



Diálogos

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4025.dialogos.v24i1>

ISSN 2177-2940
(Online)

ISSN 1415-9945
(Impresso)

The American Dream: Immigration and Formation of Cultural Identity in the United States

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4025.dialogos.v23i3.51952>

 Mimi Yang

Carthage College, United States. E-mail: myang@carthage.edu

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Key words: The American Dream, immigration; WASPs; cultural identity; nativism; duality; double consciousness; Frederick Douglass; W. E. B. DuBois.</p> | <p>The American Dream: Immigration and Formation of Cultural Identity in the United States Abstract: This article confronts the monoculturalist American identity and argues a multicultural and multiracial cultural identity, molded by the history of immigration. Further, it dissects the American Dream under the lens of the WASPs as well as of non-WASP immigrants, particularly in the mid-19th century. In correlating cultural duality and double consciousness across the WASPs, later immigrants, nativists, and African American culturalists, the article asserts a malleable and evolving American cultural identity, constantly shaped by the successive waves of immigrants.</p> |
| <p>Palabras clave: Sueño Americano; inmigración; WASPs; identidad cultural; dualidad; nativismo; doble conciencia; Frederick Douglass; W. E. B. DuBois.</p> | <p>El Sueño Americano: Inmigración y formación de la identidad cultural en Estados Unidos Resumen: Este artículo confronta la identidad estadounidense monoculturalista y postula una identidad multicultural y multirracial, moldeada por la historia de la inmigración. Además, disecciona el Sueño Americano bajo la lente tanto de los WASPs como de los inmigrantes no-WASPs, particularmente a mediados del siglo XIX. Al correlacionar la dualidad cultural y la doble conciencia a través de los WASPs, inmigrantes posteriores, nativistas, y culturalistas afroamericanos, el artículo afirma una identidad cultural estadounidense maleable y en evolución, constantemente (re)configurada por las sucesivas oleadas de inmigrantes.</p> |
| <p>Palavras-chave: Sonho americano; imigração; WASPs; identidade cultural; dualidade; nativismo; dupla consciência; Frederick Douglass; W. E. B. DuBois.</p> | <p>O sonho americano: Imigração e formação de identidade cultural nos Estados Unidos Resumo: Este artigo confronta a identidade americana monoculturalista e postula uma identidade multicultural e multirracial, moldada pela história da imigração. Além disso, ele diseca o sonho americano sob a lente de imigrantes WASPs e não-WASPs, particularmente em meados do século XIX. Ao correlacionar a dualidade cultural e a dupla consciência por meio de WASPs, imigrantes, nativistas e culturalistas afro-americanos, o artigo afirma uma identidade cultural americana maleável e em evolução, constantemente (re)moldada por ondas sucessivas de imigrantes.</p> |
| <p>Artigo recebido em: 26/01/2020. Aprovado em: 12/02/2020.</p> | |

Introduction

“Individualism, personal freedom, constitutional rights, economic opportunity, social equality, ideological tolerance, and political democracy” (MERELMAN, 1998, p. 784), these elements prescribe a universally recognizable and laudable American Dream. This Dream is intimately associated with vastness and newness of North American landscape, enabling one to be reborn, reinvent and remake oneself. Glenn Baker dreams his “American Dream,” rooted in the virginal soil and expanded by the majestic space:

And to you who doubt that dream,
You of the pseudo culture and decadent
Philosophies - I say: go down to the land,
Go down into the great valley that lies
Between the Appalachian dam and
the Rocky Mountain scarp. Here is America! (BAKER, 1949, p. 389)

Individualism and freedom have mythologized and horizontalized the American Dream. Lineage, social status, and economic class no longer matter; only the Dream determines who you are and what you can be. Vanneman and Cannon (1987) propose an egalitarianism as essential to the American Dream as well as the origin of individualism:

More than any nation, America has celebrated itself as the land of opportunity. Immigrants came to the New World to escape European class barriers. In America, wealth and position were to be organized differently— open to every person of talent and hard work. The frontier beckoned to those seeking a new chance. The fabulous wealth of the continent promised abundance for all who were willing to work. It was the natural setting for an ideology of individualism (WANNEMAN, CANNON, 1987, 257).

Indeed, there is a “we-can” spirit that propels an individual to play by the rules, succeed and excel. The land of opportunity perpetuates the myth of the American Dream and draws millions and millions of individuals around the world to this vast and horizontal space to remake themselves and become Americans. Immigration is the single biggest result of the American Dream; conversely, the American Dream is the cause and the reason of immigration in the U.S. However, not all sing the American Dream’s praises. William Faulkner’s “On Privacy: The American Dream, What Happened to it” is a sharp cultural critique. The writer argued that the American Dream -- the mythic dream of freedom, opportunity, and equality, has been decayed and lost, because we have become complacent and “we dozed, slept, and it abandoned us.” (FAULKNER, 1965, p.65). To Faulkner, “the American Dream is merely a vision that is unsubstantiated in reality ... this loss inflicts on society an unbearable burden.” (MARTIN, 1985, p. 282). Faulkner reiterated that the American Dream was freedom for man from “the hierarchies of church and state which had

compressed and held him individually... impotent.” (FAULKNER, 1965, p.62; MARTIN, 1985, p.282). If the American Dream no longer has the power to eradicate hierarchies that suppress and oppress individualism, then, what do we dream about and what does this Dream mean to the present day’s immigrants?

