

Western civilization v. multiculturalism

by Tom Strunk

This year marks the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World. While most years we celebrate Columbus Day, it seems that this year we will be celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Columbus has been continually assailed by attacks from the left, claiming that he destroyed a continent inhabited by peaceful civilizations living in wondrous harmony with nature.

Columbus has become the symbol of western civilization and all its sins. This attack against western civilization is led by a group of multiculturalists determined to expose every deplorable act committed by Europeans, to ignore the offenses of non-western civilizations, and to divide America into warring factions similar to those of Eastern Europe.

Since classical antiquity the western world has been a driving force in the way man lived. The Greeks and Romans, as the creators of western civilization, were among the first to analyze the way man thought.

They established institutions of learning based on academic freedom. They questioned natural phenomena scientifically, rather than supernaturally.

Confidence in the individual was reflected in their democratic government. This way of life was far different from those of the Egyptians and the civilizations of the Near East, where there were stricter class structures and events were explained independently of reason.

As centuries passed, Europe even challenged the validity of its own religious orthodoxy: Catholicism. When western civilization flourished, it could not be contained by Europe and it burst out upon the world.

The Europeans circumnavigated the world, spreading their culture wherever they went. America was one of those places. As the scientific revolution and enlightenment transformed Europe, it changed America as it is now changing many other areas of the world.

Our forefathers based our government on the principles of the enlightenment, our education systems on academic freedom, and our ideals on scientific inquiry. The religion many of us practice originated in western civilization. So much of what we are has undeniably come from Europe.

But now that western tradition is being challenged by multiculturalists who are insisting on cultural relativism. They teach us that cultures can not be compared,

they can only be judged in their own context. We are not allowed to look at a culture and deem it barbaric.

Instead we can only study the oppression they were put through by western imperialism. Although the multiculturalists may have good intentions, such as respect for other people and a broader view of the world, they have gone beyond those



goals and are now destroying their own dream.

They have changed history into a game, where the teams consist of races and sexes. Each of them bending the truth and grappling for great names from their past. Whenever a white person is mentioned, a black person must be mentioned to keep the score even.

So it goes, across sexes, races and disciplines. This game hurts us as we struggle

to create an integrated society. For the game only allows us to partake in our own separate histories, divided according to our race and sex.

For example, Malcolm X is owned by blacks, while George Washington is owned by whites. In the end we sacrifice truth and history to create a society that is divided against itself.

One danger of multiculturalism is that it has now found followers in education. The curriculum is becoming increasingly multicultural, as teachers use history to build self-esteem. Our children no longer go to school to learn to reason and think critically. Instead, they are indoctrinated with the achievements of various races and sexes (I wonder what the Japanese are doing?).

These practices may make us feel good but they will never teach us to live together. They only remind us further of our differences. The dream of an integrated society will become impossible as we grow more and more ethnocentric.

At a time of increasing diversity in America, it is imperative that we take pride in our common ground. Our schools need to rediscover traditional values, not because they were created by a handful of white men, but because they have made us a great civilization.

Plato should not be studied because he was a white male, but because he thought and wrote so profoundly. I can not consider myself an heir to Plato just because he and I are white. If I want to read and study him, fine, but I can not strut proudly because Plato was both great and white. I had no effect on what he accomplished.

The same is true for Dr. Martin Luther King. We should not celebrate his birthday because we need a black holiday. We should celebrate his birthday because he was a great man. Similarly, blacks do not own Dr. King because they are black.

Americans need to work together for a common culture. The practices of multiculturalism only seek to separate us. And separate, we shall fall, for as Wendell Wilkie said:

"The cloak that binds America together is woven of a strong, yet delicate fabric. It serves to shelter alike the rich and poor, the native and foreign born, Jew and Gentile, black and white. Let no one tear it asunder, for we do not know where we shall find its like again."

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The coups that changed mankind

Ed. note: Mike Royko is on vacation. In his absence, we are reprinting some of his favorite columns.

by Mike Royko

The world of science is delirious with excitement over the discovery of new, efficient ways to get electricity from here to there. Or there to here, I suppose.

It's said that these recent discoveries will have an enormous impact on the economy and our lifestyles and make possible all sorts of wondrous technological advances.

One scientist was quoted in a newspaper as saying about the rapid development and potential of the new electrical conductors: "Nothing like this has ever happened in science before."

Another said: "Superconductivity developments are the most exciting new breakthroughs of our lives. It will change the way we live."

With all respect for the scientists, I have my doubts about that. Changing the way we live, I mean.

For example, nothing I've read has said that this amazing

breakthrough will lead to the elimination of some of the most terrible curses known to modern man -- the rush-hour traffic jam, flavorless tomatoes, devious politicians or goofs who talk during movies.

Every few years, scientists insist on telling us that something new and amazing will change our lives. But what happens? The military uses the new development to refine the methods we might use to blow up the world. And the rest of us wake up with the same problems, bills, aches and pains.

Consider the transistor, which replaced the vacuum tube and was hailed as one of the great inventions of the ages. That did it give us? A sub-race of zombies who shuffle or jog through life with Walkman radios attached to their heads.

That's why I'm skeptical about most scientific breakthroughs. I've seen few of them lead to a genuine improvement in the way we live. Have any of them eliminated the hangover?

And that has led me to compile a list of what I consider to be some of the most important inventions of my lifetime. It isn't

a comprehensive list, of course, and others may have their own choices.

If so, you might send them to me and I'll add them to the list. In no particular order, here are my choices. The automatic car wash, especially the kind that lets you



shove a slug in a slot and squirt hot wax on your car. The automatic car wash has freed millions of men from the weekend ritual of slopping soap on their sneakers and has permitted them to do more important things, such as nothing.

The disposable diaper. Only those who had children before it

was available can appreciate how much less offensive it is to be a young parent. As Slats Grobnik once said: "Everybody says babies are so sweet. But if a grown man did the things a kid does, he'd be run out of every saloon in town."

The cut-proof golf ball. Scientists have estimated that this amazing advancement has eliminated so much stress that the average golfer's life has been extended by 2 1/2 years. I made that up, but it's probably true anyway.

The remote-control channel changer. The world would have been better off if TV had never been invented. What would we have missed -- Sam Donaldson? But as long as we're stuck with it, it's nice to be able to flip through the channels effortlessly to see if there's anything lewd going on.

The automatic ice cube maker. I can't imagine what life is like in societies that don't have this device. It's little wonder that there is so much discontent in the Third World.

The once-size-fits-all men's stocking. Until we had this, we never knew whether a stocking would be too big or too little

when we bought it. So most of us had toes that were either scrunched or pinched. As Plato said: A person cannot be truly happy with painful toes.

The phone answering machine. It's been maligned and ridiculed. But it's permitted me to at last be honest with those who phone my home. Before I had one, I had to say, "Hello. Oh, hi, how are you? Uh-huh, that's interesting. No kidding. Well, maybe we can get together and do that." Now, my recorded message states a simple truth: "I'm here, but I don't want to talk to you. At the beep, just go away. Thank you for listening."

As I said, others may have their favorites. Venetian blinds, for example, which admit light but discourage peeping toms; automatic windshield washers; and any garment made of polyester. But we have a long way to go. We can put a man on the moon, make electricity move more efficiently.

When will science develop a martini that is good for you?

Mike Royko is Chicago-based, nationally syndicated columnist. His column appears weekly in The Collegian.