friedman 1998). It might merely be suggested that it is in this way that neoliberalism today appears progressive in relation to a backward-looking and conservative socialism. The progressive is, quite simply, identified with the inevitable future and in the Swedish case is extreme in its relevance. Last year's government proposition on integration states that "since a large group of people have their origins in another country, the Swedish population lacks a common history." The minister of integration, Lars Engqvist, when asked in a recent television interview if he identified himself as a Swede, answered, "No! Definitely not!"

Comments

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I am one of the four Swedish anthropologists whom Friedman seems to want to depict, by way of his Ionesco allegory, as prominent rhinoceroses and perhaps fascists. Readers of CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY who know me may judge for themselves how apt they find this.

I have no wish to engage in any lengthy point-by-point discussion of Friedman's claims about Swedish society or Swedish debate or of his narrative of a brave but lonely couple of public intellectuals turning the tide against the repressive political correctness of the national "moral elite." Taken together I find them bizarre. Perhaps there is a sort of climax in his statement that a book titled anything like *A Fragmented Society* would have "presumably been outlawed in Sweden"—no, more probably it would have been on the talk shows.

I will concentrate instead on the two events which were at the center of the controversy in April and May 1997. One was Kajsa Ekholm Friedman's appearance at a meeting held by the organization Folkviljan och Massinvandringen (People's Will and Mass Immigration). Many of my compatriots will immediately be suspicious, as am I, of an organization with such a name, which in the context of current Swedish debate sounds xenophobic. The first time I heard about this meeting, Ekholm Friedman's name was not mentioned. What the newspapers reported, rather, was that the youth wing of the main Swedish conservative party protested against the presence of one of the party's members of parliament in such a forum. Friedman suggests that according to the Internet home page of the organization just mentioned, it is "forthrightly antiracist." That may be so, since the politics of exclusion in Europe now often takes the form of cultural fundamentalism rather than racism in the strict sense (cf. Stolcke 1995). But as far as social implications are concerned, this tends to be a distinction without a difference. The leader of the organization in question and apparently Ekholm Friedman's closest connection within it, Kenneth Sandberg, was a parliamentary candidate for the Sweden Democrats in the 1998 national election. That party, too, perhaps claims not to be xenophobic, but few are gullible enough to believe it. It is a fringe group which has never been anywhere close to getting a seat in the parliament, but according to newspaper reports (e.g., *Dagens Nyheter*, October 30, 1998) it had financial support from the National Front in France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's party, in the 1998 election. Perhaps it could be argued that pointing this out is more "guilt by association." Nonetheless, most people would probably recognize that it is wise to be a bit careful with the groupings one chooses to get involved with.

According to the account in *Dagens Nyheter* (April 28, 1997), Sweden's largest daily morning paper, it was at the meeting just referred to, in the context of an exchange about higher education among immigrants, that Ekholm Friedman said that "in Africa, you can buy your diplomas as easily as anything"—and, according to the same account, this was followed by "laughter in the hall." Whatever the corrupt practices one may be able to detect in some countries, one may think it poor judgment to engage in such generalizations to please the crowd in a dubious gathering. Ekholm Friedman, according to a later newspaper account (*Dagens Nyheter*, May 5, 1997), has regretted this statement.

Then followed the second event in question, the publication of her article in *Dagens Nyheter* on May 6, 1997 (which, according to Friedman, took up "the core of her presentation" at the meeting). Anyone familiar with mass media practices will be aware that outside contributors may have little control (unless one insists) over the rubrics newspaper editors finally choose, so "Immigration Leads to Disintegration" may not have been Ekholm Friedman's choice although it was hardly entirely misleading in relation to the article's contents. The subtitle may not have been of her making, either, although again it does not seem misleading: "Professor of Social Anthropology Explains Why She Lined Up for The People's Will and Mass Immigration."

But then those rubrics, as well as her article, were there, in the public domain, and a number of her Swedish anthropologist colleagues found that they had reason to be concerned. The article beneath the headlines did not make them any less apprehensive. Friedman hardly gives a full picture of its contents. Neither will I, but a few quotes may give the reader some understanding of our unease:

> Multiethnicity is disastrous for social solidarity, for the cement needed to make a society function. In a multiethnic society there is no "we" at the national level. Instead people aim their loyalty at their own ethnic groups, with whatever this implies in terms of lack of loyalty and solidarity toward society as a whole and toward those who are not included in their own group.