Over the time, these dream qualities have evolved to become defining elements of American culture. Since its dedication in 1886, the Statue of Liberty in Upper New York Bay on Liberty Island south of Ellis Island has been standing silently, witnessing and welcoming millions and millions of immigrants who have sailed across oceans and landed on these shores, in search for the American Dream. They have risked life and sacrificed everything to come with nothing but a dream for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Statue of Liberty has thus stood tall as an image of freedom and a symbol of the United States; it embodies the American Dream in an icon and continues to lure immigrants across the world till this day and beyond.

However, behind the shared American Dream and under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, the non-stoppable immigration waves have punched, crushed, and reconfigured the American landscape, sometimes peacefully and sometimes violently. The first Mayflower landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Since then, the cultural and demographic face in America has changed forever. The original inhabitants in this land –American Indians– have been conveniently counted out in the formation of American identity. The successive immigrants from the four corners of the world have added colors and textures to American identity in a myriad of ways. Nonetheless, since the inception of the nation, English language, Christianity (mainly Protestantism), and those of white European descent have molded the pot for others to melt in. In this article, we use WASP to denominate the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant group. Historians and cultural critics have examined the WASP phenomenon from the WASP perspective as well as from diverse American contexts. In his discussion on how problematic Anglo-Protestants found their accustomed dominance in the American West, Douglas Firth Anderson characterizes the WASPs in these terms:

I shall use the term Anglo-Protestant – short-hand for Anglo-American Protestant – to refer to that community of British and northern European-derived theological traditions bound together in the United States by transdenominational organizations, revivalistic experience, republican ideology, and hegemonic aspirations. The various denominations of the Anglo-Protestant community self-consciously dominated much of the religious scene of the eastern United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (ANDERSON, 1992, p. 200-201).

A British and Northern European base sets itself apart as the dominant and ruling class in the multicultural and multiracial America. However, the Anglo-Protestants, aka, the WASPs, have always had to face the “manyness” of America’s Wests and America’s religions (ANDERSON, 1992, p. 200), which challenge their dominance. “Anglo-Protestants in the Great Plains, Rocky

Mountain, and Great Basin regions encountered problems of pluralism in their relations with Native Americans, Hispanic Catholics and Mormons” (ANDERSON, 1992, p. 201). The WASPs have become a cultural force to sweep out the non-WASP based cultures and value systems, whether in the East, the Midwest, the South or the West and in the name of defending American values.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1825), one of the most significant Founding Fathers of the nation and author of *The Declaration of Independence*, “until his death at eighty-three, ...arguing [argued] passionately that the teaching of Anglo-Saxon would make American students better jurists and better citizens.” (JOHNSON, 2017, p. 680). He founded the University of Virginia in 1819 and became a widely recognized face of American enlightenment and American culture. Jefferson’s lifelong interest in Anglo-Saxon and their undisputable impact “has been foundational for scholarship on the subject in the [his] last thirty years” (JOHNSON, 2017, p. 682). It is worth noting that he translated Genesis to “American” English in 1821 (“Rough Copy”) and 1825 (“Clean Copy”). In doing so, “Jefferson deploys the narrative strategies of the romance form in his attempt to revive the Anglo-Saxon through his translation of Genesis.” (JOHNSON, 2017, p. 683). As early as in 1774, Jefferson already published *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, a pamphlet in which he exhorted the Williamsburg congressional delegation to “remind George III that our ancestors, before their emigration to America, were the free inhabitants of British dominions in Europe.” (cited in CURTIS, 2012, p. 19). By establishing parallels between biblical stories and Anglo-Saxon-evolved-American-patriots, Jefferson, step by step throughout the American Revolutions, interprets and establishes a theory of American exceptionalism because of the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant nature.

Carol M. Swain’s 2002 book *The New White Nationalism in America: Its challenge to Integration* presaged the cultural and racial divide as well as political tribalism in the Trump era, as white nationalism rears its ugly head in the presidential election seasons in both 2016 and 2020. Swain’s central argument is that massive nonwhite immigrants, together with African-Americans’ struggle for racial equality, created a cultural threat to the whites, namely, white Anglo-Saxon and Protestant establishments; this caused the rise of white nationalism. In her various and general arguments, she aligns white conservatism with white nationalism, which links directly to the WASP base in our discussion. Further, Swain’s book portrays white nationalism as a movement that has gone beyond violence, and with coordinated efforts, it enters the mainstream of American culture. Internet and technologies made it all helpful for white nationalism to spread ideologies of racism and anti-immigration.

From entirely different perspectives, Anderson, Johnson, Curtis, and Swain converge at the point that the WASPs have played a unmistakable and foundational part in the myth of “melting pot” in the formation of American culture; the “melting pot” has gained particular and exclusive

meanings pertinent to a culture identifier. The original “melting pot” had only one design –the WASP blueprint–. The American Indian design, the African slave design, and the designs of later comers from non-WASP traditions did not count; all of these had to be melt into the WASP blue print, which has been held as the standard and authoritative definition of Americanism and American culture. Any other definition that does not fit with the “melting pot” or challenges the blueprint is deemed un-American or unpatriotic. In this light, this article questions the premise and suggests an evolving and inclusive American cultural identity because of immigration.

