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# 美国文化教程



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## Preface

Working together in a joint undertaking can be both challenging and fun, and that is exactly what has happened to the five of us during the past year when we pooled our brains together for this course book of American culture. It is challenging, because we all had different schedules and priorities, often finding it difficult to meet pre-set timelines. It is fun, because we share our interest in American Cultural Studies. Sometimes, challenges became so enormous that the fun side of the equation got diminished, and even occasionally obscured when the pace of work stalled, or when the deadline approached. But our commitment to the mission did not simply hold us together in times of frustration; but more importantly, it helped solidify our efforts to pull it through in a cheerful and rewarding direction. So, what the reader finds before him/her now — *American Culture: A Course Book* — is the result of our common endeavor, bound together by our shared intellectual joy and academic interest.

As teachers of English in Chinese universities and colleges, we all believe that the learning process of English can be greatly facilitated through a good understanding of English-speaking countries' culture(s), for the two are not only inseparable from each other, but also reinforce one another in many ways. Some people prefer to teach English with a cultural dimension, helping students understand the culture of English-speaking countries through language acquisition, where culture is secondary to language. Others suggest that culture teaching should be parallel to language teaching, where language and culture are given equal weight in teaching, and students acquire both separately. Still others argue that culture teaching is an integral part of language teaching, where language and culture are integrated and acquired simultaneously. We believe that all three arguments are

valid to the extent that they fit the circumstances under which language teaching and culture teaching are offered. But whenever and wherever conditions are available or mature, it is more preferable and indeed advisable to follow the third approach, i. e. , treating culture teaching as an integral part of language teaching. It is not only because the two can not be divorced from each other arbitrarily, but also because they will be more sensibly appreciated and more effectively acquired by students when language teaching and culture teaching are appropriately integrated.

It is exactly with this awareness that we decided to compile this textbook in English, introducing and explaining American culture to the college students in China in decent and, hopefully, idiomatic English. We are very much convinced that this course book will benefit Chinese college students in several ways. For one thing, it will help them improve their English language skills, for the book, as a whole, is prepared in quite readable English. For another, students will find their vision of the English world — the United States in this case — broadened as they explore with us the social fabrics and cultural values of the United States. For still another, by offering them much-needed information as well as clear explanations about the ways Americans think and behave, it will assist students in building up their intercultural communication skills. Beyond all this, the reader, on a practical level, will find the textbook useful in many other ways as well, such as for more advanced study in the field of American culture, or for future career development in an intercultural environment, be it a business setting or otherwise. At any rate, with the accelerated pace of globalization and the growing needs for understanding between people from different cultures, a reasonable amount of knowledge of world cultures, American culture included, has become increasingly important and, indeed, indispensable.

For anyone engaged in cultural studies, it is almost a truism that there is no single, accepted definition of culture — indeed, there are almost as many definitions as there are textbooks on culture. Still, difficult as it is, there are several characteristics that most definitions agree upon from which one can draw a general idea as to what the concept of culture is. Edward Tylor, for example, stated that culture is “*that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.*” It is a very broad definition, suggesting that culture is not only the behavior of an individual, but also the thought processes and perceptions of the world of an individual. Following this line of thinking, we can probably summarize culture as



something that includes, but not limited to, at least two essential elements: (1) a way of life, and (2) values and beliefs that direct one's behavior. Essentially, we, for the purpose of this course book, apply this working definition to our discussion of American culture in the pages that follow.

With this in mind, we have included in this textbook a wide range of topics involving American way of life and values and beliefs, such as national character, ethnic identity, racial relationships, cultural regions, values and assumptions, mass media, popular culture, intellectual currents, literature, women, family, sports, immigration, urban culture, political system, religion, economy, and education. It is hoped that such an approach will not only present to the reader a clear picture of the American way of life, but also reveal the underpinning values and beliefs of it. To us and the reader alike, understanding the American way of life is the first step toward the appreciation of the sustaining power of American ideas and fundamental beliefs. After all, it is these ideas and beliefs that define American character.

