

Multiculturalism: Battleground or Meeting Ground?

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“It is very natural that the history written by the victim does not altogether chime with the story of the victor.”

José Fernández of California, 1874¹

In 1979, I experienced the truth of this statement when I found myself attacked by C. Vann Woodward in the *New York Review of Books*. I had recently published a broad and comparative study of blacks, Chinese, Indians, Irish, and Mexicans, from the American Revolution to the U.S. war against Spain. But, for Woodward, my *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* was too narrow in focus. My analysis, he stridently complained, should have compared ethnic conflicts in the United States to those in Brazil, South Africa, Germany, and Russia. Such an encompassing view would have shown that America was not so “bad” after all.

The author of scholarship that focused exclusively on the American South, Woodward was arguing that mine should have been cross-national in order to be “balanced.” But how, I wondered, was balance to be measured? Surely, any examination of the “worse instances” of racial oppression in other coun-

tries should not diminish the importance of what happened here. Balance should also insist that we steer away from denial or a tendency to be dismissive. Woodward’s contrast of the “millions of corpses” and the “horrors of genocide” in Nazi Germany to racial violence in the United States seemed both heartless and beside the point. Enslaved Africans in the American South would have felt little comfort to have been told that conditions for their counterparts in Latin America were “worse.” They would have responded that it mattered little that the black population in Brazil was “17.5 million” rather than “127.6 million” by 1850, or whether slavery beyond what Woodward called the “three-mile limit” was more terrible and deadly.

What had provoked such a scolding from this dean of American history? One might have expected a more supportive reading from the author of *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, a book that had helped stir our soci-

ety's moral conscience during the civil rights era. My colleague Michael Rogin tried to explain Woodward's curious reaction by saying that the elderly historian perceived me as a bad son. History had traditionally been written by members of the majority population; now some younger scholars of color like me had received our Ph.D.'s and were trying to "re-vision" America's past. But our critical scholarship did not chime with the traditional version of history. Noting my nonwhiteness, Woodward charged that I was guilty of reverse discrimination: my characterization of whites in terms of rapacity, greed, and brutality constituted a "practice" that could be described as "racism." Like a father, Woodward chastised me for catering to the "current mood of self-denigration and self-flagellation." "If and when the mood passes," he lamented, "one would hope a more balanced perspective on American history will prevail."²

Looking back at Woodward's review today, we can see that it constituted one of the opening skirmishes of what has come to be called the culture war. Some of the battles of this conflict have erupted in the political arena. Speaking before the 1992 Republican National Convention, Patrick Buchanan urged his fellow conservatives to take back their cities, their culture, and their country, block by block. This last phrase was a reference to the National Guard's show of force during the 1992 Los Angeles riot. On the other hand, in his first speech as President-elect, Bill Clinton recognized our ethnic and cultural diversity as a source of America's strength.

But many of the fiercest battles over how we define America are being waged within the academy. There minority students and scholars are struggling to diversify the curriculum, while conservative pundits like Charles J. Sykes and Dinesh D'Souza are fighting to recapture the campus.³

The stakes in this conflict are high, for we are being asked to define education and determine what an educated person should

know about the world in general and America in particular. This is the issue Allan Bloom raises in his polemic, *The Closing of the American Mind*. A leader of the intellectual backlash against cultural diversity, he articulates a conservative view of the university curriculum. According to Bloom, entering students are "uncivilized," and faculty have the responsibility to "civilize" them. As a teacher, he claims to know what their "hungers" are and "what they can digest." Eating is one of his favorite metaphors. Noting the "large black presence" at major universities, he regrets the "one failure" in race relations—black students have proven to be "indigestible." They do not "melt as have *all* other groups." The problem, he contends, is that "blacks have become blacks": they have become "ethnic." This separatism has been reinforced by an academic permissiveness that has befouled the curriculum with "Black Studies" along with "Learn Another Culture." The only solution, Bloom insists, is "the good old Great Books approach."⁴

Behind Bloom's approach is a political agenda. What does it mean to be an American? he asks. The "old view" was that "by recognizing and accepting man's natural rights," people in this society found a fundamental basis of unity. The immigrant came here and became assimilated. But the "recent education of openness," with its celebration of diversity, is threatening the social contract that had defined the members of American society as individuals. During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Black Power militants had aggressively affirmed a group identity. Invading college campuses, they demanded "respect for blacks as blacks, not as human beings simply," and began to "propagandize acceptance of different ways." This emphasis on ethnicity separated Americans from each other, shrouding their "essential humankindness." The black conception of a group identity provided the theoretical basis for a new policy, affirmative action, which opened the doors to the admission of un-

qualified students. Once on campus, many black students agitated for the establishment of black studies programs, which in turn contributed to academic incoherence, lack of synopsis, and the “decomposition of the university.”⁵