> Is multiculturalism the opposite of ethnicity and the ethnically pure? No, not at all. It consists of ethnic groups, which means that it can suddenly explode into ethnic war and ethnic cleansing. Look at what has happened in Bosnia and Africa lately.

> Western Europe is going downhill, and apart from that, our earlier homogeneity is being broken up by tentacles from the outside. Europe's colonial past perhaps means that we should not complain, but on the other hand we need not celebrate our own falling apart.

Those of us who responded to this article felt that this was a much too one-sided and partly erroneous view of

ethnicity, that what seems rather like a forecast of "ethnic-war-coming-soon-to-a-neighborhood-near-you" was far from helpful as a contribution to a dialogue over immigration and the reception of refugees, and that the use of the "tentacle" metaphor without any identifiable subject hardly made things any better. We were concerned with the influence of Ekholm Friedman's public statements on the social climate in Sweden and with the apparent scholarly authority she lent them by being described as a "professor of social anthropology." As anthropologists, too, we had indications that whatever trust members of the public might have in our discipline risked being seriously damaged.

To distance ourselves as soon as possible from Ekholm Friedman's views, three colleagues and I (together holding most of the professorships in social anthropology in the country) hurried to write our response on the day her article appeared. The debate page (which could be roughly translated as the "Op Ed page") of *Dagens Nyheter* is generally recognized as the main public forum in the Swedish print media, however, so in the competition for its space our article (Dahl et al. 1997) was held for a few days—there is usually only one article per day. Although we felt it incumbent on us to state our view quickly, we stand by every formulation (while on every other occasion during this period Ekholm Friedman seems to have regretted some of hers). Ekholm Friedman returned with a second article on May 24 (1997*c*), where she appears to say that instead of "tentacles" she should have written "rhizomes." Well, in terms of rhetorical impact, these are not exactly equivalent.

Friedman may want to go on and on about how he practices "rational critical thinking" while his adversaries engage in "moral politics." It is hardly difficult to criticize Ekholm Friedman's miscellany of "facts" and her ordering of them on entirely scholarly grounds, and she certainly did reap a considerable amount of such criticism. But the critique of "associationism" here seems to reveal an astonishing social naiveté. The context of statements does matter; Ekholm Friedman was not making hers at a seminar table. The reason for her Swedish colleagues' dismay was indeed not only that her line of argument was intellectually dubious (and would have been treated as such at the seminar table) but that in the context of the wider social climate it in effect constituted fearmongering. It is, then, not very helpful to come back with an "I didn't mean it."

In the period after our own article, we received some responses from the public. Most were favorable. Some involved hate mail from the people Friedman seems to describe as "nationalists," while some were from elderly people concerned with ways in which Swedish society now seemed different from the way it had been during their formative years, a difference which they associated with "immigrants." I believe we all engaged with a number of these senior citizens at some length, in telephone calls and by letter. There was no name-calling involved, as we felt that these worries deserved respect. We tried to offer our interpretations of the concrete situations they described, and we appealed to their compassion and

sense of solidarity—most of the newcomers to Sweden in recent years have been refugees from violent conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere. To counter assumptions and arguments of a more or less cultural fundamentalist variety, we drew attention to the prevalence of cultural exchanges in human history generally and in Sweden's past especially, as we had also done in our *Dagens Nyheter* article. Friedman argues that this is irrelevant and irresponsible "diffusionism," perhaps hoping that his anthropologist readers will have a habitual negative response to the latter term. But we should have no difficulty distinguishing between the "ism," as an antiquated school of anthropological thought, and diffusion as a sociocultural phenomenon. Debates about what are basically phenomena of diffusion—call the scenarios involved "cultural imperialism," "McDonaldization," or whatever, although it is not always a matter of global homogenization—have been fairly continuous in the public arena during recent decades. That is ample reason for anthropologists also to reconsider diffusion, as a number of people in the discipline now realize (see, e.g., Fox 1997). Friedman seems to take the position that "culture is not where to get things from but the way to put them together," but then he generally has an unfortunate predilection for trying to impose his own either-or constructions on audiences and adversaries. In the contemporary world, it would seem to be the combination of long-distance cultural flows with integrative processes that offers many of the challenges to anthropologists.