To this end, we have attempted in every way possible to facilitate the use of this textbook for its readers. To begin with, we have carefully designed “Core of the Analysis” and placed it at the beginning of each chapter as a way of kick-starting the thinking process of the reader when he/she opens the textbook. This part is intended to help the reader to not only generate a general idea of the key content covered in a given chapter, but also start thinking about the possible questions raised and analyzed in it. Following that lead-in, we proceed to discuss specific topics on a one-by-one basis in all the fifteen chapters in this book. These topics, as indicated in the Contents, are thematically organized and approached with description and analysis. In other words, each chapter does not merely describe what it is, but also makes considerable effort to discuss and explain why it is. To further assist the reader in comprehending the text in each chapter, a section called “Summary” has been prepared after each chapter, summing up the key points and ideas in it. Similarly, in order to help the reader gain more knowledge about the personalities, issues or events mentioned in any given chapter, “Cultural Notes” is attached to each chapter after the text per se, where relatively more detailed information is provided about these personalities, issues or events. More importantly, as a way of checking on the user's comprehension and analytical ability, “Questions for Review” and “Questions for Critical Thinking and Discussion” have been carefully designed for each chapter. As the words in the two phrases indicate, the former is intended to help the student consolidate the understanding of the topic and its related

issues discussed in the chapter, and the latter to direct the student to think critically about the broader and oftentimes more profound issues surrounding the topic itself. In short, no efforts have been spared on our part to give a helping hand to the reader for his/her exploration of American culture and society.

In this connection, the five of us devoted much of our time and intellect over the past year to working on this collaborative undertaking, each responsible for a certain portion of the project in the spirit of collegueship. Specifically, Wang Enming, while proofreading and editing the whole textbook, is responsible for Chapters Six, Eight, Nine, Fourteen, Fifteen and parts of Chapters Three and Seven, Yao Guigui, for Chapters Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, Geng Dianlei, for Chapters One, Five, and Thirteen, Lei Yuanmin, for Chapters Two and Four, and Liu Yun for a significant portion of Chapters Three and Seven. We are all students of American culture, intensely interested in understanding and interpreting the national character of the United States of America. To the extent that America has a distinctive culture of its own, and to the extent that American Culture as a civilization has its place in the world, we believe that we have made an attempt worthy of our time and energy. It is our sincere hope that all the users of this course book will share with us the intellectual excitement such an endeavor provides. Equally, we also look forward to having more young minds joining us in exploring further the myth and reality of American culture and life. In this age of globalization, it is incumbent upon us to think globally and act locally. To do all this, understanding and critiquing cultures of other countries, American culture included, is the first step in the right direction. It is hoped that this textbook will help the user to better prepare himself/herself to live in this global village, not only with good communication skill, but also with broad vision and critical thinking. Toward this end, we sincerely welcome and indeed invite comments and criticisms from any user of this textbook to help us improve it for future revision or otherwise.

Wang Enming

10 Feb. , 2011

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# Chapter One

## Immigration and Race Relations

### Core of the Analysis

American immigration history can be viewed in five epochs: early immigration (pre-1820), old immigration (1820–1880), new immigration (1880–1930), immigration (1930–1965), and immigration (post-1965).

There are four principal models of integration of immigrants, i.e., Anglo conformity, the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and multiculturalism.

The United States is a racially and ethnically diverse country.

Modern U. S. Census designates six racial categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race.

The category “Hispanic” is considered an ethnicity, rather than a race.

America is a nation of immigrants. American society has been enriched by the unique cultural influences and traditions that immigrants bring to this land. Whereas in its early formation American society was shaped by waves of European immigrants who forged racial and ethnic identities within a **hegemonious**<sup>1</sup> ideology, the last four decades of the 20th century witnessed an increasing number of immigrants arriving from Asia, Mexico, and Central America who made racial and ethnic diversity more noticeable in the social fabric of American society. In the 21st century, these changing demographics continue to dominate public discourse in the United States, as a dominant Anglo population perceives threats to its political **clout**<sup>2</sup>, cultural values and social norms.