Bloom’s is a closed mind, unwilling to allow the curriculum to become more inclusive. Fortunately, many other educators have been acknowledging the need to teach students about the cultural diversity of American society. “Every student needs to know,” former University of Wisconsin chancellor Donna Shalala has explained, “much more about the origins and history of the particular cultures which, as Americans, we will encounter during our lives.”⁶

This need for cross-cultural understanding has been grimly highlighted by recent racial tensions and conflicts such as the black boycott of Korean stores, Jewish-black antagonism in Crown Heights, and especially the 1992 Los Angeles racial explosion. During the days of rage, Rodney King pleaded for calm: “Please, we can get along here. We all can get along. I mean, we’re all stuck here for a while. Let’s try to work it out.” But how should “we” be defined?⁷

Earlier, the Watts riot had reflected a conflict between whites and blacks, but the fire this time in 1992 Los Angeles highlighted the multiracial reality of American society. Race includes Hispanics and Asian Americans. The old binary language of race relations between whites and blacks, *Newsweek* observed, is no longer descriptive of who we are as Americans. Our future will increasingly be multiethnic as the twenty-first century rushes toward us: the western edge of the continent called California constitutes the thin end of an entering new wedge, a brave new multicultural world of Calibans of many different races and ethnicities.⁸

If “we” must be more inclusive, how do we “work it out”? One crucial way would be for us to learn more about each other—not only whites about peoples of color, but also blacks

about Koreans, and Hispanics about blacks. Our very diversity offers an intellectual invitation to teachers and scholars to reach for a more comprehensive understanding of American society. Here the debate over multiculturalism has gone beyond whether or not to be inclusive. The question has become, How do we develop and teach a more culturally diverse curriculum?

What has emerged are two perspectives, what Diane Ravitch has usefully described as “particularism” versus “pluralism.” But, by regarding each as exclusive, even antagonistic, Ravitch fails to appreciate the validity of both viewpoints and the ways they complement each other.⁹

Actually, we need not be forced into an either-or situation. Currently, many universities offer courses that study a particular group, such as African Americans or Asian Americans. This focus enables students of a specific minority to learn about their history and community. These students are not necessarily seeking what has been slandered as self-esteem courses. Rather, they simply believe that they are entitled to learn how their communities fit into American history and society. My grandparents were Japanese immigrant laborers, and even after I finished college with a major in American history and completed a Ph.D. in this field, I had learned virtually nothing about why they had come to America and what had happened to them as well as other Japanese immigrants in this country. This history should have been available to me.

The particularistic perspective led me to write *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. This focus on a specific group can also be found in Irving Howe’s *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America*, Mario Garcia’s *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920*, Lawrence Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, and Kerby Miller’s *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*.¹⁰

Increasingly, educators and scholars are recognizing the need for us to step back from particularistic portraits in order to discern the rich and complex mosaic of our national pluralism. While group-specific courses have been in the curriculum for many years, courses offering a comparative and integrative approach have been introduced recently. In fact, the University of California at Berkeley has instituted an American cultures requirement for graduation. The purpose of this course is to give students an understanding of American society in terms of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and European Americans, especially the immigrant groups from places like Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Russia.

What such curricular innovations promise is not only the introduction of intellectually dynamic courses that study the crisscrossed paths of America's different groups but also the fostering of comparative multicultural scholarship. This pluralistic approach is illustrated by works like my *Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* as well as Gary Nash's *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America*, Ivan Light's *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks*, Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, and Benjamin Ringer's "*We the People*" and *Others: Duality and America's Treatment of Its Racial Minorities*.¹¹

Even here, however, a battle is being fought over how America's diversity should be conceptualized. For example, Diane Ravitch avidly supports the pluralistic perspective, but she fears national division. Stressing the importance of national unity, Ravitch promotes the development of multiculturalism based on a strategy of adding on: to keep mainstream Anglo-American history and expand it by simply including information on racism as well as minority contributions to America's music, art, literature, food, clothing, sports, and holidays. The purpose behind this

pluralism, for Ravitch, is to encourage students of "all racial and ethnic groups to believe that they are part of this society and that they should develop their talents and minds to the fullest." By "fullest," she means for students to be inspired by learning about "men and women from diverse backgrounds who overcame poverty, discrimination, physical handicaps, and other obstacles to achieve success in a variety of fields." Ravitch is driven by a desire for universalism: she wants to affirm our common humanity by discouraging our specific group identities, especially those based on racial experiences. Ironically, Ravitch, a self-avowed proponent of pluralism, actually wants us to abandon our group ties and become individuals.¹²

This privileging of the "unum" over the "pluribus" has been advanced more aggressively by Arthur Schlesinger in *The Disuniting of America*.

