



# ULUSLARARASI SOSYAL ARAŐTIRMALAR DERĐİŐİ THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

Uluslararası Sosyal Arařtırmalar Dergisi/The Journal of International Social Research

Cilt: 16 Sayı: 97 Őubat 2023 & Volume: 16 Issue: 97 February 2023

Received: February 03, 2023, Manuscript No. jisir-23-89335; Editor assigned: February 06, 2023, PreQC  
No. jisir-23-89335 (PQ); Reviewed: February 20, 2023, QC No. jisir-23-89335; Revised: February 24, 2023,  
Manuscript No. jisir-23-89335(R); Published: February 28, 2023, DOI: 10.17719/jisir.2023.89335

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ISSN: 1307-9581

## IMPACT OF "MELTING POT" ON DEFINING AMERICAN IDENTITY

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### ABSTRACT

Even though the total population of the United States is more than 300 million, the "American race" is only 20 million. If we are to think America as a huge cake, the ingredients in the cake or each slice of the cake represents a various race, and "American race" is just only one slice of this cake. Therefore, it can be said that it is the immigrants who constructed the United States. Today, with its population, America is an enormous and the third largest country in the world. One of the main reasons why the population is so high is that it constantly receives immigrants from every continent of the world to fulfill "American Dream", which inspired millions of people to migrate United States for better life conditions and for more democracy. Naturally, there are debates and even conflicts on religion, language, race, ethnicity in the country. Among these debates, the problem of racism is the most important issue. In America, racism gave result in a new type of literary expression which is known as the Black-American Literature. The fact that racism is still effective in America is due to its relation with American nationalism. American nationalism, on the one hand, suggests a conception of national identity, where there is no ethnic limitation and cultural values prevail as once referred as "Melting Pot" by James Hector St. John de Crevecoeur in his "Letters form an American Farmer (1782)" writings. This term was also used as "smelting pot" by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his "The Complete Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson", and "fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot" by Henry James in his travel narrative "The American Scene". Melting pot was used as a metaphor for the ideal process of immigration and colonialism process in which various nations, cultures and races were involved and adhered to a new, virtuous community and to core Americanism. On the other hand, American nationalism contains dynamics of ethnic discrimination



within itself as a result of cultural assimilation of *melting pot*. Therefore, the aim of this study is to make a relation between “melting pot” and who are Americans exactly by applying its use in the literature. The study argues that even though America includes many different races, religions, ethnicities and cultures referred as “*melting pot*”, it does not embrace all these races, religions, ethnicities and cultures. From our contemporary point of view, the *melting pot* implies to a racist ideology; because it does not contain as part of formula for the proper mix the truly culturally different groups such as Afro American, Chicanos, Indians etc. These groups have never been given status as a complete human.