1. **hegemonious**: 霸权的

2. **clout**: 影响力





## 1. The Immigrant Experience

American immigration history can be viewed in five epochs: early immigration (pre-1820), old immigration (1820-1880), new immigration (1880-1930), immigration (1930-1965), and immigration (post-1965). Each epoch brought distinct national groups — and races and ethnicities — to the United States. In order to explain the greatest migration in human history, it is useful to differentiate between push and pull factors. We should ask what drove people from their homes and what attracted them to America. There were economic, religious and political reasons, and each sending country had its own set of different circumstances.

### (1) Early Immigration (pre-1820)

The first humans in North America are believed to have migrated at least 10,000 years ago from northeast Asia, via the land bridge available during the most recent **glaciation**<sup>3</sup>. They developed into most of the various **indigenous**<sup>4</sup> peoples of the Americas. European immigration to the American continent started a few decades after Columbus' "discovery" in 1492 and was mainly composed of Spaniards and the French. The first successful English colony in the present-day U.S. was established as a barely successful business enterprise in 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia. In order to seek freedom of worship and protection from tyranny, English **Pilgrims**<sup>5</sup> established a small settlement near Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Much larger numbers of English Puritans came to Boston, Massachusetts and adjacent areas from about 1629 to 1640. Shortly after the pilgrims arrived, the Swedes arrived to establish a colony in Delaware, which was later taken over by the Dutch. During the 17th century, approximately 175,000 Englishmen migrated to colonial America. Over half of all European immigrants to colonial America arrived as **indentured servants**<sup>6</sup>. In the early years of the United States, immigration was fewer than 8,000 people a year.

### (2) Old Immigration (1820-1880)

Between 1820 and 1880 the majority of immigrants came from northern and central Europe, with the Germans and Irish taking the lead in 1830 and the English and the Scandinavians running a close second after the Civil War. Due to economic prosperity and expanding markets, two periods (1845-1865, 1865-1876) witnessed

3. glaciation: 冰川  
作用

4. indigenous: 土著的

5. Pilgrim: 清教徒前  
辈移民

6. indentured servant:  
契约奴



3.5 million of immigrants, the highest figures. The Irish had fled from potato famine and overpopulation. They brought with them few industrial skills and little or no money, and what is probably more important, little faith in a rural livelihood. They therefore stayed close to their churches in the cities, taking the lowest jobs and working under the most **gruesome**<sup>7</sup> conditions, particularly building the transport system — canals and railways.

The arrival of the Germans during this immigration phase (among whom many were Jews) were prompted by calculated economic motives. As a rule they came with some money to move on to the Middle West and, somewhat later, to Texas, where they would buy land and homestead. Then, be they farmers or craftsmen, they would trigger a chain migration of relatives and friends from their hometowns.

After the Civil War, when Swedish agriculture experienced a depression and the first industrialization was felt in Norway, the number of Scandinavian immigration increased. Like the Germans, they settled as farmers in the Midwest. On the West Coast, the Chinese, called “coolie laborers”, were instrumental in building the infrastructure of western expansion in the mines, canal work and the railway. Although small in number, they were perceived to be a threat to the dominant population. Prejudice against the Chinese eventually led to an outburst of **nativism**<sup>8</sup>— represented by Know Nothing Party, which in turn prompted the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. With the passage of such an exclusion act, the years prior to 1882 may be regarded as the period of unrestricted immigration in American history. The incoming immigrants were merely registered, not selected according to desirability as new citizens.