In this jeremiad, Schlesinger denounces what he calls "the cult of ethnicity"—the shift from assimilation to group identity, from integration to separatism. The issue at stake, he argues, is the teaching of "bad history under whatever ethnic banner." After acknowledging that American history has long been written in the "interests of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males," he describes the enslavement of Africans, the seizure of Indian lands, and the exploitation of Chinese railroad workers. But his discussion on racial oppression is perfunctory and parsimonious, and he devotes most of his attention to a defense of traditional history. "Anglocentric domination of schoolbooks was based in part on unassailable facts," Schlesinger declares. "For better or worse, American history has been shaped more than anything else by British tradition and culture." Like Bloom, Schlesinger utilizes the metaphor of eating. "To deny the essentially European origins of American culture is to falsify history," he explains. "Belief in one's own culture does not require disdain for other cultures. But one step at a time: no culture can hope to ingest

other cultures all at once, certainly not before it ingests its own." Defensively claiming to be an inclusionist historian, Schlesinger presents his own credentials: "As for me, I was for a time a member of the executive council of the *Journal of Negro History*. . . I have been a lifelong advocate of civil rights."¹³

But what happens when minority peoples try to define their civil rights in terms of cultural pluralism and group identities? They become targets of Schlesinger's scorn. This "exaggeration" of ethnic differences, he warns, only "drives ever deeper the awful wedges between races," leading to an "endgame" of self-pity and self-ghettoization. The culprits responsible for this divisiveness are the "multicultural zealots," especially the Afrocentrists. Schlesinger castigates them as campus bullies, distorting history and creating myths about the contributions of Africans.¹⁴

What Schlesinger refuses to admit or is unable to see clearly is how he himself is culpable of historical distortion: his own omissions in *The Age of Jackson* have erased what James Madison had described then as "the black race within our bosom" and "the red on our borders." Both groups have been entirely left out of Schlesinger's study: they do not even have entries in the index. Moreover, there is not even a mention of two marker events, the Nat Turner insurrection and Indian Removal, which Andrew Jackson himself would have been surprised to find omitted from a history of his era. Unfortunately, Schlesinger fails to meet even his own standards of scholarship: "The historian's goals are accuracy, analysis, and objectivity in the reconstruction of the past."¹⁵

Behind Schlesinger's cant against multiculturalism is fear. What will happen to our national ideal of "*e pluribus unum*?" he worries. Will the center hold, or will the melting pot yield to the Tower of Babel? For answers, he looks abroad. "Today," he observes, "the nationalist fever encircles the globe." Angry and violent "tribalism" is exploding in India,

the former Soviet Union, Indonesia, Guyana, and other countries around the world. "The ethnic upsurge in America, far from being unique, partakes of the global fever." Like Bloom and Ravitch, Schlesinger prescribes individualism as the cure. "Most Americans," he argues, "continue to see themselves primarily as individuals and only secondarily and trivially as adherents of a group." The dividing of society into "fixed ethnicities nourishes a culture of victimization and a contagion of inflammable sensitivities." This danger threatens the "brittle bonds of national identity that hold this diverse and fractious society together." The Balkan present, Schlesinger warns, may be America's prologue.¹⁶

Are we limited to a choice between a "disuniting" multiculturalism and a common American culture, or can we transform the "culture war" into a meeting ground? The intellectual combats of this conflict, Gerald Graff suggests, have the potential to enrich American education. As universities become contested terrains of different points of view, gray and monotonous cloisters of Eurocentric knowledge can become brave new worlds, dynamic and multicultural. On these academic battlegrounds, scholars and students can engage each other in dialogue and debate, informed by the heat and light generated by the examination of opposing texts such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. "Teaching the conflicts has nothing to do with relativism or denying the existence of truth," Graff contends. "The best way to make relativists of students is to expose them to an endless series of different positions which are *not* debated before their eyes." Graff turns the guns of the great books against Bloom. By viewing culture as a debate and by entering a process of intellectual clashes, students can search for truth, as did Socrates "when he taught the conflicts two millennia ago."¹⁷

