

Answering questions

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



The essays which are considered in this paper deal with the complex issues of solidarity and national identity. In his essay *All for One, and One for All* Charles Taylor discusses the problem of maintaining the sense of solidarity amid diversifying populations. In the preface to *The Bush Garden* Northop Frye explains the problem of identity and separatism in Canada.

Taylor starts his essay with an assertion that without solidarity democratic societies fall apart. The reason of this, in author's opinion, is "a diminishing sense of common identity". An example of strong identity is—as the author argues—ethnically homogeneous Scandinavia. According to Taylor, there are two ways to maintain the sense of intense solidarity. The first way deals with the "older modes of solidarity". Republican secularism in France, according to Taylor's example, is "erecting a dam against Muslim immigrants". This is ineffective and represents the first way. The second way is to redefine identity "in dialogue with some elements that are external, and some that are internal". In Taylor's opinion this means to preserve traditions, start dialog with foreigners, and form the political ethic upon human rights. Thus, different groups of people must unite in the desire to preserve solidarity. It will happen if "Christians see it as central to their Christianity, if Muslims see it as central to their Islam, and if the various kinds of lay philosophies see it as central to their philosophies". The ultimate goal is to create a powerful political ethic of solidarity based upon the presence and acceptance of very different views.

Northop Frye, in his turn, also speaks of solidarity, but his opinion is a bit different. First of all, the author distinguishes between the national identity and national unity: "identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination

and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling". The author condemns uniformity, when people " use the same cliches, thinks alike and behave alike". The result of such uniformity will be a society " which seems comfortable at first but is totally lacking in human dignity". What the author considers to be a " real unity" is tolerating dissent and rejoicing in variety of outlook and tradition, recognizing that it is man's destiny to unite and not divide.

It is possible to see that both authors support the idea of preserving the traditions of different cultures inside one society. According to them it will prevent conflicts and maintain solidarity. This sounds great, but the fact is that it will never happen. It can be seen from history, that the process of cultural globalization has a strong potential for conflicts, since people often have to revise or abandon some of their traditional principles and values of their own culture. This is inevitable. Different societies react to changes differently. Resistance to merging process may be different—from passive rejection of values of other cultures to active resistance against their distribution and approval. This is the way to chaos. It is impossible, as Taylor offers, to preserve the traditions and " recreate our political ethic around the kernel of human rights" at the same time. Simply because religious societies are very far from what is considered as human rights.

Taylor's example of ethnically homogeneous Scandinavia, as a matter of fact, contradicts his opinion. The racial and religious conflicts in these countries, which can be observed today, prove it. As soon as some groups of people start to violate common norms of behavior the conflict is imminent.

The only way to preserve solidarity is to implement strict rules, common for every culture and every religion. Violation of these rules must be severely punished. No action can be justified by cultural or religious traditions, because they are many and they are different. It is stated in the Bible that one can take his neighbor as a slave, if he is of different religion. Taylor offers to preserve traditions—well, this is a good tradition. The conclusion here is the following – you can't have your cake and eat it.

Works Cited

Frye, N. The Preface to the Bush Garden. Web. <http://northropfrye-thebushgarden.blogspot.com/2009/02/preface.html>

Taylor, C. "All for One, and One for All", The Globe and Mail, Sep. 30 2010. Web. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/all-for-one-and-one-for-all/article4327522/>