

A Lurking Pocahontas

by [Norman Berdichevsky](#) (November 2018)



Erasmus Variations, R. B. Kitaj, 1958

Senator Elizabeth Warren's recent embarrassing DNA results revealing a biological heritage of 1,024th (one x ten

grandparents back in history) part Native American ancestry in spite of a career built in large measure of sympathy for her "minority" status as a "woman of color" (terms she proudly used) should be the epitaph on the tombstone of the Democrats driven policy of *identity politics* which violates the tenants of *One nation with Liberty and Justice for All*. It is not difficult to find countless other inane manifestations of this policy that puts the United States in much the same category as states which ordered two classes of citizens based on the primitive notions of "blood."

In 2015, an apparent "spiritual cousin" of Senator Warren, Rachel Anne Dolezal, the local director of the Spokane Washington NAACP, was exposed by her parents and brother at having invented/adopted a false Black ancestry. The family of totally White European extraction told a story that shocked many of her colleagues and those who had known her in the guise of a devoted "Activist" civil rights worker on behalf of the African-American community.

Ms. Dolezal's numerous interviews and the absurd answers given to factual questions about her birth certificate, callously rejecting both her parents and their heritage (part Czech, Irish and Norwegian), dismissing the relevance of DNA tests and insisting how she feels supersedes any facts, would embarrass a child. The authentic feeling of elation of "belonging" to some distinct ethnic/racial group cannot be acted or created at the expense of disowning one's own parents and their heritage as Rachel Dolezal has done, no matter how successful she was at imitating a dialect, adopting Afro hairstyles, loving soul food, or darkening her complexion. By contrast, Senator Warren may have had authentic memories of stories her grandparents had told her of American Indian ancestry but they were nowhere apparent in her early

educational or political career.

In the case of Dolezal, her patently ridiculous answers became trenchantly self-serving naked attempts at fraud. After all, she was on record for bringing suit against Howard University for discriminating against her because she is (at least was at the time) "white." Howard is no better or worse than the Harvard University and other paragon institutions of Ivy League vintage that discriminated against Jews in their admissions policy for decades in the past, masking them under the same call for "diversity" and camouflaging them as a "geographic consideration."

The government's policies and actions since 1964, primarily in Democratic administrations, have been in the direction of promoting "groups' rights." The absurd requirement demanding that individuals fill out the census forms to indicate their group racial and ethnic identity serves no other purposes than to document which group deserves more protection and "equality." This has the unintended consequence of often promoting racial discrimination. Although realtors are forbidden by law to inform prospective buyers of a home anything about the racial makeup of the neighborhood where the house is located, the buyers can simply go online and look up the racial composition of each area based on the most recent census data (and avoid buying where they don't like the profile).

What made the appointment of Supreme Court Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor grotesque is that the principle of diversity was so absent in nominating them to the Supreme Court when there was not a single "WASP" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) on the bench at that time. WASPS are still the

largest single identifiable ethnic or religious component of the American population. Kagan and Sotomayor joined their mirror image counterpart on the court, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Since Kagan grew up in Manhattan; Ginsburg is from Brooklyn, and Sotomayor comes from the Bronx, "diversity" was no consideration at all for Obama. All three women justices are considered ultra-liberal. A new Supreme Court with both these women resulted in a representation of one-third female and 55% (five-ninths) Greater New York-New Jersey (Justices Scalia and Alito were both born in Trenton).

If we were still a nation of individual citizens with equal rights and opportunities and with merit being the only consideration for appointment to high office, none of the above would matter. But it is the selective use of diversity, like so much else, that is part of the Obama/Left/Liberal agenda that stands out for its hypocrisy. Ironically, the leading Ivy League schools who today push the Liberal/Left agenda in the country, used "geographical diversity" as a camouflage in the 1930s to severely limit the admission of Jewish students.

There is indeed one and only one good argument for diversity built into our Constitution, and that is the Electoral College, designed to prevent manipulation of specific blocks of voters in large states and afford representation to the small states and rural areas. From the very beginning, it wisely prescribed the limitation that Electors must cast at least one ballot for an individual who "shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves". This makes it virtually certain that the President and Vice-Presidential candidates will always be from different states (and preferably from different regions to win the widest support nationally).