Like Graff, I welcome such debates in my teaching. One of my courses, "Racial Inequality in America: A Comparative Histori-

cal Perspective,” studies the character of American society in relationship to our racial and ethnic diversity. My approach is captured in the phrase “from different shores.” By “shores,” I intend a double meaning. One is the shores from which the migrants departed, places such as Europe, Africa, and Asia. The second is the various and often conflicting perspectives or shores from which scholars have viewed the experiences of racial and ethnic groups.

By critically examining these different shores, students address complex comparative questions. How have the experiences of racial minorities such as African Americans been similar to and different from those of ethnic groups such as Irish Americans? Is race the same as ethnicity? For example, is the African American experience qualitatively or quantitatively different from the Jewish American experience? How have race relations been shaped by economic developments as well as by culture—moral values about how people think and behave as well as beliefs about human nature and society? To wrestle with these questions, students read Nathan Glazer’s analysis of assimilationist patterns as well as Robert Blauner’s theory of internal colonialism, Charles Murray on black welfare dependency as well as William Julius Wilson on the economic structures creating the black underclass, and Thomas Sowell’s explanation of Asian American success as well as my critique of the “myth of the Asian-American model minority.”¹⁸

The need to open American minds to greater cultural diversity will not go away. Faculty can resist this imperative by ignoring the changing racial composition of student bodies and the larger society, or they can embrace this timely and exciting intellectual opportunity to revitalize the social sciences and humanities. “The study of the humanities,” Henry Louis Gates observes, “is the study of the possibilities of human life in culture. It thrives on diversity. . . . The new [ethnic studies] scholarship has invigorated the tradi-

tional disciplines.” What distinguishes the university from other battlegrounds, such as the media and politics, is that the university has a special commitment to the search for knowledge, one based on a process of intellectual openness and inquiry. Multiculturalism can stoke this critical spirit by transforming the university into a crucial meeting ground for different viewpoints. In the process, perhaps we will be able to discover what makes us an American people.¹⁹

Whether the university can realize this intellectual pursuit for collective self-knowledge is uncertain, especially during difficult economic times. As institutions of higher learning face budget cuts, calls for an expansion of the curriculum often encounter hostility from faculty in traditional departments determined to protect dwindling resources. Furthermore, the economic crisis has been fanning the fires of racism in society: Asian Americans have been bashed for the seeming invasion of Japanese cars, Hispanics accused of taking jobs away from Americans, and blacks attacked for their dependency on welfare and the special privileges of affirmative action.

This context of rising racial tensions has conditioned the culture war. Both the advocates and the critics of multiculturalism know that the conflict is not wholly academic; the debate over how America should be defined is related to power and privilege. Both sides agree that history is power. Society’s collective memory determines the future. The battle is over what should be remembered and who should do the remembering.

Traditionally excluded from the curriculum, minorities are insisting that America does not belong to one group and neither does America’s history. They are making their claim to the knowledge offered by the university, reminding us that Americans originated from many lands and that everyone here is entitled to dignity. “I hope this survey do a lot of good for Chinese people.”

an immigrant told an interviewer from Stanford in the 1920s. "Make American people realize that Chinese people are humans. I think very few American people really know anything about Chinese." As different groups find their voices, they tell and retell stories that liberate. By writing about the people on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros explained, "the ghost does not ache so much." The place no longer holds her with "both arms. She sets [her] free." Indeed, stories may not be as innocent or simple as they might seem. They "aren't just entertainment," observed Native American novelist Leslie Marmon Silko.²⁰

On the other side, the interests seeking to maintain the status quo also recognize that the contested terrain of ideas is related to social reality. No wonder conservative foundations like Coors and Olin have been financing projects to promote their own political agenda on campuses across the country, and the National Association of Scholars has been attacking multiculturalism by smearing it with a brush called "political correctness." Conservative critics like Bloom are the real campus bullies: they are the ones unwilling to open the debate and introduce students to different viewpoints. Under the banner of intellectual freedom and excellence, these naysayers have been imposing their own intellectual orthodoxy by denouncing those who disagree with them as "the new barbarians," saluting Lynne Cheney, the former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities for defending traditional American culture, and employing McCarthyite tactics to brand ethnic studies as "un-American."²¹