### (3) New Immigration (1880–1930)

As the industrialization process in the northeastern states quickened its pace during the late 1800s, the demand for foreign labor grew accordingly. Between 1880 and 1930, 27 million immigrants came to America from all parts of the world, seeking economic opportunities as well as personal freedoms. They arrived by the shipload to fill America’s vacant jobs, with about 80% settling in the Midwest and Northeast and the majority ending up in large industrial cities like Chicago and New York. With reference to the previous “old immigrants”, who were mostly Northern and Western **Protestants**<sup>9</sup>, these “new immigrants” were mainly Southern

7. **gruesome**: 可怕的,  
令人厌恶的

8. **nativism**: 本土主  
义,排外主义

9. **Protestant**: 新教徒

10. Slovak: 斯洛伐克人

11. Slovene: 斯洛文尼亚人

12. Croat: 克罗地亚人

13. Serb: 塞尔维亚人

14. Bulgarian: 保加利亚人

15. contingent: 小组; 批次

16. Armenian: 亚美尼亚人

17. vermin: 危害社会的人

18. anti-Semitism: 反犹太主义

19. Asiatic Barred Zone: 亚洲禁区

20. Chicano: 奇卡诺人(即墨西哥裔美国人)



and Eastern European Catholics.

A combination of factors — poverty and population increases in Sicily, relatively cheap passage and the expansion of agriculture in the U.S. — brought three million Italians between 1881 and 1910. The second largest group of about two million were the East European Jews. They arrived with the experience of having been aliens in their land of birth. Besides, their immigration was not job or gender specific but comprised elements of a complete society, including the intellectual classes. The third group comprised Slavic immigrants, among them Russians, Slovaks<sup>10</sup>, Slovenes<sup>11</sup>, Poles, Croats<sup>12</sup>, Serbs<sup>13</sup> and Bulgarians<sup>14</sup>. After 1899 Poles were registered separately, forming the third largest group after Italians and Jews. The fourth contingent<sup>15</sup> was made up of Hungarians, Greeks, Portuguese, Armenians<sup>16</sup> and Japanese. The peak year of European immigration was in 1907 when 1, 285, 349 persons entered the country.

The reaction of the old stock Americans to what were thought of as “hordes of alien vermin<sup>17</sup>” led to a rise in nativism. This was induced by the Protestant anti-Catholicism and Christian anti-Semitism<sup>18</sup>, as well as a general racism against southern and eastern Europeans, who were considered inassimilable. During World War I, a marked increase in racism and isolationism in the U.S. led to demands for further restrictions on immigration. The Immigration Act of 1917 expanded the classes of foreigners to be excluded from the United States. It imposed a literacy test and designated an Asiatic Barred Zone<sup>19</sup>, a geographic region encompassing much of eastern Asia and the Pacific islands, from which immigrants would not be admitted to the United States. In 1921, Congress established the first quota system for immigrants. Following World War I, the National Origins Act of 1924 further reduced quotas of immigrants deemed less desirable. Quotas for countries such as Russia, the source of most Jewish immigrants, and Italy were cut back.

Mexican Americans and Chicanos<sup>20</sup> present a special case in immigration history. The first group of Mexican-Americans were created by the American conquest of the Southwest between 1845 and 1854. Due to a high birthrate the Mexican population in this area grew rapidly, strengthened by immigration peaking in the 1920s when almost 500,000 Mexicans crossed the frontier. Most of these Chicanos were employed as agricultural laborers. In addition to Mexican Americans, “new immigrants” of this period also included

Puerto Ricans, who have been U. S. citizens since 1917 and can move freely between the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico and the mainland.

#### (4) Immigration (1930 - 1965)

Immigration patterns of the 1930s were dominated by *the Great Depression*, which hit the U. S. hard and lasted over ten years. In the last prosperous year (1929), there were 279,678 immigrants recorded, but in 1933 only 23,068 came to the U. S. In the early 1930s, more people emigrated from the United States than immigrated to it. The U. S. government sponsored a Mexican **Repatriation**<sup>21</sup> program intended to encourage people to voluntarily move to Mexico, but thousands were deported against their will. Altogether about 400,000 Mexicans were repatriated.

