Twitter Thread by David Roberts



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The more I think about the Bruce Springsteen Jeep ad, the more disgusted I get. It's allegedly a call for unity, but it is drenched in a very particular culture's iconography: a Christian church (that superimposes the cross on the US flag), farms, rural living, "the middle" ...

... it's all so white. This is the "America" of nationalist fairy tales: rural land, settled by self-reliant white farmers & good Christians. It's all trucks & dust & manual labor & squinting at the horizon while wiping sweat from your brow. This is the kind of "unity" ...

... designed to comfort (or at least not threaten) white people. It says, "let's unify by joining together to reaffirm America's mythical self-conception, despite the real-world violence & repression it has always entailed."

If I'm, I dunno, a latino housekeeper in Vegas or black Uber driver in Sacramento, what's in the commercial for me? What does this kind of "unity" promise me? What can I find in "the (mythical) middle"? Nothing. It's not for me.

If America ever does come together in some kind of social solidarity again (which looks pretty doubtful), it's not going to be around the myths & iconography of 20th century hegemonic white culture in the US. It's going to be around something NEW -- new stories, new icons.

It's fine, I guess, that Bruce & Jeep are trying to comfort white people. When white people get upset, lots of other people tend to suffer & die. But the ad is a lie, an illusion. That America is gone. A new, genuinely multicultural, multiethnic America awaits.