**Keywords:** America, American Nationalism, Black American Literature, Racism, Melting pot.

### Özet

ABD'nin toplam nüfusu 300 milyondan fazla olmasına rağmen, “Amerikan ırkı” sadece 20 milyondur. Amerika'yı dev bir kek olarak düşünürsek, pastanın içindeki malzemeler veyapastanın her dilimi farklı bir ırkı temsil eder ve “Amerikan ırkı” bu pastanın sadece bir dilimidir. Bu nedenle, ABD'yi büyük bir ülke yapan aslında göçmenler olduğu söylenebilir. Bugün, nüfusu ile Amerika, dünyanın muazzam ve üçüncü en büyük ülkesidir. Nüfusun bu kadar yüksek olmasının ana nedenlerinden biri, dünyanın her kıtasından göçmenleri daha iyi yaşam koşulları ve daha fazla demokrasi sloganıyla ortaya çıkan “Amerikan Rüyası”dır. Bunun sonucunda, doğal olarak, ülkede din, dil, ırk, etnik köken hakkında tartışmalar ve hatta çatışmalar meydana gelmiştir. Bu tartışmalar arasında “ırkçılık” sorunu en önemli konudur. Amerika'da ırkçılık, Siyah Amerikan Edebiyatı olarak bilinen yeni bir edebi ifade biçimine yol açmıştır. Amerika'da ırkçılığın hala etkili olduğu gerçeği, Amerikan milliyetçiliği ile olan ilişkisinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Amerikan milliyetçiliği, bir yandan, etnik sınırlamanın olmadığı ve kültürel değerlerin hakim olduğu ulusal kimlik anlayışını öne sürmektedir. Bu, anlayış J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur'un “*Letters form an AmericanFarmer (1782)*” yazılarında “Melting Pot” olarak bahsedilmektedir. Bu terim aynı zamanda “Ralph Waldo Emerson'ın “*The Complete Journals of RalphWaldoEmerson*” yazılarında “*smelting pot*” olarak ve Henry James'in “*TheAmericanScene*” seyahat anlatısında ise “*fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot*” olarak kullanılmıştır. Melting Pot, farklı ulusların, kültürlerin ve ırkların dahil olduğu, yeni, erdemli bir topluluğa ve Amerikancılığa bağlı kaldıkları ideal göç ve sömürgecilik süreci için bir metafor olarak kullanılmıştır. Öte yandan, Amerikan milliyetçiliği, MeltingPot'ın yarattığı kültürel asimilasyonu sonucunda, kendi içinde etnik ayrımcılık dinamiklerini içermektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın amacı Melting Pot teriminin edebiyattaki kullanımına başvurarak , “Melting Pot” ile “Amerikan ırkı” arasında bir ilişki kurmaktır. Çalışma, Amerika'nın “Melting Pot” olarak adlandırılan pek çok farklı ırk, din, etnik köken ve kültür içermesine rağmen, tüm bu ırkları, dinleri, etnik kökenleri ve kültürleri benimsemediğini savunmaktadır. Çağdaş bakış açımıza göre, Melting Pot" ırkçı bir ideolojiye işaret etmektedir; Çünkü Afro- Amerikan, Meksika



kökenli Amerikalılar, Hintliler gibi gerçekten kültürel olarak farklı grupları içermemektedir. Bu gruplara hiçbir zaman tam bir insan statü verilmemiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Amerika, Amerikan Milliyetçiliği, Siyah Amerikan Edebiyatı, Irkçılık, Melting Pot.

When the first European immigrants landed in North America, they were met by the native population. Yet even these aboriginal Americans were descended from “immigrants” who during the last Ice Age 12,000-28,000 years ago left their frigid Siberian hunting grounds in search of game and wandered across the land bridge that connected northeastern Asia and Alaska. By the time the white man arrived, Indian culture in North America was extremely diverse, due to the India’s adaption to different environments. The use of the word “Indian” derives from Columbus’s belief that he had found a new route to India. The name was kept, “American” being added to distinguish the native people from the quite different peoples of India. There is now little cultural similarity between Asian peoples and the American Indians, except between the people of Siberia and Eskimos or Innuits. Today no American Indians have retained all their culture (Kennedy, 1994).

At the period of the American Revolution, Columbus was seen as a national hero. For example, King’s College’s name which was in New York was changed as Columbia and the national capital being planned was given the name of the District of Columbia. American scholars at that time considered Columbus as a romantic hero. They claimed that Columbus faults, such as enslaving and killing native people, were the errors of the times and appreciated Columbus’s optimism and belief in progress. According to them, Columbus was an example of human advancement, from rags to riches, from log cabin to the White House (Tindall and Shi,1993). In Connecticut in 1882, Irish Catholic immigrants prepared the Knights of Columbus, and described Columbus as an instrument of Divine Providence. In New York, Italian raised money for his statue (now standing in Columbus Circle) (Brinkley, 1997).

When Europeans arrived, the country north of the Rio Grande included possibly 4 million people of whom 500,000 lived in the regions accessible to the early settlers. Before the Pre-Colombian Era, two different cultures were known. These were The Pueblo People and The Mound Builders. The Pueblo People in modern legends known as the Anasazi. They were the predecessor of the present-day Hopi and Zuni Indians. They lived in villages composed of large terrace and were farmers using irrigation canals to bring water to their cornfields. As for The Mound Builders, they were people who built various earth mound styles for spiritual, ritual, grave and elite residential goals. Those included the Archaic era pre-Columbian civilizations, the Woodland era (Calusa culture of Adena and Hopewell societies) and the Mississippian era; roughly beginning from 3500 BCE (Watson Brake construction) to the 16th century and inhabiting the Great Lakes, the Ohio River Valley, and the Mississippi River valley and waters (Kennedy, 1994).