Before and during WWII, the triumph of fascism in Europe, particularly Hitler's accession to power, brought a highly selective group of European intellectuals to America, a group that would greatly enhance academic and cultural life in the U. S. Yet, despite the plight of Jews in Europe the strict immigration quotas remained intact. Nativism was particularly strongly felt in the case of Japanese. The attack on Pearl Harbor led President F. D. Roosevelt to issue the infamous Executive Order 9066, by which some 11,000 West Coast Japanese, most of them native-born Americans, were rounded up in camps. When the war ended, however, Congress classified people escaping from their homelands for political reasons as refugees. Those who had survived Nazi persecution in Europe during World War II and people fleeing Communist countries in Eastern Europe after the war were also granted entrance. The **Displaced Persons**<sup>22</sup> Acts of 1948 and 1950 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 authorized the admission of over 500,000 people.

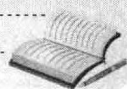
Immigration policy in the 1950s was greatly influenced by the "**Red Scare**"<sup>23</sup>, an anti-communism mentality. Most of the existing U. S. laws related to immigration were incorporated into the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, otherwise known as the McCarran-Walter Act. As a result, the Asiatic Barred Zone, which had banned most Asian immigrants since 1917, was abolished. Just as important, people from all nations of the world were given the opportunity to enter the United States, though with restrictions.

To remedy domestic labor shortages caused by WWII, the United States established an Emergency Labor Program in 1942,

21. repatriation: 遣返

22. displaced person: 难民

23. Red Scare: 赤色恐怖





24. **bracero**: (合法入境美国的) 墨西哥短期合同工

25. **Operation Wetback**: 湿背行动 (wetback: 湿背人, 尤指由格兰德河偷渡进入美国的墨西哥人)

26. **undocumented worker**: 无证移民, 偷渡客

27. **quadruple**: 成四倍的

commonly known as the **Bracero**<sup>24</sup> Program. “Braceros” were Mexican manual laborers allowed to enter the United States to replace American workers who joined the armed forces. Many Mexicans who entered the United States under the Bracero Program remained in the country illegally. To curb illegal immigration from Mexico, the United States in 1954 began **Operation Wetback**<sup>25</sup>, a program to find **undocumented workers**<sup>26</sup> and return them to Mexico. During the 1950s, several million Mexicans were deported. But migrants continued to arrive, often to become low-paid laborers. One-third of Mexican Americans in the 1950s lived below the poverty line. The Bracero Program was eliminated in 1964. While there were 50, 000 Puerto Ricans in the U. S. in 1930, the number swelled to 300,000 in 1950.

#### (5) Immigration (post-1965)

In the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, Congress replaced the national origins system with a preference system designed to reunite immigrant families and attract skilled immigrants to the United States. The effects of the 1965 Act were immediate and significant. Within five years, Asian immigration would more than **quadruple**<sup>27</sup>. This trend was magnified even further by the surge in refugees from the war in South East Asia. Almost half of the 8 million immigrants would come from Asia. Still, the largest number in this wave were the 4.3 million from Mexico.

Not until the Refugee Act of 1980 did the United States have a general policy governing the admission of refugees. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 allowed most illegal aliens who had resided in the U. S. continuously since January 1 of 1982 to apply for legal status and prohibited employers from hiring illegal aliens and mandated penalties for violations. The Immigration Act of 1990 set an annual maximum of 700, 000 immigrants allowed to enter the U. S. for the next three years and an annual maximum of 675,000 per year for every year thereafter. The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act made it easier to deport aliens without documentation. However, thanks to economic progress for immigrants during the 1990s, such as in the Hispanic-owned businesses and the Silicon Valley high-tech enterprises run by Asian immigrants, a victory for immigrant rights advocates came in 1998 when a federal judge ruled Proposition 187 unconstitutional. That law, a 1994 ballot initiative



in California, had sought to prevent and drive out illegal immigration by excluding undocumented immigrants from social services, health care, and public education programs.