Since the *Dagens Nyheter* article and the immediately following communications with our readers, the four of us who responded to Ekholm Friedman's earlier statements have not participated in any further public debate over her views and certainly not in any "witch hunt." Having stated that we found these unacceptable as they appeared in the public domain, we feel that our own views on the general issues concerned would be more usefully expressed in other public or organizational contexts. We have never questioned Ekholm Friedman's right to take part in debate, while Friedman seems to think that when we voice our opinion of Ekholm Friedman's statements and state another view, we are doing something other than exercising our right to disagree. I would also note that while it is our article that Friedman seems most unhappy about, an extended critique was published by ten faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Uppsala, and at least a couple of statements of related criticism came from faculty and graduate students from within his and Ekholm Friedman's own department at the University of Lund. In the regional newspaper *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* (May 14, 1997) the members of his own department got a rehearsal of the argument Friedman has now presented here, Ionesco and all—in this case, it was his own graduate students who were branded as "fascistoid" in their thought. Ekholm Friedman was thus strongly criticized from all the major academic centers of anthropology in Sweden. Friedman may indeed want to portray us all as a horde of rhinoceroses, ex-

emplars of the great Swedish "political correctness." But then readers of CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY in a great many places probably now recognize such invective as a way of avoiding debate and uncomfortable moral issues. As far as the possibilities of turning "political correctness" into a powerful analytical concept are concerned, I have my doubts even after Friedman's exercise. It is, of course, a notion originating in the United States, yet Friedman suggests that there "verbal communication does not normally play a strategic social role" (since you can easily take back whatever you have said [here Friedman passingly bad-mouths another country]). And then "the heightening of the importance of language in political correctness is one of the latter's principal characteristics." Perhaps—and perhaps some of those "nationalists" would prefer a more muscular approach?

Two years after the events at issue here, one might conclude that in the long run, as far as Swedish society is concerned, they have not mattered very much. On the whole, the Swedish situation with regard to immigration, the reception of refugees, and minority affairs is not entirely different from that in much of western Europe (although it is worth pointing out that no anti-immigrant party has established a durable political foothold). Similar arguments over the issues arise and also return in similar forms over the years. (I remember the "time bomb in the suburbs" slogan, quoted by Friedman from Der Spiegel, 1997, from Swedish debate in the 1970s.)

This is obviously not to say that everything is fine, since it is not; it is only to put the activities of Friedman and Ekholm Friedman in some perspective. I stand by my opinion, however, that Ekholm Friedman's views, which certainly she had a right to express, were socially harmful, poorly based, and deleterious to the reputation of anthropology. I would add that if Friedman is arguing that Ekholm Friedman's article was based on research while that of Dahl, Hannerz, Knutsson, and Århem was not, those who know anything about our combined research experience with regard to issues of globalization, ethnicity, and development might well have a different opinion, and they might not be impressed with the intellectual cogency of Ekholm Friedman's shrill globe-galloping catastrophism either (Stockholm and Lund are not much like either Brazzaville or Mumbai). If he is suggesting that we hold naive, irresponsible, celebrationist attitudes to "cultural diversity" or "multiculturalism," I would draw his attention, for example, to a chapter I published in a volume devoted to Swedish immigration questions almost two decades ago (off and on, I have participated in the public discussion of Swedish immigration affairs longer than Friedman may be aware). The chapter was titled "Living with Diversity," which perhaps can be fairly readily understood not to be entirely a view through rose-tinted glasses (Hannerz 1981). I have elaborated on what is fundamentally the same perspective more recently (Hannerz n.d.). The point is not that immigration or the reception of refugees involves no problems whatsoever but rather that these problems need to be discussed constructively—which is what we

tried to do, in our response to Ekholm Friedman's article, in dwelling on conceptions of citizenship.