The Duality of Americanism: Monocultural vs Multicultural

Huntington (2004, p. 40) is a striking voice of the monoculturalist and WASP-centered view on American identity:

The central elements of that culture [American] can be defined in a variety of ways but include the Christian religion, Protestant values and moralism, a work ethic, the English language, British traditions of law, justice, and the limits of government power, and a legacy of European art, literature, philosophy and music.

A monoculturalist characterization as such, coupled with Eurocentric worldviews, has been defining American culture without major interruptions since the inception of this nation, although challenged by the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, among other monumental sociopolitical upheavals and movements. Huntington and his monoculturalism did not surface from vacuum but a long-standing tradition and a well-established canon in the U.S. history, decreed by a number of authoritative figures. Among them a most notable is Frederick Jackson Turner. His 1893 essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” has been held as a foundational construction of an American character and cultural identity. The essay has been a standard reference for the “standard” American history, thus revered by generations of historians. The main thesis that Turner constructed is that during the West Expansion, Europeans’ encounter, mainly the WASPs’ experience, with the frontier “refashioned their character and institutions, and the frontier experience made Europeans into Americans” (HURTADO, 2013, p. 5). Turner constructs “Americaness” on “Europeaness” with no hesitation:

In the settlement of America we have to observe how European life entered the continent, and how America modified and developed that life and reacted to Europe. Our early history is the study of European germs developing in an American environment (TURNER, 1994, p. 33).

This narrative has appealed to the white dominant society and cemented the mental frame of a white-only America. His staunchest modern defender Ray Allen Billington boldly wrote that American character “was rooted in the frontiering background of the people”¹ (HURTADO, 2013, p.5). Strongly influenced by social and biological Darwinism, Turner minimized Indians’ historical significance and portrayed them as obstacles who were best forgotten after a superior civilization, namely the Anglo-centric authorities, overcame them. When discussing governmental policies in relation to the Anglo settlers in the West, Turner explicitly position them in a racially superior position:

You [the government] have no authority to throw the rights and property of this people [the WASPs] into “hotch-pot” with the wild men on the Missouri, nor with the mixed, through more respectable, race of Anglo-Hispano-Gallo-Americans who bask on the sands in the mouth of the Mississippi... (TURNER, 1994, p.64)

“The wild men” refer to the American Indians living in the Great Plains. Turner’s ethnocentric views hierarchized a racial pyramid with Anglo/the WASPs on the top, putting white, mixed blood, Indians and Blacks in an order of successive descent. His racialized American narrative has influenced American historians for nearly a century. In the meantime, in a much simplified and accessible form, Turner’s American/WASP narrative has seeped into the popular imagination, textbooks, and the depth of the nation’s psyche. The monoculturalism with the WASPs at the center as well as in the ruling position has proved almost impossible to uproot.

Till this day, a significant majority in the present day still hold Turner and Huntington’s view to be the “American Creed.” While “individualism, personal freedom, constitutional rights, economic opportunity, social equality, ideological tolerance, and political democracy” (MERELMAN, 1998, p. 784) are the indisputable American ideal and values, the Turner-Huntington “American Creed” gives all the credit to the WASP group as if no one else had made relevant and meaningful contributions to these ideals and values. The monoculturalism establishes the WASPs as the exclusive bearers of Americanness and, therefore, they are the authoritative and standardized face and voice for all Americans, in spite of the diverse and dynamic cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds that constitute and identify the population of this country as a result of immigration. Thus, the “melting pot” has to be shaped and framed with the exclusionary and appropriating model and design by the WASPs.

¹ This is from a footnote from (HURTADO, 2013, p. 5). It reads: “Ray Allen Billington”, *America’s Frontier Heritage* (Albuquerque, 1974), 61. For the first publication of Turner’s essay, see: Frederick Jackson Turner, ‘The Significance of the Frontier in American History,’ Report of the American Historical Association (Washington, DC, 1893), 199-227. For the most famous reprint of the essay, see: Frederick Jackson Turner, ‘The Significance of the Frontier in American History,’ Chap. 1 in the *Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), 1-38.”

In immortalized words, the Declaration of Independence has acknowledged and declared the most humanistic dream, the most liberating spirit, and the most democratic equalities not only to Americans but to the entire human race, including the immigrants of non-Protestant origin or non-Christian faith, non-Euro-descent, non-English-speaking, and non-white skin color. Let's not forget that the WASPs had come with the humanistic and democratic vision and written the Declaration; they should be the most fit to carry out the most beautiful and noble American Dream in the new world, where the oppressive force to exclude and persecute them was no more. Most significantly, as the earliest settlers, the WASPs saw America as a promised land exclusively for themselves. As beautiful and noble as their American Dream was, they failed to realize that a promised land would attract seekers of freedom and equality like themselves, who may or may not come from a WASP background. They failed to anticipate that a promised land would be anticipated with waves of immigrants from the four corners of the world in the years and decades to come. Here comes the duality of the WASPs: the most humanistic and dignified American Dream of freedom and equality and the exclusiveness of the American Dream.

