One can ask why Louisville, KY (the city of my birth and childhood), never became a world-influencing city, but Los Angeles did. Louisville had considerable early advantages in terms of location, weather and natural resources. It had a 50+ year headstart on Los Angeles as a growing city. But Los Angeles had the most important advantage: diversity. From its very earliest days LA merged Spanish, English and Native American cultures. Throughout its history, wave after wave of immigrants came to Los Angeles. It attracted the misfits, the non-conformists, the dissatisfied, the strivers. I strongly believe that it is the synergisms that arise across diverse cultures and perspectives that was absent in Louisville, but made LA one of the great cities of the world. Yet too often in the public dialog today we advocate closing off America to immigrants: closing it off from people who may not speak like we do, think like we do, or act like we do. Many want to turn the entire US into the homogenous Louisville and cease celebrating the diverse Los Angeles. This is a huge mistake for all of us, both as a culture and as a nation. This is why I support the diversity initiative at UCLA. Diversity is what made the US great, and we should do our utmost to teach this simple lesson.

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