It seems that, later on, while Friedman was busy using a sizable portion of his graduate students' course work and other means for damage control, rumors still spread, even internationally, about the debate which Ekholm Friedman's statements had occasioned. Friedman mentions an incident when Arjun Appadurai left a conference in Lund which he had arranged. It is true that when Appadurai was in Stockholm participating in another symposium just before going to Lund, I gave him as a friend an account of the recent debate, as it appeared relevant to the conference he was about to attend. I made no effort to persuade him not to go there. It seems, too, also according to Friedman, that Appadurai's decision to leave had to do with matters internal to that conference. With regard to this, I am sure Appadurai can answer for himself.

Rumors have been commonly known to change as they spread, and consequently I am not surprised if after a while Friedman has begun to find some "facts" difficult to recognize. Let me only point out that I have done nothing to propagate these rumors: I would much have preferred to keep this entire sordid intermezzo in public anthropology within limits, in time as well as space.

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Together with three named colleagues, I responded in print to a May 1997 article by Kajsa Ekholm Friedman published in the debate forum of Dagens Nyheter, the main daily paper in Sweden. While Friedman insinuates that we are part of a malicious, rumourmongering conspiracy, the only activity in which we have been involved with regard to Ekholm Friedman's text has, to my knowledge, been the single response just mentioned. Any other accusations are based on the very type of thinking that Friedman sets out to criticize, "associative thinking." I cannot respond to accusations produced in such an associative vein, as I see no relation between them and my own agency. For having reacted to Ekholm Friedman's text, I am, however fully accountable.

Writing in a forum like "DN-Debatt," a prestigious arena for public debate in Sweden, one is admittedly to some extent at the mercy of the editors. Friedman argues that the headline of Ekholm Friedman's article misrepresented her arguments. That is a fate that any of us may be subject to, but readers of a text will hold the writer accountable for what is done to it. If one feels misrepresented one can either complain or withdraw the article. Choosing to publish in a forum such as "DN-Debatt" means that one is prepared to accept criticism on the basis of the formulations as they are printed. Readers can hardly be expected to wait for eventual qualifications of unfortunate formulations; those who feel that important issues are at stake will react immediately. Obviously,

anyone is entitled to react without being accused of trying to interfere with someone else's right of expression.

"DN-Debatt" is, however, a forum for statements of opinion rather than for scientific subtleties, and it is marked by political rather than scientific language. The nature of the forum invites the use of rhetorical generalizations and political metaphors more than a scientific debate would. Ekholm Friedman's article makes use of language that is based less on rational argument than on the associative language of politics. It is not, as readers of CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY may be led to believe, a conventional research report but a political tract. Leaving aside the headline, the body of the article contains a number of formulations which rightly or wrongly are read not only by colleagues but also by Swedish laymen as reflecting xenophobic views. They convey images and associations interpreted in this way both by a xenophobic audience and by readers who may be more open toward immigration. They perhaps do not convey this image to Friedman, the loyal husband, but they did so even when read—as in my case—by a friend biased toward a benevolent reading. Once printed, a text and its parts escape our control and have force of their own.

"Ethnicity as a *cultural* practice of social bounding leads to the social reality of multiculturalism as a politics of difference, an ethnic politics," Friedman writes. Yes: and unarticulated generalizations about immigrants are well known to strengthen tendencies of ethnic purism and give fuel to the ethnic controversies he himself fears. Our reaction was motivated by the expectation not that anthropologist colleagues would endeavour to avoid sensitive topics but that they would write about them in nuanced language, in particular when they summon the authority of the discipline. We expect them to adjust the level of their claims to the empirical data at hand and, as representatives of the discipline, to show professional consciousness of the hazards of generalizing about social categories. They should be aware of the power of metaphor and be capable of insightful reflection on the implications and associations evoked by their own metaphors.

Choice of words is not a trivial matter,. The metaphor of "tentacles" with which Ekholm Friedman describes immigration conjures up images of alien outer-space or submarine monsters. In her text the metaphor is associated with destructive processes of "breaking up." If it was meant to allude to "rhizomes," how could we be expected to know this? The term "rhizome" exists in Swedish as in other languages, but its main semantic referent is to positive growth and resilience, which would not have suited the dystopian context of the argument.