How can the university become a meeting ground when the encounter of oppositional ideas is disparaged? What Susan Faludi has observed about the academic backlash against women's liberation can be applied to the reaction to multiculturalism. "The donnish robes of many of these backlash thinkers cloaked impulses that were less than scholarly," she wrote. "Some of them were academics who believed that feminists had cost them

in advancement, tenure, and honors; they found the creation of women's studies not just professionally but personally disturbing and invasive, a trespasser trampling across *their* campus." Her observation applies to multiculturalism: all we need to do is to substitute "minority scholars" for "feminists," and "ethnic studies" for "women's studies." The intellectual backslashers are defending "their" campuses against the "other."²²

The campaign against multiculturalism reflects a larger social nervousness, a perplexity over the changing racial composition of American society. Here Faludi's insights may again be transferrable. The war against women, she notes, manifests an identity crisis for men: what does it mean to be a man? One response has been to reclaim masculinity through violence, to "kick ass," the expression George Bush used to describe his combat with Geraldine Ferraro in the 1984 vice-presidential debate. Eight years later, during the Persian Gulf war against Saddam Hussein, Bush as President demonstrated masculine power in Desert Storm. In a parallel way, it can be argued, the expanding multicultural reality of America is creating a racial identity crisis: what does it mean to be white?²³

Demographic studies project that whites will become a minority of the total U.S. population some time during the twenty-first century. Already in major cities across the country, whites no longer predominate numerically. This expanding multicultural reality is challenging the traditional notion of America as white. What will it mean for American society to have a nonwhite majority? The significance of this future, *Time* observed, is related to our identity—our sense of individual self and nationhood, or what it means to be American. This demographic transformation has prompted E.D. Hirsch to worry that America is becoming a "Tower of Babel," and that this multiplicity of cultures is threatening to tear the country's social fabric. Nostalgic for a more cohesive culture and a more homogeneous America, he contends,

"If we *had* to make a choice between the *one* and the *many*, most Americans would choose the principle of unity, since we cannot function as a nation without it." The way to correct this fragmentation, Hirsch argues, is to promote the teaching of "shared symbols." In *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, Hirsch offers an appendix of terms designed to create a sense of national identity and unity—a list that leaves out much of the histories and cultures of minorities.²⁴

The escalating war against multiculturalism is being fueled by a fear of loss. "Backlash politics may be defined as the reaction by groups which are declining in a felt sense of importance, influence, and power," observed Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab. Similarly, historian Richard Hofstadter described the impulses of progressive politics in the early twentieth century in terms of a "status revolution"—a widely shared frustration among middle-class professionals who had been displaced by a new class of elite businessmen. Hofstadter also detected a "paranoid style in American politics" practiced by certain groups such as nativists who suffered from lost prestige and felt besieged by complex new realities. Grieving for an America that had been taken away from them, they desperately fought to repossess their country and "prevent the final destructive act of subversion."²⁵

A similar anxiety is growing in America today. One of the factors behind the backlash against multiculturalism is race, what Lawrence Auster calls "the forbidden topic." In an essay published in the *National Review*, he advocates the restriction of immigration for nonwhites. Auster condemns the white liberals for wanting to have it both ways—to have a common culture and also to promote racial diversity. They naively refuse to recognize the danger: when a "critical number" of people in this country are no longer from the West, then we will no longer be able to employ traditional reference points such as "our West-

ern heritage" or speak of "our Founding Fathers." American culture as it has been known, Auster warns, is disappearing as "more and more minorities complain that they can't identify with American history because they 'don't see people who look like themselves' in that history." To preserve America as a Western society, Auster argues, America must continue to be composed mostly of people of European ancestry.²⁶

What Auster presents is an extreme but logical extension of a view shared by both conservatives like Bloom and liberals like Schlesinger: they have bifurcated American society into "us" versus "them." This division locates whites at the center and minorities at the margins of our national identity. "American," observed Toni Morrison, has been defined as "white." Such a dichotomization denies our wholeness as one people. "Everybody remembers," she explained, "the first time they were taught that part of the human race was Other. That's a trauma. It's as though I told you that your left hand is not part of your body."²⁷