The United States is often called as "Melting Pot", a metaphor that symbolizes the United States society. With melting pot, it was originally aimed to combining of various cultures, languages and religions to compose a unique national identity. However, it was later seen that this metaphor actually does not include all the immigrants who has been migrating to United States with various origins, races and beliefs.

The discussions on immigration are neither new nor rare in the US history and seem to never finish. Migration is not only an important part of the US national identity, but also an important determinant of the cultural and political tension in the country. Today, as in the earlier periods of mass migration to the United States, the inclusion of immigrants into the American mainstream is a vigorous process requiring adoption. This adaption not only includes the migrants but also the community, public institutions and private organizations in the country.

Since the earliest days of its history, the US cities such as Los Angeles, New York and Chicago have been exposing to the influx of immigrants. In fact, these cities were built mostly by immigrants (Slotkin, 2001). In recent years, many small US cities and towns have been undergoing the cultural transformation of immigrants who participate in their population. From the south to the Midwest and the West Coast, an increasing number of immigrants settle in areas inhabited largely by European migrants of the nineteen and early twenty centuries. This creates both challenges and opportunities for both newcomers and residents in the area (Goldstein, 2006).

The United States is defined as "*A permanently unfinished country*" by Ueda, a professor in the Department of History at Tufts University. She claims that the main reason for this is that the country has been rebuilding by immigrants since its discovery. Indeed, it has become one of the leading countries for migrants since the 19th century. According to Ueda newcomers are posing a recurring challenge for American life: How can immigrant communities learn to be co-operative under the conditions of openness, change, and choice? (Ueda, 2016).

The population of the US which was 5.3 million in 1800 increased to 76.2 million in 1900, 151.3 million in 1950, 288.3 million in 2002 and more than 300 million today. Today, with its population, America is an enormous and the third largest country in the world. One of the main reasons why the country's population is so high is that it constantly received and still has been receiving immigrants from every continent of the world. In the 1840s, an average of 170,000 migrants arrived to the US coast each year, and in 1850, 10% of the country's 23,000,000 population was foreign (Hobsbawm, et al., 2009). In the 1890s, European migration patterns began to vary from northern and western Europe to southern and eastern Europe, which brought Italians, Greeks, Slavs and Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia. Therefore, the country's today population is largely the descendant of the immigrants who migrated to the US in 1800s (Goldstein, 2006).



America does not consist of people whose race is only American. Even if the US population is more than 300 million today, not all the population is descended from American race. Actually, the amount of American race in the total population is just % 7.2 which accounts for only 22 million. America consist of more than 72 various races. For example, %14.7 of the population which accounts for 46 million is descended from German race, %12.3 of the population which accounts for 38 million is descended from African-American race, %10.9 which accounts for 34 million is descended from Mexican race, %10.6 which accounts for 33 million is descended from Irish race, %7.8 which accounts for 24 million is descended from English race, %5.5 which accounts for 17 million is descended from Italian race, %3.0 which accounts for 9 million is descended from Polish race, % 2.6 which accounts for 8 million is descended from French race, %1.7 which accounts for 5 million is descended from Scottish, %1.6 which accounts for 5 million is descended from Puerto Rican, %1.4 which accounts for 4 million is descended from Norwegian, and %1.4 which accounts for 4 million is descended from Dutch, %7.5 which accounts for 27 million is descended from Swedish, Chinese, Asian Indian, Scotch-Irish, Russian, West Indian, Filipino and many other minorities apart from these races (US Census Bureau).

As it can be seen that America not only consist of people who are descended from American race, but also many various races, and that is what makes American as once called as "*melting pot*", which was used as a metaphor for the combining of many cultures, languages and religions to compose a unique national identity to core Americanism (Jacoby, 2004).