For more than a generation now, one of the most powerful weapons used by the Liberal-Left in American politics is to classify individuals by a group identity such as race, ethnicity or sex, now termed *gender*, to justify differential treatment of citizens, usually referred to by the euphemism of “affirmative action.”

Multiracial Americans are those who have mixed ancestry of “two or more races.” The term also includes many Americans of mixed-race ancestry but who self-identify with just one group culturally and socially. In the 2010 US census, approximately 9 million individuals, or 2.9% of the population, self-identified as “multiracial.” Many geneticists believe that there is considerable evidence that a realistic accounting by genetic ancestry would produce a much higher number than this, largely due to the successful “passing” of many individuals of partial Black or American Indian ancestry who made considerable efforts to approximate the white majority in every aspect—both physically, socially and culturally.

“Pinky” and the Centuries’ Long Passing of Blacks into the White Population

“Pinky” was a 1949 American race drama film starring Jeanne Crain, Ethel Barrymore and Ethel Waters. All three actresses were nominated for the Academy Award, Crain (a white woman who played Pinky) for “Best Actress in a Leading Role,” and Barrymore and Waters for “Best Actress in a Supporting Role.” The explicit theme of the film was multiracial identity and Blacks “passing” as Whites. The main character is Pinky, a light-skinned African-American nursing student. She returns to

the South after getting a nursing degree in the North to visit Dicey (Ethel Waters), the illiterate black laundress grandmother who raised her. Pinky confesses to Dicey that she passed for white while studying and as a result fell in love with a white doctor, Thomas Adams, who knows nothing about her black heritage.

The film honestly confronts racial animosity from all sides as Pinky eventually reconciles with a stern wealthy white dowager Miss Em (played by Ethel Barrymore) whom she instinctively dislikes only to later discover that Miss Em had nursed her grandmother back to health and left Pinky a fortune in her will. Both Lena Horne and Dorothy Dandridge (Hollywood's most famous very light complexioned African-American stars who were both very anxious to play the role of Pinky) were passed over to give the part to a white, lesser known actress. Critics were unanimous that she did not bring to the role the required intensity and passion that either of the more well-known African-American stars would have brought.

LBJ and the New Importance of Quotas (by other names)

Prior to the mid-20th century, many individuals and families did their utmost to hide their multiracial heritage because of racial discrimination against minorities, predominantly against African-Americans. It was President Lyndon B. Johnson, the classic white southern politician, struggling to wear/inherit the cape of the great fallen leader/martyr, JFK, who elaborated on the importance of "affirmative action" for groups rather than individuals when he stated:

. . . But freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please . . . We seek . . . not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result . . . To this end, opportunity is essential, but not enough.

What is enough then? This question remains unanswered but cannot be answered by checking a box marking a group identity on a form, and even less so by asking someone how they feel. A height requirement that screens out many Hispanics and women, even if it can be demonstrated that height is an important job-related consideration (among firefighters for example), may be held to be invalid today. The laws relating to affirmative action currently state that if a test for “merit” (itself a concept in ill repute as is “meritocracy,” disproportionately lessens the scores/participation of one racial or gender group and some other equally good merit test does not, then the employer has to use the latter test. The door is thus open to endless variations of “equally good merit tests” (until you find the one that works).

Chief Justice John Roberts has rightly expressed his firm opposition to the “whole sordid business” of dividing the American population by race and ethnicity but the prospects are dim that we can escape the fate of all of us being forced into statistical boxes. My wife was born in Argentina and her first language is Spanish. Does she qualify as a Hispanic? Her parents were Yiddish speaking Jews who immigrated to Argentina in 1920. When she asked an official at the American Embassy in Madrid where she filled out the forms for a green card, if she should identify herself on the form as Hispanic, his reply was, “I haven’t got a clue.” And why should he? Only in the United States is the term “Hispanic” regarded as a racial

rather than a cultural category.