In their war against the denied parts of American society, the backslashers are our modern Captain Ahab's. In their pursuit of their version of the white whale, they are in command; like Ahab directing his chase from the deck of the *Pequod*, they steer the course of the university curriculum. Their exclusive definition of knowledge has rendered invisible and silent the swirling and rich diversity below deck. The workers of the *Pequod* represent a multicultural society—whites like Ishmael, Pacific Islanders like Queequeg, Africans like Daggoo, Asians like Fedallah, and American Indians like Tashtego. In Melville's powerful story, Ishmael and Queequeg find themselves strangers to each other at first. As they labor together, they are united by their need of mutual survival and cooperation. This connectedness is graphically illustrated by the monkey-rope. Lowered into the shark-infested water to secure the blubber hook into the dead whale, Queequeg is held

by a rope tied to Ishmael. The process is perilous for both men. "We two, for the time," Ishmael tells us, "were wedded; and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both usage and honor demanded that, instead of cutting the cord, it should drag me down in his wake." Though originally from different shores, the members of the crew share a noble class unity. Ahab, however, is able to charm them, his charisma drawing them into the delirium of his hunt. Driven by a monomaniac mission, Ahab charts a course that ends in the destruction of everyone except Ishmael.²⁸

On college campuses today, the voices of many students and faculty from below deck are challenging such hierarchical power. In their search for cross-cultural understandings, they are trying to re-vision America. But will we as Americans continue to perceive our past and peer into our future as through a glass darkly? In the telling and retelling of our particular stories, will we create communities of separate memories, or will we be able to connect our diverse selves to a larger national narrative? As we approach a new century dominated by ethnic and racial conflicts at home and throughout the world, we realize that the answers to such questions will depend largely on whether the university will be able to become both a battleground and a meeting ground of varied viewpoints.

Notes

1. David J. Weber, ed., *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), p. vi.

2. C. Van Woodward, "America the Bad?" *New York Review of Books*, 22 Nov. 1979; Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Knopf, 1979).

3. Charles J. Sykes, *The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1990); Dinesh D'Souza, *Il-*

liberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus (New York: Free Press, 1991).

4. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 19, 91–93, 340–41, 344.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 29, 33, 35, 89, 90, 347.

6. *University of Wisconsin–Madison: The Madison Plan* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1988).

7. Rodney King's statement to the press; see *New York Times*, 2 May 1992, p. 6.

8. "Beyond Black and White," *Newsweek*, 18 May 1992, p. 28.

9. Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures," *American Scholar*, 59(3):337–54 (Summer 1990).

10. Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989); Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

11. Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Little, Brown, 1993); Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974); Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Benjamin Ringer, "We the People" and Others: *Duality and America's Treatment of Its Racial Minorities* (New York: Tavistock, 1983).

12. Ravitch, "Multiculturalism," pp. 341, 354.
13. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (Knoxville, TN: Whittle Communications, 1991), pp. 2, 24, 14, 81–82.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 66.
15. James Madison, quoted in Takaki, *Iron Cages*, p. 80; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945); *idem*, *Disuniting of America*, p. 20.
16. Schlesinger, *Disuniting of America*, pp. 2, 21, 64.
17. Gerald Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education* (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 15.
18. Nathan Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*. For an example of the debate format, see Ronald Takaki, *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
19. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 114.
20. Pany Lowe, interview, 1924, Survey of Race Relations, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA; Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (New York: Vintage, 1991), pp. 109–10; Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (New York: New American Library, 1978), p. 2.
21. Dinesh D'Souza, "The Visigoths in Tweed," in *Beyond PC: Towards a Politics of Under-*

standing, ed. Patricia Aufderheide (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1992), p. 11; George Will, "Literary Politics," *Newsweek*, 22 Apr. 1991, p. 72; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "When Ethnic Studies Are Un-American," *Wall Street Journal*, 23 Apr. 1990.

22. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 282.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

24. William A. Henry III, "Beyond the Melting Pot," *Time*, 9 Apr. 1990, pp. 28–31; E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1987), pp. xiii, xvii, 2, 18, 96, 152–215.

25. Lipset and Raab quoted in Faludi, *Backlash*, p. 231; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 131–73.

26. Lawrence Auster, "The Forbidden Topic," *National Review*, 27 Apr. 1992, pp. 42–44.

27. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 47; Bonnie Angelo, "The Pain of Being Black," *Time*, 22 May 1989, p. 121. Copyright © 1989 Time Inc. Reprinted by permission.

28. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), pp. 182, 253, 322–23.

Takaki:

1. What does Takaki mean when he discusses "defining America"? What is involved in that definition, and what is at stake?
2. Why does Takaki say that the debate over how America should be defined is about power and privilege?