The melting pot can be defined as a symbol which converts a heterogeneous society into a more homogeneous in order to create a homogenous society which has various cultural backgrounds (Kennedy, 2003). Historically, this term was used to describe the assimilation of immigrants in the US. The concept of melting pot has provided some kind of middle way among the leftist and rightist uncompromising perspectives: liberals like Kallen and Bourne criticized the melting pot. They claim that it is as a paradigm of assimilation that resulted in homogenization. Instead, they proposed alternative forms of ethno-cultural pluralism and diversity (Kallen, 1998). The eugenics, such as Nativist anti-immigration critics and especially Madison Grant and Theodore Lothrop Stoddard, considered the melting pot as a threat for the American community. For this reason, they called for measures to ensure national health. The myth of melting pot in hegemonic structure concealed the role of racism in the US society by reflecting the vision of color blindness of a social harmony in color harmony and by hiding the continuing inequality (Madison, 1916; Stoddard, 1922).

The term also became a theme in literature. In the literature melting pot was used to describe America as a "*city upon a hill*" or "*new promised land*" (Jacoby, 2004). In the American literature, the first use of the concept of "*melting pot*" was seen in the writings of J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur. Crevecoeur "*In his*



*Letters from an American Farmer (1782)*" defines America, as a response to his own question "What then is the American, this new man?" as below(Crevecoeur, 1912) :

*"American is one who "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."*

*"..whence came all these people? They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes... What, then, is the American, this new man? He is either an European or the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.... The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared." (Crevecoeur, 1912).*

Another representation of melting pot in literature can be seen in Ralph Waldo Emerson's "*The Complete Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*". He was considered proponent of the melting pot. Emerson, in his article, openly welcomes the intermingling of white and non-white races with below quote:





*Man is the most composite of all creatures. . . . by the melting and intermixture of silver and gold and other metals a new compound of all nations, – the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, and all the European tribes, – of the Africans, and of the Polynesians, – will create a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature, which will be as dynamic as the new Europe which came out of the smelting-pot of the Dark Ages, or that which earlier emerged from the Pelasgic and Etruscan barbarism. (Emerson, 1876)*

Emerson's visions are echoed in the works of Walt Whitman (1819-1892), who exemplifies the American melting pot as a new literary phrase. He saw it as unique American experiences “(Archambeau, 1999). In his preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman mentions about America as “*the Americans of all nations*”, “*race of races*” and “*the nation of many nations*” (Whitman, 1855). The melting pot term was also used as “*fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot*” by Henry James in his travel narrative “*The American Scene*” (James, 1907).

Jean Toomer (1894-1967), a vital author in African- American literature, promoted melting pot. He states that there is a new race in America and he is a member of this unique race. He argues that this new race is not white neither black nor in-between, it is the American race, varying enormously from white and black as white and black vary from each other. He outlines that there are Negro and Indian blood in his origin along with English, Spanish, Welsh, Scotch, French, Dutch, and German. He concludes that this is typical in U.S, and it is from all these strains that this new race was born. He also proposes that now is the time of the beginning of a new system, a new concept and spirit, a new model of man. with the quotation below (Toomer, 1993):

Racism in America led to a new form of literary expression known as Black American Literature. Racism is a phenomenon that still has much influence on American society. The fact that racism is still effective in America is due to its relation with American nationalism. American nationalism, on the one hand, suggests a conception of national identity, where there is no ethnic limitation and cultural values prevail as once referred as “*Melting Pot*” by J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur in his “*Letters form an American Farmer (1782)*” writings. Crevecoeur argued that America symbolizes a new mixed race consisting of various nationalities. According to him, ethnic or cultural differences were inevitably resolved in the dissolution of the New World. This term was also used as “*smelting pot*” by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his



work "The Complete Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson", and "fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot" by Henry James in his travel narrative "The American Scene". *Melting pot* was metaphor for the combining of many cultures, languages and religions to compose a unique national identity to core Americanism (Slotkin, 2001). On the other hand, American nationalism contains dynamics of ethnic discrimination within itself as a result of cultural assimilation of *melting pot* (Eguchi, 2013).

Historically, African-Americans were kept out of the melting pot; participants in the proposed reunification process were largely European groups and although Native Americans were included in Crèvecoeur melting pot, Natives, African-Americans and Asian Americans often lacked the discourse of melting pot (Ager, 1995). In one of his speech in 1919, president Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) called for the ending of the melting pot belief to all states of the world even as he separated administration workers by their race (Saveth, 1965).