The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 caused a fundamental change in the structure of immigration agencies, especially the birth of Department of Homeland Security. Since 2001, the focus of U.S. immigration reform and legislation has been enforcement and border security. The government has become tougher on enforcing immigration laws, and 30% of immigrants report that they personally have experienced discrimination one way or another.

The U.S. Census Bureau<sup>28</sup> estimates the U. S. population will grow from 309 million at present to 397 million in 2050 with expected immigration, but only to 328 million with zero immigration. A new report from the Pew Research Center projects that by 2050, non-Hispanic whites will account for 47% of the population, down from the 2005 figure of 67%, and the 1960 figure of 85%. The Hispanic population is expected to rise from 14% in 2005 to 29% by 2050, and the Asian population to more than triple by the same year. Overall, the population of the United States is due to rise to about 400 million by mid-twenty-first century, with 82% of the increase coming from immigrants.

For over two centuries the impact of immigration on America has been debated. Yet, history repeatedly illustrates the value of immigrants. In many major cities across the country, the hard work of immigrants has helped create jobs and revitalize communities. Throughout U.S. history, immigrants have sacrificed tremendously to see America succeed in times of labor shortages, economic crises, and wars. It can be expected that in the future new immigrants will follow their predecessors in assisting their adopted country to build a more just and much fairer society in the land designated by its earliest settlers as “a city upon a hill.”

## 2. Models of Integration of Immigrants

The nature of adjustment of increasing numbers of immigrants to life in America has been of concern to both scholars and politicians since the early days of the colonial period. In the **deliberations**<sup>29</sup> and debates over the problem of integrating ethnically heterogeneous peoples into a unified, English-speaking national group, various courses of action with clearly defined goals have been

28. U. S. Census

Bureau: 美国人口统计局

29. deliberations: 商议, 讨论



30. promulgate: 散布, 传播

**promulgated**<sup>30</sup>. Altogether, there have been four principal theories of adjustment offered, namely Anglo conformity, the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and multiculturalism.

### (1) Anglo Conformity

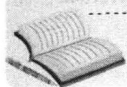
Sometimes also called assimilation, this theory preaches and pursues the desire to make the immigrants conform in every possible way to the host culture, namely, the middle-class cultural patterns of WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Various ethnic subpopulations may evidence different degrees of progress in adapting to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. Cultural assimilation occurs when the values, beliefs, dogmas, ideologies, language, and other systems of symbols of the dominant culture are adopted. Most ethnic groups become, to varying degrees, culturally assimilated. By contrast, structural assimilation occurs when migrant ethnic groups become members of the primary groups within dominant ethnic subpopulations — their families, close friends, cliques within clubs, and groups within organizations. Structural assimilation is more difficult to achieve than cultural assimilation.

### (2) The Melting Pot

For any country with multiple ethnic and racial groups, it is always advisable for it to develop a society where the “best” traditions of the various nations would be integrated into a dynamic unity. This conception of **amalgamation**<sup>31</sup> was initially suggested in the 1780s by the French-born naturalized American J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. The idea was expanded in 1909 in the play *The Melting Pot* by Israel Zangwill, an English Jew, who portrayed America as “God’s **crucible**”<sup>32</sup> to include persons from every corner of the globe. However, different from Crèvecoeur’s idea of amalgamation, the melting-pot view suggested an apparent equality among the ingredients, expressing a kind of progressive optimism that by melting something superior would emerge. But this philosophy came to be seen by many keen observers as being too idealistic. For one thing, questions were raised as to which ethnic/racial group was stronger than other groups and thereby more likely to melt than to be melted. For another, some ethnic/racial groups simply refused (and still refuse) to be melted and managed to stay beyond the melting-pot. Recognition of all of this encouraged the emergence of the idea of cultural pluralism.

