

DISCUSSION BLOCK

Throughout the recent decades following the end of the cold war, matters of cultural diversity have become a major theme for theoretical discussions and political controversies in the liberal democratic societies in Europe and North America. Is liberal democracy inhospitable *per se* to cultural differences? Are universal civic values incompatible with cultural identity? Should a person who lives in such a society be obliged to relativize his or her ethnic or, e.g., religious allegiances, in order to be a good citizen? Should public life in a “well ordered society” (according to the famous formulation of John Rawls) be cleared of ethnic, religious, or racial differences? And is this at all possible; or, is it simply a hypocritical “smoke screen” behind which the ethnic, religious, and racial identities of the majority dominate in a given society (such as is the case, according to many critics, with WASP¹ culture in the USA)?

Two major factors have contributed to the rising salience of cultural diversity today. One is the democratization of life in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This made it impossible to deal with the issues of the numerous ethnic and religious minorities in this region by means of coercion. The other is the

massive migration of people from “Third-World” countries to Western Europe. The encapsulation of Muslim immigrant communities in Western societies has demonstrated the problematic nature of the multiculturalist slogan “Let us celebrate diversity.”

The *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* wishes to begin a discussion of the theme *Liberal Democracy and Cultural Diversity*. To facilitate this, Richard Robson’s well known short paper “In What Sense Is Multiculturalism a Form of Communitarianism” and Slobodan Divjak’s paper “Communitarianism, Multiculturalism and Liberalism” are here published as an introduction to the theme because these papers present an overview of this subject-matter. We invite all colleagues who have something to say on these issues to submit relevant papers. Those which receive positive reviews will be published one by one in the next issues of the Journal, under the separate heading of the discussion.

From the Editorial Board of
Balkan Journal of Philosophy

¹ White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