In the American promised land, the non-WASPs have always had to hit or penetrate more walls and fortresses to get in; they have invariably had to cross more hurdles and obstacles to claim their American identity. Mendoza (2010, p. 47) in his "A 'Nation' of Immigrants" poignantly states:

...what can be deciphered from the history of U.S. immigration and its claim to be a "nation of immigrants" is that while the United States, as a nation, has been founded on and currently depends upon the vulnerable labor of immigrants, it is and has been at the same aghast at the possibility that nonwhite immigrants might in some way disturb the delicate makeup of the nation (i.e. white supremacy) by becoming full and equal members.

The non-WASPs or nonwhite immigrants do not belong in the monoculturalist construction of Americanism. They need to deal with not only immigration laws but also the mental and psychological barriers of the WASPs' "club," which is still widely held as the exclusive and the authentic "American Club." Anything different would be deemed as un-American or less-American. Emma Lazarus' famous poem "The New Colossus," graven on a tablet within the pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty stands, welcomes freedom-seekers –the tired, poor, and huddled immigrants to these shores without discrimination. Nonetheless, "as full, equal, and rights-bearing members of the community, nonwhite immigrants are *personae non gratae*." (MENDOZA, 2010, p. 47) and depend on the acceptance or rejection from the WASPs' Club.

Ironically, equality has come to mean the equal nature of struggles for all these who do not belong to the WASP circles. The formation of American cultural identity was never and will never be set in stone so long as immigrants continue to hit these shores. Successive immigrants have been facing the duality as well: the need to learn, conform to and internalize the WASP cultural DNA in

order to be included in the American society and the need to keep their own cultural authenticity in “Americanization.” This creates confrontations of American/WASP values and non-American/non-WASP values. The binary and the exclusiveness of the American Dream molded the “melting pot,” which does not allow the formation of American culture to take its course as the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God dictate, as proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence. The pot simmers and boils and eventually melts away anything other than Anglo-centered values. The formation of the U.S. culture(s) has never been natural but forceful and contentious. Thus, continued confrontation and negotiation between WASPs and other groups have ensued. Like various shades of grey, which can go whiter or blacker both ways, there are infinite sub-versions of the American narrative, whether from a monoculturalist or multiculturalist perspective. In alternation between peace and violence, liberation and oppression, inclusion and exclusion, the American cultural identity has come to be, evolves, and continues to take shape.

As I write this paper, the nation’s immigration policies take a turn to follow economic nationalism and “America First” motto. With the continuation of the construction/extension of the border wall with Mexico, deportation of those from Mexico and Central America, restriction of travel and work visas, the American cultural identity has been thrown, once again, into a new context of competing voices, questions, and quests. This article questions and disputes the monoculturalism in constructing of American cultural identity. It aims to prove that Turner and Huntington’s “American” narrative is Euro-centric, exclusionary, and unreflective of the increasingly multiracial and multicultural society that the nation has become. It searches for the answers to what the American culture is and how it has been formed. We challenge the monoculturalism from an America-driven and multicultural instead of Euro-centric position; this position relies on the immigration history to articulate culture formation.

Formation/Evolution of American Culture: The WASPs’ Duality

Unlike the formation of cultural identities in Europe or elsewhere from well honored and established civilizations, heritages and traditions of thousands of years, the United States, in spite of indigenous civilization centers and social structures, did not have referential points that Europeans can relate or refer to. In the absence of a WASP tradition prior to 1620 when the first Mayflower arrived, the colonial WASPs regarded the new world as a blank slate and themselves as creators of an American Garden or a “sanctuary” for the persecuted, lost, and marginalized. In the absence of deep roots, blood ties, shared ancestral genealogies, collective memory, mutual experience, and common languages, Americans had to fashion out a cultural identity that is ideological, mental, and psychological, and then, to be instilled in the material, tangible, and physical realm. In the absence

of power hierarchies and institutions, Americans had to “standardize” and “normalize” their way of belief and life. All this was done to protect and defend freedom and equality, fought with blood, toil, tears and sweat. The early WASPs’ vision for America and deed to bring the vision to this land unequivocally established their hierarchic position in American history and culture. Thus, the WASPs claimed to be the righteous and entitled “owners” of freedom, equality, and democracy. Since the very beginning, the American culture was conceived with the WASP’s DNA of duality, which has become a cultural paradox, freedom and hierarchy at the same time.

On a more in-depth cultural level, dissecting and defining the WASPs’ cultural paradox of freedom and hierarchy triggers out a set of pronged paradoxes – liberating and oppressing, inclusion and exclusion, vertical and horizontal, unity and diversity among others. On one hand, the American Dream brings individuals across races, religions, and social classes under the arms of the Goddess of Liberty. A convergent “E Pluribus Unum” (From Many, One) characterizes an American ideal of unity achieved from diversity, equality from hierarchy. This enables a unique and profound American vision on humanity: “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” (JEFFERSON, 1776). This vision envisages a cultural identity to be constructed on egalitarianism and on a horizontal expanse. In one unified voice, it represents a severance from England and the old world, and defines a new world never seen before.

