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John Kenneth White, *Barack Obama's America: How New Conceptions of Race, Family, and Religion Ended the Reagan Era* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2009, \$75.00 cloth/\$27.95 paper). Pp. x + 305. ISBN 978 0 472 11450 4, 978 0 472 03399 1.

Describing demographic change in twenty-first-century Georgia, John Kenneth White quotes Cisco Montanez, a fifteen-year-old employee at a Dairy Queen owned by a recent immigrant from India: “Tomorrow is right now” (57). White argues that, in contemporary America, tomorrow is indeed right now. For White, the country that elected Barack Obama is alive with change. The 2008 election “represented a moment when a new demography caught up to a new politics” (234).

Barack Obama's America is organized around discussion of “four revolutions”: “racial, family, gay-rights, and religious” (183). The electorate is seen to be clearly multiracial, with the Census Bureau recognizing twenty-one different racial categories. Accelerating divorce rates, common experience of cohabitation and changing patterns of sexual relationships among the young have transformed family values. Six out of ten poll respondents now report that they have homosexual friends, colleagues, or family members. White also argues (a little more counter-intuitively) that religious change in America is, on balance, increasingly anti-institutional and individualistic. Even the rise of megachurches plays into this schema: “successful megapastors,” like Rick Warren, “de-emphasize the notion of sin” (179). For White, liberalism and tolerance are on the march.

White is brilliant at marshalling the telling anecdote and the revealing statistic in support of his argument. He recognizes the existence of countermovements: resistance to gay marriage, nativist responses to immigration, and so on. Yet his analysis is, from a liberal perspective at least, fairly relentlessly upbeat (certainly more upbeat than his account of American transitional social change in *The Values Divide* (2003)). Was it really only in 2004 that John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, in *The Right Nation*, were arguing that Americans had decisively taken the conservative fork in the political road? White's highly enjoyable study may be seen as a liberal whoop of joy at Obama's election, yet it is also an important contribution to the line of argument advanced by John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira in *Back to the Future: The Re-emergence of the Emerging Democratic Majority* (2007).

John Kenneth White has, in *Barack Obama's America*, done a great job of nailing empirical jelly to the interpretative wall. However, I am sure he would be the first to acknowledge that emerging electoral majorities are products of complex, unpredictable interactions between demography, values, voter behaviour, and sheer historical contingency. The new liberal majority, rooted in changing demographics and shifting values, may find it difficult to adjust to the politics of high unemployment and its associated anti-Washington resentments. It is also by no means inconceivable that the Republicans will soon wake up to the new demographics.

Durham University

JOHN DUMBRELL