The policies and refusal of ethnic mixing in U.S was considered by some scholars as "American Apartheid" through Jim Crow's legislation, segregation which was based on apartheid and black ghettoization across the country. That's why the trans-national perspectives on melting pot are not surprisingly more specific than inclusive (Ager, 1995).

Within the American society of African descent, various responses to the melting pot legend can be seen over time: to accept racial segregation and limited access to the American smelting furnace; rough criticism of melting pot belief and its systems of marginalization ; an obvious refusal of ethnic and cultural involvement with whites in races in an inverted discourse of ethnic superiority based on racial pride, an affirmation of a more inclusive melting pot that is explicitly multiracial and moves past the tormenting "double consciousness" and its "two unreconciled strivings" (Jacobson, 1998), which W.E.B. Du Bois identified for African-Americans in the United States (Du Bois, 1994). The first position-accommodation with segregation and the exclusion of African Americans from the melting pot following Civil War- was mostly linked to the former slave and black intellectual Booker T. Washington (1856-1915). Similarly, Melvin Steinfield assesses the duplicity of the melting pot myth, claiming that "[e]very instance of racism or discrimination was a vivid contradiction of the myth of the Melting Pot [...]," or as he called as "cracks in the Melting Pot" in his book of the same title (Steinfield, 1974). Dudley Randall, an African-American poet and poetry publisher (1914-2000) in his famous poem "The Melting Pot", contrasted the European migrants' experiences with the experiences of African-American Americans (Randall, 2009):





*There is a magic melting pot  
where any girl or man  
can step in Czech or Greek or Scot,  
step out American.  
Johann and Jan and Jean and Juan,  
Giovanni and Ivan  
step in and then step out again  
all freshly christened John.  
Sam, watching, said, "Why, I was here  
even before they came,"  
and stepped in too, but was tossed out  
before he passed the brim.  
And every time Sam tried that pot  
they threw him out again.  
"Keep out. This is our private pot.  
We don't want your black stain."  
At last, thrown out a thousand times,  
Sam said, "I don't give a damn.  
Shove your old pot. You can like it or not,  
but I'll be just what I am."*

In his poem, Randall argues that melting pot demonstrates the assimilation of dominant culture (as is commonly the case in modern day use) instead of a hybrid form: all European migrants, no matter what their ethnic origin is, become "Johns," i.e. so their Americanization is equal to Anglicization. The African American's response to being rejected -"But I'll be just I am"- advocates the prediction of the development of modern Black nationalism that responds to discrimination and exclusion with races, rejecting racist fusion with whites, and thus rejecting the melting pot according to their own circumstances. Of course, at first, the melting pot was seen as a vague symbol of the American contingent; On the one hand it was seen as a legend that gave a sense of harmony and evolution to the American and on the other hand it was seen as a means of forced culturalization and severe assimilation.

Schuman thinks that there have not been significant changes in the attitudes of Americans towards minorities in the country. For instance, the large gap among blacks and whites has been growing more and more as the blacks become more aware of their right, which is making Americans be more prejudiced against them. Schuman therefore argues that *"Americans are not much more color-blind today than they ever*



were, and a melting-pot solution to racial differences in the US is not likely to occur in the foreseeable future” (Schuman, 2005). Since World War II minorities in the US, in particular blacks have faced and suffered from discrimination that has been welcomed by many Americans.

Studies have attempted to demonstrate that distorted stereotyped models of immigrant identities in American drama are humiliating, biased, and not focus on a rigid rational basis, but that some individuals' personal experiences are remembered and therefore far from being generalized. With the emergence of the American approved drama as a literary genre in the performing arts in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new concepts of ethnicity, color and national identity began to arise in the scene indicating the social segregation of immigrants and struggles to assimilate within the mainstream society (Mahfouz, 2013). In some American plays, ethnic minorities are displayed as subjects instead of objects and therefore displayed as an inferior other. Mae Ngai discusses that foreign citizens are "persons who are American by virtue of birth in the United States, but who are assumed to be foreign by the mainstream of American society and, at times, by the state." (Ngai, 2004).