On the other hand, not the unifying American Dream nor the welcoming Statue of Liberty depicts a tangible, delineable, and graspable America; they are dreams and symbols open to diverse and plural interpretations subject to individuals and cultures. Neither the Declaration of Independence nor the Constitution of the United States drafted in 1787 spells out citizenship and cultural identity; they are legal documents designed to govern and set orders and institutions. The cultural icons, symbols and historical documents have left much room for both liberation and oppression, both inclusion and exclusion. Since its inception, the inherently immigrant nation was thrown into a perpetual and seemingly unresolvable circle between national identity and cultural plurality. Historians, sociologists, philosophers, poets, novelists among many others have written about the formation of an American cultural from a multitude of angles and voices, to draw a straight and progressive line has been proven hopelessly challenging. On the way Americanists and seekers for the American soul often get carried out by ramified paths and trapped directions.

The WASPs themselves are trapped in the paradox of liberation and oppression. On one hand, these were individuals with extraordinary vision and encourage with the goal to found a sanctuary for the oppressed, the humble, and the powerless. They sailed to these shores with a dream for justice, equality and freedom. In the old continent, marginalized and alienated by the

established Church of England and in conflict with the Catholics, they encountered political and social barriers in the ecclesiastical system to bring about the Puritan clergy (YANG, 2018, p. 3). It was the rebellious and audacious spirit that brought them to America. In 1776, Thomas Paine captured the original motive of the migration to America in his pamphlet *Common Sense*, “Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom has been hunted round the globe... oh, receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.” (PAINE, 1776). “They (the WASPs) were first dreamers of the American Dream. The birth of the United States was inextricably intertwined with a group of British Puritans who were adherent to Calvinism.” (YANG, 2018, p. 3). America was a blank slate to draw freedom and justice. In search for freedom and liberation, the WASPs who had brought with them “the ideal of equality, freedom, and democracy to this land. They came with nothing but a vision for a land where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness could be carried out uninhibitedly.” (YANG, 2018, p. 3). The WASPs were liberators for themselves.

On the other hand, while getting acclimated to the new world, the early WASPs had to set up functional society with norm, order, and law. Along the way, it was humanly understandable to construe a governing machine with “standards” to determine who should join their “republic”. They needed structures and mechanisms to protect and guard their American Dream, and systems to keep their interests and ideologies “pure” and intact. If need be, the governing mechanism and institutions should be set in a way to defend any threat that can potentially erode the WASPs’ freedom and American Dream. Unfortunately, the early WASPs either purposefully had no regards to or simply had no desire to include the American Indians in their pursuit of freedom, equality, and democracy. It was not a shared American Dream, but an exclusive one since its inception, period.

Throughout the immigration history, the exclusivity of the American Dream has been intensified, politicized, and weaponized, as the racial demographics is turning more diverse, complex, and “unmanageable.” If America is a refuge for mankind, as Paine believed, if America is the Garden of Eden for freedom and equality, why are the immigrants of color less accepted than those of European descent? or why is there an indestructible color line between the immigrants including the WASPs, who are from immigrant origin too? The irony of WASPs is that to defend their own American Dream, freedom and equality, they have had to strip these rights from other groups. The WASPs have been oppressors to the Americans of color and of a different background from theirs.

Formation/Evolution of American Culture: Immigrants' Duality

The liberation-and-oppression paradox plays out consistently during the three waves of immigration. The paradox has forced the formation of American cultural identity to be a struggle and a trudging walk, sometimes with one step forward and two steps backward or sideways, and sometimes in uphill battles and life-and-death confrontations. The history of the nation has witnessed three major waves of immigration: roughly, 1841-1890 covered the first; then, 1891-1920 saw the second; and after a hiatus of three decades due to tightened policies on immigration, from 1965 to the present day we find ourselves in the third and on-going wave.² These three waves have lapped, punched and crushed the shores. As a result, the geopolitical and demographic landscape of America was configured and reconfigured in an ever changing and evolving way, as immigration has and is still far from coming to an end. We focus our discussion on the first wave of immigration to examine the formation of American culture.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the verb “immigrate”: “to enter and usually become established.” (MERRIAN WEBSTER). The Free Dictionary has it as “enter a country of which one is not native; introduce as settlers.” (THE FREE DICTIONARY). “Immigrate” thus means movement of coming and arriving, transforming from foreign to colonist and eventually native. Most importantly, it means taking roots and affirming an identity. The early WASPs did all of this except transforming themselves from foreign to native as they felt entitled to claim this land as the promised land only and exclusively belonging to them, so they never considered themselves foreigners or outsiders but “owners,” “masters” and “chosen people” of America. Nonetheless, this rule does not apply to all other and later immigrant groups, as the paradox of inclusion and exclusion comes to interplay with the one of liberation and oppression. American cultural identity was thus conceived in a “double standard” that separates the WASPs from other groups and holds them in a special place above everyone else and above every other culture.

Prior to, during, and after these immigration waves, there have always been building-up forces, accumulating pressures, rip streams, and trapping undercurrents to develop and create the waves. The formation of American culture took place not so much at the peak of the waves but in between them. Zooming into the forces prior, during, and after the first wave in the mid-19th century, one gets caught in the crisscrossed intersection of races, cultures, schools of thoughts, and paths to the American ideal of freedom and equality. At that time, the American shores received almost fifteen million arrivals recorded, with British, Irish, German and Scandinavian origins. The

² Different historians categorize the three immigration waves differently. This paper follows Vecoli's timeline of three immigration waves (VECOLI, 1996, p. 11).

period 1841-1890 was crucial for competing forces to take roots and configuring the battle ground for the Civil War and the perpetual cultural war.