The editors of press debates in Sweden, as in most other places, do not select materials for publication on the basis of rational arguments alone. Rather, they select them on the basis of their potential for controversy and polarization. In the period in which Ekholm Friedman's text was published and since, there has been no dearth of public pronouncements of "the tabooed truth about this and that minority group." In fact, the trope of tabooed truths is a major cliché used by populists and part of a cultural convention with a particular social basis that cannot be argued to be the ordinary Swede's view. The same is true for the popular support for an open policy towards refugees, which is still strong despite a hardened official immigration policy. What one classifies as "the conventional view" is a matter of opinion. For an anthropologist, it is of course a challenge to break out of commonsensical understanding—but also to avoid the trap of simply swapping it for another piece of popular consensus with a different social base. To me, any commensensical understanding that classifies others categorically as lacking in solidarity and likely to explode into ethnic violence should, however, set off warning lights. If we do not condone such understandings, we should endeavour to write texts that do not appear to support them.

Friedman suggests that the media work as a catalyst for a narrow intellectual framework of "political correctness" pervading the cultural elite. This can be placed in another light by a consideration of the "facts" about the state of ethnic problems in Sweden quoted by Friedman: "Ethnic violence has in fact increased, in the form of gang fights between various immigrant groups and skinheads, the rapid increase of gang rape, most often interethnic, and an increasingly aggressive ethnic politics." Professor Jerzy Sarnecki, one of Sweden's most prominent criminologists, is in the process of writing up a major network study of the social context of 29,000 crimes committed in Stockholm from 1990 to 1995. He finds that, in contrast to conditions in the U.S.A., co-ethnic preferences are generally unimportant in the choice of crime accomplices. Criminal gangs and networks are most often formed on the basis of shared residence in multiethnic underclass suburbs. They draw a heterogeneous collection of Swedes, children of mixed marriages, and hetero-ethnic immigrants from different ethnic groups and continents. They are caused neither by multiethnicity nor by ethnically based gangs but by residential, class-based segregation—a serious enough issue, indeed. Ethnically marked sex crimes are the exception rather than the rule but of course gain intense press coverage. A "rapid increase" still refers to no more than a handful of cases in which the ethnic or interethnic dimension is still unclear. The widespread social construct of "ethnic violence" is thus to large extent a creation of the media. What is clear, however, is that there is a correlation between the experience of discrimination and intraethnic choice of partners in crime. Contributions to the social construction of ethnic crime as a major problem are therefore likely to create the very problem in the fashion of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Friedman's critique of multiculturalist liberalism is as timely as it is powerful. Kajsa Ekholm Friedman's and

his experiences show clearly that while multiculturalism is to be welcomed for the recognition of diversity that informs it, when converted into an ideology it may lead to the opposite of what it is intended to achieve, produce a categorical rigidity that erases important differences in the name of cultural diversity, and even serve to suppress dissent. At a time when we have deconstructed culture to the point where it is not even clear whether we should be speaking about it, multiculturalism ironically restores and institutionalizes reified cultural identities that erase all kinds of other differences within the groups defined by "their" cultures. This may serve well for bureaucratic, management, marketing, and consumer views of culture. It also involves issues of power with regard to who represents cultures and how. But instead of the examination of culture as a concretely spatial and temporal problem of everyday life, it almost inevitably reproduces abstractions that draw boundaries around and between groups and imprison those within.

The Swedish case Friedman discusses obviously has its own specificities, especially in the importance of the bureaucratic management of diversity, but the predicament of multiculturalism as policy, or even as ethical and intellectual stance, is restricted neither to Sweden nor to bureaucrats. While there may be no necessary connection between the multicultural and the multiethnic, the connection intrudes almost unavoidably into any discussion of identity, returns us to the most retrograde notions of both ethnicity and culture, and, by inviting race into the identification when ethnicity is associated with physical difference, easily slips into definitions of culture that are, as Paul Gilroy has pointed out, nearly biological. Ironically, intellectuals in the United States and elsewhere who identify themselves with one or another form of postcoloniality, whether or not they are indeed postcolonial in any meaningful sense of the term, and are quite oblivious to the contribution of their preoccupation with race and ethnicity to the promotion of ethnicized and racialized notions of culture readily bring similar charges of racism against those who dissent from their uncritical reification of diversity and the reasoning that justifies it. For my own criticisms of postcoloniality as an intellectual, social, and political problem, I have been charged by some putative radicals with opposition to Third World "scab" labor, racism, and even subterranean monstrosity. Silly, perhaps, but not trivial therefore, as such atavistic name-calling has much to say about the ideologies of the time and the ways in which we have come to conceive what we do and how we think. We have already moved a considerable distance toward the ethnicization of knowledge and human values. This was necessary to overcome the ethnocentrism of Eurocentric knowledge and values, but now that we are there, will we be capable of thinking our way out of the prison-house of an ethnicized world? Much may depend on the question, and multiculturalism is part of the problem.