As a result of racism, xenophobia has emerged as another serious problem for minorities living in America. Although racism and xenophobia appears to be almost the same, xenophobia actually has a completely different meaning. In many cases racism refers to a particular race that is superior to the other, while xenophobia expresses open hatred towards strangers based on fear and anxiety. Xenophobia leads to such a prejudice that people start believing that there are others who do not belong to their society and community they live in because they are outsiders. According to Bordeau, there are many reasons for Xenophobia. He points out that some of these reasons are economic hardship, rising nationalism and naturalism, pressures related to migration, global terrorism after September 11 attacks and other security threats (Bordeau, 2008). When America is in the question about this issue, xenophobia can be said to have always existed in this dream country. What Bordeau showed as reasons, have always been valid for the United States since the beginning of its history, which has always been promised for many countries that want to emigrate. The more they come, the angrier Americans feel against them. Perhaps they feel that their space, which they had migrated before, has begun to be invaded by foreigners.

Consequently, the racism and xenophobia that the minorities in the United States have been exposed to have always existed within the borders of the United States. Even though Americans are conscious of their unfair behavior against these minorities, they believe in their legitimacy in this regard because according to them it is difficult to live with foreigners who might pose a political, economic and social hazard. On the other hand, as a country of opportunities, America is believed to provide equal rights for



all, whether he or she is an American or not. As minorities, Jews, blacks, Muslims and others are making a great effort to achieve prestige and fortune in America. While some may achieve what they want, the great prejudice against them makes it impossible or really difficult for many.

People from all over the globe migrated to America "in pursuit of American Dream" which has roots in the Declaration of Independence that announces "*all men are created equal with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*" (McDonald, 1999).

Author James Truslow Adams promoted "*American Dream*" in his 1931 book, *Epic of America*. In his book he argues that there is also the American dream for every human being according to her/his skill or success, it is an earth dream in which there must be better and richer and more full of life for every occasion. It is a challenging dream for European upper classes to comment modestly, and many of us have become tired of ourselves and become unreliable. This dream is not a motorized car and a huge payment dream, but it is a social order dream where every individual can achieve the highest stature of which they are innately capable, and be appreciated by others for what they are. He also explains that although this dream has fascinated millions from various nations, it is not just a material abundance dream which has unquestionably counted heavily. According to him, American Dream is beyond the material wealth, it is a dream to expand to the complete growth as a man and woman, not to be hindered by the social order developed for the interests of some classes (Adams, 1931).

Martin Luther King, Jr., rooted African-American civil rights movement in search of the American Dream in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" during 1963. In his letter he discusses that they will accomplish their independence because believes that the holy inheritance of their nation and the infinite will of God are included in their echoing requests (Kloppenger, 1998).

The *American Dream* concept has been used in popular discourse, and scholars have followed the use of this term from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and Willa Cather's "*My Ántonia*" (Miller, 1974), to the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Lemay, 1986), F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) (Canaday, 1966), Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925) and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) (Harold and Blake, 2009). Other writers of the *American Dream* theme include Hunter S. Thompson, Edward Albee, John Steinbeck (Hayley, 2010), Langston Hughes (Lloyd, 1976).

The American Dream was credited to help create a harmonious American experience, but was also held responsible for inflated and exaggerated expectations. It is said that despite the deeply rooted belief in the



egalitarian American Dream, the modern American structure still maintains its racial and class inequalities between generations (Gordon, 2013).

American Dream became a theme in the careers of many political leaders, including Henry Kissinger (Jeremy, 2008), Hillary Clinton (Dan, 2008), Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln (Edward, 2007). In his book *"The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream"* published in 2006, President Barack Obama points out that it was American Dream that helped him to determine the statewide and national credibility (Obama, 2006). Therefore, American Dream became a goal for millions of people all over the world. In fact, those people who wanted to pursue this dream became the reality of America, and in some way those people were the people whom America dreamt of, because it was these people who contributed much on the American way of life in every aspect (Huang and Carla, 2008). For example, the immigrants of Irish Catholic who escaped famine from the 1840s to the Civil War encouraged the growth of cities and provided labor for the construction of canal and railway (King, 2000). The Germans, the Dutch and the Scandinavians migrated to the Middle West where the family farms developed the agricultural economy of the region. They often set up rural communities. During this period, migrations from southeast China also increased. Their families, farmers and workers living throughout the generations of Hong Kong and their hinterland began to migrate to the United States seeking better living conditions and opportunities (Overland, 1998). Thus, the US population is heterogeneous, and the recognition of the country as a country of opportunities and a society which is referred as open to ethnic and cultural pluralism continued and still continuing to attract newcomers (Pratt, 1989). Just as the Italians, Germans, Jews and Irish national food, speeches, music, clothing and behavior converted to the US communities during the Industrial Revolution, what were brought by the Mexican, Brazilian, Korean, Filipino, Arab and Caribbean immigrants re-shaped the culture and consumer behavior in the post-industrial period in the country (Huang and Carla, 2008).