Upon landing, the mixed British/Northern Europeans found themselves in an already built “pot” and getting ready to be melted or becoming resistant to the pot. Two centuries ago way before their arrival, the early Anglo Puritan settlers, who, no different from mid-19th century and today’s immigrants, risked life and sacrificed family to come to this land. They came for a dream, a dream for a just society, a better life, and a second chance to be one’s own master and to be in charge of one’s own destiny. Different from the later and contemporary immigrants, the early White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) had the advantage of the-early-bird-catches-the-worm, and set the rules. Knowing what an uphill battle is to fight Catholic persecutions and monarchic oppressions in the old world, the WASPs sought and “framed” the new world with freedom and equality prior to the arrival of all other immigrant groups. The WASPs took no time to set up “norms” and “standards” of freedom and democracy, enshrining “the city” on the hill. The pot to melt other immigrants was molded in the WASPs’ values.

Most importantly, the WASPs identified themselves as the only Americans. The freedom, equality and unalienable human rights of the American Indians and later the African slaves were not much of the concern for the early WASPs, although their livelihood, economy, and social infrastructures had to rely on these non-white humans to function. The melting pot with WASPs’ shape and texture only testifies to the origin of Turner and Huntington’s monocultural view of English language only, white Anglo-Saxon/European only, and British law only in defining American culture. It is with this pot that all later immigrants are sized up so that their “fitness” to be an American can be determined. Ironically, who gets fit in or out the pot is ruled by the freedom defenders, equality champions, and justice guardians – the WASPs. Way before the mid-nineteenth century immigration wave, the American paradox of national unity and cultural diversity had already been in full action.

In addition to the shared American Dream, the immigrants of the first wave in the mid-19th century also shared a blood and northern European connection with the early WASPs, although in a sociopolitical and demographical landscape different from the one in Europe. These immigrants were certainly not alien to English language, racial make-up, and British superiority; they blended in with the WASPs with less resistance, less rejection and less exclusion, compared to the second and third waves of immigrants. In forming an American identity, given the affinity and lineage of European descent, some of them even helped with extension of the “blood line.” Unlike cultural identities sprout from the lands where a genealogical and ancestral tree can be traced out, the United States did not and never had a “blood and soil” tradition. In fact, the term “blood and soil” conjures up with racism and Nazism in American culture in our present day. However, that was not the case

during the first wave of immigration; it was then that the notion of “blood and soil” gave rise to nativism. Instead of honoring and respecting native American Indians, the WASPs by mid-nineteenth century laid full claims of nativeness and enjoyed the status of indisputable owners and masters of this land.

The mid-nineteenth century immigrants dealt with while inheriting the early WASPs paradox of inclusion and exclusion, liberation and oppression. In so doing, the paradox had blown into a double consciousness (elaborated later in the paper) in the formation of American cultural identity. Xenophobia was on the rise in America. “Scientific” advances at that time on racial research and experiment and Darwinism on pecking order in sociopolitical environment enhanced Anglo ethnocentrism and entitlement. When Irish Catholics were arriving in massive numbers during the famine years of the middle of the 19th century, they came for a better and decent life but instead encountered discriminations against them in a society of “normalized” slavery and racialized power hierarchy. When non-Anglo and non-Protestant Europeans came to the scene, they quickly realized and acclimated to the double standards and the double consciousness about being an American. At that time, Irish Catholics in particular were considered foreigners and accused of being a threat to American values and institutions. The arrival of a great number of Roman Catholics was also perceived as a Jesuit conspiracy to undermine American democracy and fragment the WASPs’ “melting pot”.

It was during mid-nineteenth century and with the motive of excluding Irish Roman Catholics, the school of nativism was emerging and breaking the ground. John Higham’s *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (HIGHAM 2002 [1954]) zooms into that period and edifies nativism as a building block of Americanism in the mid-19th century as well as in the American history. In 1854, the formation of the American Party or the Know-Nothing Party, under the motto “America for America,” signaled the Protestant Crusade against Catholics and rendered Irish as foreigners and threat, not too different from today’s political rhetoric against Hispanic immigrants. An exclusionist and xenophobic view by the WASPs was widely displayed in disguise of Americanism.

Among all European immigrants, the British were the ruling class on the top of the elite club of Americans. Nordic immigrants were generally superior to the Mediterranean and East Europeans. Irish Catholics, Italians, and Eastern European Jews were the easiest target for exclusion, racialization, and discrimination, because of their ethnic, religious and linguistic departure from the ones of the WASPs. In the case of the Irish immigrants, the social disdain towards them from the “mainstream” also had to do with the one in the old world. Over centuries, British had attempted to conquer Ireland, colonize its people, and eradicate their religion and culture; the old historical wounds and scars were carried to the new world. Irish Catholics were especially attacked by

Protestants in America. The racism in Victorian Britain was extended sideways across the Atlantic to the 19th century America. At that time, the Irish were portrayed as violent, alcoholic, and “ape-like” faced; as a race, they were inferior to Anglo-Saxons. The derogatory cartoons spread the stereotype in the popular culture. John Higham describes they were commonly portrayed with “a pug nose, an underslung jaw, and an air of tattered truculence usually augmented by whiskey.” (HIGHAM 2002 [1954], p. 141) So, all men are born equal, except Irish, that was the (de)formation of American culture.