A newspaper story [featured](#) on page one of the Orlando Sentinel entitled “Hispanic License Plate Could Sail to Approval.” A “Hispanic Achievers” plate design had been incorporated into a bill submitted to then Governor Crist. Its original form simply stated “Hispanics Discovered Florida,” but the public relations team behind the proposal had to tone down the message and simply put the organization’s name on the design with a Spanish galleon in the center and the word UNIDOS in large print. Profits from the \$25 tag fee would go to fund the group’s “administrative costs” and benefit Hispanic achievers. The group claimed a network of 14,000 subscribers, a drop in the bucket of the state’s more than three and a half million Hispanics.

Of course, the absurd irony that no one bothers to pay attention to, is that the same mentality of group pride and a balkanized identity of hyphenated-Americans originally led most politicians on both the state and local level to go along with cancelling “Columbus Day” to satisfy American Indian groups angry at the Spanish “discovery and conquest of the Americas” as “racial genocide.” Columbus Day was originally declared a federal holiday back in 1934 as an act by the Roosevelt administration to help assuage the feelings of many American Catholics, organized by the Knights of Columbus, especially of Italian origin (who claim Columbus as their own), that there was no national holiday that recognized an achievement by Catholics (and Italians). We have come full circle.

The Jews Wishing to Pass as Gentiles Had No Choice

The film "Europa Europa," a 1990 [film](#) directed by Agnieszka Holland, based on a true story, traces the fate of Solomon Perel, a German Jewish boy who escaped the Holocaust by masquerading, not just as a Gentile, but as an elite "Aryan" German (so much for Nazi racial theories—Perel was judged to be a perfect specimen of Aryan manhood by Nazi anthropologists). Its original German title is *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, i.e. "Hitler Youth Salomon." Perel appears briefly as himself in the finale of the film. At any moment in the decade of masquerading, he risked instant discovery and betrayal by the simple fact of his circumcision (in Hellenistic times, some Jews attempted to reverse the condition by submitting to a painful surgery).

For the overwhelming majority of them in eastern and central Europe, ca. 1930-1945, there was never a real chance to simply act the part as Perel had managed miraculously or benefit from the scholarships and good jobs Dolezal received. After all, they were not "slumming," "social climbing" or rehearsing a Broadway part, they were frantically trying to survive. Hiding one's identity has been an option for only a minority of oppressed peoples. Tens of millions of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe who immigrated to the United States felt a social pressure to conform, learn English as soon as possible, which the great majority did, and adjust to American culture. A large number of them did so by also changing and shortening their family names (see NER;s "[What's in a Name?](#)"). Many Jewish immigrants to modern Israel and the United States also changed their names to erase memories of the oppressive Russian, Austrian, Polish "exiles countries" where Jews had often been humiliated.

Although certain “typical Jewish” names in particular ending -berg, -stein or -man are actually of German origin, and those ending -sky and -vitz are Slavic, they nevertheless came to be regarded as reminiscent of a humiliating past. It was not only a family name but also one way Jews tried to hide their identity and assimilate even before the rise of Hitler. I have a friend whose parents felt that they would face less anti-Semitism in the United States by changing the spelling of their name from the German/Jewish Fried to Freed.

There could never be a doubt about the Jewish identity of those immigrants to Israel who had thrown off the desire to integrate and regard themselves as Germans or Hungarians or Poles of the “Mosaic faith.” Very few of their fellow citizens from the larger gentile society would have welcomed them, no matter how well they imitated speaking the national language with perfect diction. No Gentile, no matter how sympathetic to Zionism or Jewish culture, music, art, philosophy and religious tradition would have posed as a Jew as Rachel Dolezal has done with her newly adopted “Black” identity. Senator Warren may yet pay a price for what appears to be a cynical political ploy that ended up biting her and the Democrats fondness for identity politics.

Norman Berdichevsky is a Contributing Editor to *New English Review* and is the author of [*The Left is Seldom Right*](#) and [*Modern Hebrew: The Past and Future of a Revitalized Language*](#).

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