John F. Kennedy wrote a small book *"A nation of Immigrants"* with short chapters on waves of immigration, immigrant contribution and immigration policy. In its bibliography, besides general titles, is a list of thirty monographs, each on one country -from Armenian to Yugoslav immigrants. Among immigrant imports he lists the very name of the United States -modelled after the *United States of Netherlands*. He states that the Dutch also brought to the U.S ice skating, bowling, cookies, waffles and the doughnut, the figure of Santa Claus and the many tales of the Hudson Valley; their nickname in the Manhattan colony turned into the name Yankee. The Swedes brought the knowledge of how to build houses from squared-off timbers (the log cabin. The Pennsylvania Germans built the Conestoga wagon for carrying heavy loads, which later developed into prairie schooner carrying emigrants to West. Many of the beautiful houses which make Charleston so picturesque today were built originally by the French



Huguenots, and Washington D.C was designed by a Frenchman. The first Opera to be staged in America was produced by the French in New Orleans. The first sculptors and interior decorators were Italian. Craftsman brought from Italy started a glass trade and later planted vineyards. This account could go on and on, with the development of science and industry.

## CONCLUSION

The identification of America with the old journey and the idealized world myths make it easier for America to be blessed as a new homeland. America is defined as the only place where a society can be realized on the basis of freedom and democracy. One of the most important factors in America's acceptance as a homeland is the wealth of America. Christopher Columbus, in his 3rd trip of around the world, said "*he was close to paradise.*" This wealth of the Americas has made it easier to identify with myths. One of these myths is American Dream, which inspired millions of people to migrate United States for better life conditions and for more democracy. As a result of this myth, it is possible to find every race and various cultures in the country.

Even though the total population of the United States is more than 300 million, the American race is only 20 million. If to think America as a huge cake, the ingredients in the cake or each slice of the cake represents a various race, and American race is just one slice of the cake. Therefore, it can be said that it is the immigrants who constructed and still constructing the United States.

Melting Pot term was used as a metaphor by J. Hector St John de Crevecoeur for various races and cultures in the country. Melting pot suggests a conception of national identity, where there is no ethnic limitation. It was used as a metaphor for the ideal process of immigration and colonialism in which different nations, cultures and races were involved and adhered to a new, virtuous community and to core Americanism. Even though the original goal of the melting pot was to embrace all the races, cultures, religions in the country, and was thought to be instrumental in the emergence of a national pride for Americans by providing for the increasing economic, political and military power of the colonies, it later resulted in cultural assimilation and lead to racial problems. Especially, Black Americans were excluded from melting pot, which also gave rise to a new literary expression known as the Black American Literature. The melting pot was therefore used in many various ways and for various political aims. Immigrants have been the subject of sociological debates of melting pot. In addition to a model of literary aesthetics, it is also a metaphor for change and hybridism, as well as the essence of some utopian thought. Above all, it can be thought as a cultural mobility and cultural sharing legend. However, culture and society continue to be problematic in the concept of the metaphor of the melting pot. The meaning of the melting pot metaphor is therefore indicative of the established asymmetries, limitations and



drawbacks of the concept that the basic and exceptional version of myth can often be successfully camouflaged.

Therefore, the process of Americanization has undergone a radical transformation in the last few decades. The melting pot, the mixing of the people and their cultures into a single, “American” substance, became outdated as an ideal and a new type of assimilation emerged: plurality. New immigrants don’t get fully adapted to the mainstream, originally represented by white Protestant of British origin. Now the integration implies preservation of the specific traditions and the identity of various communities and groups.

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