The 2nd wave of immigration during 1891-1920 also brought massive numbers of Eastern European Jews and Italians to the “melting pot”. Around this time towards the end of the nineteenth century, racial biology, centered on skull skeleton studies of black and other non-white people, merged with eugenicism. Charles Darwin’s half-cousin Francis Galton published his theories of eugenics and hereditary fitness in his *Natural Inheritance* (1889) to hierarchize human races and determine the superiority and the inferiority. These theories, with a biological and scientific base, were produced in Europe and effectively institutionalized sociological and cultural racism in America. The theories certainly helped nativism grow and thrive in an immigrant-filled and racially diversified America. The new immigrants were positioned in racial inferiority. There was a general fear of the superior British, Nordic immigrants, that is, the WASPs being drown in a genetic flood and mixture “unleashed by the prolific newcomers from other parts of the world.” (VECOLI, 1996, p. 17).

Therefore, American culture was under threat and on the path to an apocalyptic end. Higham quoted Francis A. Walker, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

beaten men from beaten races; representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence. They have none of the ideas and aptitudes which belong to those who are descended from the tribes that met under the oak trees of the old Germany to make laws and choose chieftains (HIGHAM, 1954/2002, p. 143).

Higham and Walker’s crude Darwinian views enhanced the exclusion and oppression side of the American paradox, so much so that he did not give any room for the other side of liberation and inclusion. In their world, America only belongs to the white superior race and the Statue of Liberty only welcomes non-beaten people and non-beaten races. The question then becomes, were the early WASPs beaten men and women? Was their struggle in the old world the motivation for them to migrate and immigrate to America?

The cultural paradox in the early WASPs, on one hand, do liberate those subjugated to authoritarianism; on the other hand, they do practice what they themselves detested and escaped from –the oppression and domination. Their American Dream, like everyone else’s, conjures up with hope, desires, emotional responses, and spiritual quests; but it is also prone to division,

segregation and gerrymandering. Because of the WASPs' American Dream, are marginalized and discriminated Irish Catholics, Eastern European Jewish, Italians, American Indians, African slaves, and any immigrants who speak a different language, belong to a different faith, and look differently. In an intrinsically immigrant country, not only the early WASPs had the existential need to fashion an American cultural identity and a national character to get settled, belong, and flourish, but also the successive waves of immigrants have experienced the same existential need. What makes a difference is that the early WASPs were the first settlers and arrived earlier than any other immigrant groups. As stated previously, the early bird catches the worm, establishes the rule, and rules. The later arrivals, although face the same non-vernacular challenges as the ones of the early WASPs, have now and always had to deal with something extra – the dilemma of fitting into the mental and cultural frames designed and put in place by the WASPs, euphorically called “melting pot.”

Mostly, the later arrivals' responses to the once-upon-a-time new world have to be fit into WASP nationalism, ideologies, dogmas, and rationales. If otherwise, they can easily be labeled as unfit, undesired, and un-American in this land. Unlike the early WASPs, the later comers have been left with no chance to structure an American narrative but only the possibility to search for a place in the American narrative, already been “standardized” and “canonized” by the WASPs. To fit into the already existent ideologies, dogmas, frameworks becomes an act of “Americanization” and patriotism of the later comers. So, the melting pot tends to be a one-way traffic that later immigrants must be melt into WASPs' framed the “pot.” Assimilation has been “a unidimensional process of simplification: ethnic minorities shed themselves of all that makes them distinctive and become carbon copies of the ethnic majority.” (ALBA, 1999, p. 7).

From Cultural Duality to Double Cultural Consciousness

To dive into the depth of the American Paradox of liberation and oppression, inclusion and exclusion, one cannot ignore the other side of the American universe –the cultural thinkers and writers from the black race of African descent. Abraham Lincoln commented upon the discrimination of foreigners and immigrants as a departure from the country's founding ideal: “As a nation, we began by declaring that ‘all men are created equal,’ except negroes.” Now, with nativism, Anglo ethnocentrism, and racialism interplaying, the American Party would declare that “all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners and Catholics.”³ Compared to the Irish, the Catholics and foreigners, the African slaves, brought by force and violence to this land, were not

³ These are two indirect quotes from (VECOLI, 1996, p. 13), where the writer indicates the source from Arthur Mann, ed., *Immigrants in American Life: Selected Readings* (Boston, 1968).

dignified even in any of these marginalized categories; they did not belong to “all men” in the American Creed. They were the most visible and the most vulnerable group among the immigrants or outsiders. Their conditions were far worse than the ones of the Irish, the Roman Catholics, the Italians, and the Eastern European Jewish. The hurdles for them to cross and the goal to attain freedom and achieve equality were practically unfathomable in the 19th century.