31. amalgamation: 混合

32. crucible: 熔炉



### (3) Cultural Pluralism

Sometimes also called **accommodation**<sup>33</sup>, this theory developed into an image of the United States as a country enhanced by its diversity, “a multiplicity in a unity.” In a metaphorical fashion, philosopher Horace Kallen likened the new society to a symphony orchestra. Advocates of the theory based their case on the assumption that there is strength in variety, and that the nation as a whole benefits from the contributions of different groups. Cultural pluralism involves giving and taking and, most importantly, the sharing of and mutual respect for other ideas, customs and values. In such terms America could be seen as a mosaic of ethnic groups, a “nation of nations”, each retaining its unique qualities while contributing to the overall pattern. But when Kallen’s pluralism was first proposed, it was concerned with liberty and equality of European immigrants and not with promoting the historic identities of non-English subcultures (such as immigrants from Eastern and southern Europe), much less the Negroes and the growing Asian and Latino communities. The latter was not to come until the last decades of the 20th century, when multiculturalism became a slogan most enthusiastically endorsed by non-white Americans.

### (4) Multiculturalism

Starting in the 1960s a chain of social reform movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, were staged in America to challenge Eurocentric hegemony. Accordingly, multiculturalism came to be used as a term to describe resistance to established social norms and long-held cultural traditions, while at the same time offering some alternatives. It came about in reaction to what was felt to be a failure of integrative pluralism to recognize or appreciate the rich contributions of various marginalized groups to America’s common good. The debates tend to center on three often overlapping issues: the meanings and relevance of multiculturalism; what should be taught and what belongs in the “literary **canon**”<sup>34</sup>; and the relationships between civil rights and individual liberties, most clearly expressed in conflicts over “*political correctness*” and academic freedom.

Some critics saw the neglect of the culture, literature, and music of certain, mainly non-white, minorities as a clear reflection of persistent racism. Many such groups want to use multiculturalism as an educational instrument to enlighten those who are ignorant of

33. accommodation:

顺应, 调适

34. canon: 经典





35. Afrocentrist: 非洲中心主义者

36. Afrocentricity: 非洲中心论

37. exacerbate: 加剧

38. pluribus: 万众

39. unum: 一体

40. detrimental: 有害的

their ways, opening the minds of those who have been too narrowly grounded in a single tradition (Western civilization) and therefore are badly in need of “liberation.” Others, such as **Afrocentrists**<sup>35</sup>, go farther, offering not only new information but also new ways of thinking and interpreting.

Multiculturalism has been considered by some cultural critics, such as historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., as a challenge to the inclusive nature of American democracy. Indeed, Schlesinger viewed multiculturalists as cultural separatists. In a lengthy attack against “the ethnicity rage in general and **Afrocentricity**<sup>36</sup> in particular,” Schlesinger saw such movements as serious threats that “not only divert attention from real needs but **exacerbate**<sup>37</sup> the problems.” He asked in the last two chapters of *The Disuniting of America*: Are we to let the **pluribus**<sup>38</sup> overrule the **unum**<sup>39</sup>? Then Schlesinger continued to argue that any acceptance of the demands of the multiculturalists is the first step in a slippery slope leading the country towards its ultimate disintegration. But this extreme view is not widely shared. Multiculturalism, immigration, and internationalism have always been part of American society. Their capacity to present new challenges to established norms and practices may be more transforming than threatening. If one looks to history as a guide, such challenges have never led to the downfall of the republic. Rather, it may have actually strengthened the nation. In essence, a reading of history that acknowledges the **detrimental**<sup>40</sup> effects of cultural hegemony, and one that considers the historical tradition of a capacity to accommodate change, provides a more solid foundation upon which to consider contemporary challenges to American national identity.

### 3. Definitions of Race and Ethnicity

The United States is a racially and ethnically diverse country. There is an extensive history of race-based slavery, the abolishment of it, and its economic impact. In modern times, issues of race and ethnicity have also important implications in the political and economic development of the nation, particularly over such issues as welfare, education and pay.

Traditionally the term “race” connotes biological differences among peoples — skin color, facial features, stature, and the like — which are transmitted from generation to generation. By this standard, Native Americans, African-Americans and European-