For a person who is an immigrant himself, these issues are not academic. We have personal pasts and trajectories that shape not just our thinking but our values as well.

But we also make choices and have some measure of say about our self-identification. Does an immigrant have some kind of obligation to identify with those of similar origin and even background? Is an immigrant entitled to identify with the place of arrival, rather than constantly moving back and forth between the place of arrival and the place of origin, between a home that is a lived place and a home that is imagined, not out of some "uncritical gregariousness" (in Edward Said's term) but out of an inability or unwillingness to identify with the place of origin and because of the importance of living in the world rather than some imagined homeland? "Forgetting" cultural origin or background is not the same thing as being oblivious to a personal history or trajectory. Neither does "assimilation" to the place of arrival therefore mean disappearance into a "melting pot." The multiculturalist objection to an earlier outlook on these matters, one that assumed that assimilation means everyone becoming the same in the new place, is well taken and easy to agree with. It is, however, no more desirable for the new answers to be caught up in old problems and bound by the falseness of those problems. If culture has anything to do with history, personal or public—and I think that it has everything to do with it—then cultural encounters create not homogeneous identity but new identities and new cultures. And that is a question that may be dealt with only on the basis of concrete historicity, with all its continuities and discontinuities, contiguities and crossovers.

One of the most reprehensible consequences of multiculturalism is its erasure of differences among the members of groups so defined, who may choose to disidentify, rather than identify, with the groups of which they may be considered members by virtue of origin or background. I find it difficult to identify with a country of origin where the state, backed by popular support, refuses to admit to its predecessors' politics of "ethnic cleansing" against its Armenian populations and continues in the obliviousness of its own history to perpetuate similar policies against its Kurdish populations. And I take personal offense at receiving letters of invitation to join "grassroots" Turkish groups in the United States that seek to mobilize U.S. citizens of Turkish origin to counteract the "vilification" of Turkey and the Turkish government for its abuse of human rights. At an even more fundamental, because everyday, level, as the product of a politically charged secular education, do I have an obligation beyond considerations of tolerance to sing the praises of the practice of veiling women on the grounds that it represents some cultural or religious identity or to condone it as a value? To state the obvious, immigrants in any one place are not unified by any common cultural characteristic (even food, that fundamental of culture and cultural consumption, is not sufficiently unifying) but divided by many, many histories. The assumption, invocation, or imposition of a common culture against such diversity, under the circumstances, may be achieved only by suppression of difference within the group—even where participation in such a unified

culture may be required by considerations of survival and self-defense.

A critical stance on questions of cultural identity calls for both critical distance and critical engagement, which are themselves made possible and, to some extent, shaped by personal trajectory. This is not an option available to the great majority of migrants, exiles, and diasporics, who are economically and politically disadvantaged. The problem is an important one even in the case of the latter, when they revive or invent common cultural traditions for group self-defense that serves to oppress as much as to counteract oppression. It is downright puzzling when the privileged promote it against the evidence (and claims) of globality and "hybridity." And when rendered an instrument for the containment of differences, which is especially prominent among diasporic populations that inhabit a multiplicity of global locations, it not only reifies national, ethnic, and racial origin (whatever any of these identifications may mean) through the agency of culture but itself contributes to global divisiveness on the basis of imagined against lived identities. One of its by-products is making the migrant, in his/her diasporic identification, a foreigner everywhere but in some imagined cultural origin.

Multiculturalism may provide an answer to problems of the past. But unless we take it not just as a solution but also as a problem, it is likely to contribute to, rather than resolve, the problems of the present.

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