

One Does Not Become an American

A heavy price one pays for obtaining the American citizenship is that one loses his/her identity in exchange for the empty promise of freedom. One becomes not an American but rather transforms into a hyphenated political figure. A person grows up in Korea and immigrates to America and transforms into a Korean-American. The person will never fully be an American, and at the same time he/she ceases to be a Korean, for when the person goes back to Korea he/she will be then known as American-Korean. Such is the fate of the colored citizens of America. And it is how the minorities are distinguished from the "majority". The fact that the term "majority Americans" even exists proves that the colored citizens of America are yet again simply political figures that formulate the "diversity" of America.

The white citizens are exempted from facing such situation. But, interestingly and oddly ironically, the white citizens of America feel that they lack identity because they think that hyphenation is the badge that signifies one's ethnic origin. So they come up with nonsense such as "quarter Irish," "one third Jewish and two thirds German," and so on and so on until all the possibilities of mixtures of whites are exhausted. On the other hand, the colored citizens try their best to become white in order to get rid of their hyphenated identities in order to obtain a clear identity as Americans. In other words, colored and white citizens of America want to become each other for the same goal: to establish one's identity. Such identity crisis emerging from the hyphenation of the colored citizens' identities in order for the white citizens to maintain the political "majority" is a situation that is unique to America¹. What is excellent about America, however, is its superior medical care and university education. But, of course, it is costly.

Everyone in America, whether white or colored, are in identity crisis, and in some sense it is quite humorous. And because no one in America has a clear sense of identity, it is natural that Americans are humanly bland and conservative but high in patriotism. Just see how conservative and bland Hollywood films are. Hollywood sticks to one model of filmmaking that is just a blind application of theatre practice onto the aesthetics of cinema. Hollywood doesn't dive into what cinema is truly capable of. They don't even know that cinema and theatre are absolutely different forms of art. What's worst is that Hollywood imposes its economic power and teaches filmmakers around the world that the Hollywood model of filmmaking is the absolute way to approach cinema. How arrogant! Cinema as language? Relying on subtext? Constructing gripping plots? Really?! Is that all cinema can do? Is cinema limited to storytelling? We must not be afraid and must not be pressured by Hollywood. We need to first be aware that the term "art film" is as devious as the imposition of hyphenation in the American identity classification for the minorities. There is no "art film", but there are films that are art that are clearly superior to other films.

Let me say one thing to filmmakers around the world: wake up.

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¹ Note that people with mixed blood identity compose another identity crisis but such crisis is not unique to America.