Nineteenth century black writers, such as “William Wells Brown, James Madison Bell, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Martin R. Delany, Frances E. W. Harper, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Charles Waddell Chesnutt all had to turn their literary efforts into attacks against slavery, disenfranchisement, or cultural stereotyping, using a variety of strategies in their works to do so.” (BRODWIN, 1972, p. 304). Among them the abolitionist, orator and statesman Frederick Douglass (1818 -1895) stood out and chartered the course of forming an American cultural identity. His July Fourth Oration in 1852 “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” raised a landmark of cultural representation that challenged the WASPs’ “pot” head-on. It was the speech that he actually delivered on July 5, 1852, in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, New York, and the audience was the Rochester ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society. Then, it was published in *The Frederick Douglass Papers* in 1982 (BLASSINGAME, 1982).

Fourth of July should be a proud and celebratory occasion for all Americans, as it marks the birth of the United States – the beacon of freedom and the symbol of equality in the world. In a David-and-Goliath fashion, the defiant Yankees defeated the wrath and might of the British army. On the 4th of July 1776, in Philadelphia, the Declaration of Independence, composed by Thomas Jefferson, was adopted by the Continental Congress. In awe-filled words, the Declaration told the world that “these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.” Since then, Americans are recognized as free people and masters of their own lives, who govern their own destiny, breathe the air of liberty, and enjoy human dignity across the Land of the Brave.

Then, in 1852 on the eve of the American Civil War when Douglass delivered his speech on the occasion of Fourth of July, the widespread slavery institution in America did not regard African involuntary “immigrants” as equal citizens; they were less humans and inherently inferior. Do they deserve freedom and equality in the promised land of America and the model of the free world? Should the formation of American cultural identity include or exclude these individuals? Douglass, a biracial individual, is straddled in between the white and the black worlds. Living the oppressed race’s pain and suffering on his mother’s side and understanding the privileges of white race on his father side, he was a firm believer in freedom and equality for all races and ethnicities. In 1872, the first woman Victoria Woodhull of the Equal Rights Party was running for the presidency. She nominated Douglass as vice president to be her running mate. The first black man and the first woman candidates teamed up in an attempt to rewrite American narrative. From an insider’s vintage

point on both sides of the black and the white, the cultural “Minotaur” Douglass, half in bondage and half in freedom, poignantly questions and challenges the meaning and significance of Fourth of July:

What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us?

... ..

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. (DOUGLASS (a), 1852).

The dehumanization, brutality, and cruelty suffered by the African slaves in American soil did not allow them to feel celebratory and proud, like their white masters, whose freedom, equality and prosperity were secured at the expense of the black slaves’ human rights, citizenship, and equality. If African slaves were expected to celebrate the beacon of freedom, then, freedom rendered meaningless and shameful in the American narrative. If they were expected to be patriotic to a country that crashed their humanity into pieces, then patriotism in a country of 76 years old continued to add insult to injury. Throughout Douglass’ speech, the term “your fathers” is evoked repeatedly.

Are the white Founding Fathers, who were slave owners themselves, African slaves’ American national heroes too? In Douglass’ speech, the enumerated list of the Founding Fathers’ courage, vision, achievement, and significance would have inspired and energized a white audience and the WASP base, but sounded so out of place, unrelatable, and hollow to an enslaved black audience in 1852 and to the orator himself. Here Douglass planted the seeds of “the color line” and “double consciousness” in the formation of American culture, and later, W. E .B. Dubois (1868-1963) would develop them into the mainstream American narrative in his *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Black Reconstruction in America* (1903).

The double consciousness divided while connected by the color line speaks of the cultural duality in Douglass, in the WASPs, in African slaves, in Irish and Italian immigrants, in Catholics and Jewish immigrants. While embracing Americans cultural values of liberty, freedom and citizenship, Douglass protests that these values are not applied to the enslaved African Americans. He also stresses the view that slaves and free Americans are equal human beings, endowed with the same unalienable rights. He wants all the privileged white people in his audience to see that he and other abolitionists are fighting the same fight the white ancestors fought seventy-six years earlier – liberation from oppression and the cause of justice and equality—. The allowance of the existence of slavery institutions puts these cherished American values to question and doubt.

Above all, those who escaped from and fought oppression and tyranny exercised the very same to African slaves; those who found and founded freedom and equality took away the very same from African slaves. The abolitionism, especially in the mid-19th century, was simmering to its full boil in 1861 when the Civil War broke out. The American colonial economy thrived through brutal and exploiting plantation systems that relied on African slaves' labor and services. They owed nothing to the American founding but created wealth and prosperity so that the colonists -- their white masters could be freed and liberated from British tyranny and oppression, and fight for justice and equality, and write the Declaration of Independence.

Heath and Waymer coined the slaves' liberating power as "paradox of the positive" (HEANT, WAYMER, 2009, p. 193). Douglass established an analogy between Africans enslaved by white Americans and the WASPs oppressed by the British tyranny. More than a "paradox of the positive," the American ideal of freedom and equality, outlined by the WASPs, in the essence is an ideal of double standard with a double consciousness. When it was declared that all men are born equal, the adjective "all" loses its grammatical function and becomes sociopolitical and racialized. The "all" not only does not include African enslaved individuals --the forced immigrants--, but also rejects those voluntary immigrants, who are in a lower link of the pecking order in terms of race and religion. The WASPs paradox of liberation and oppression, inclusion and exclusion fits squarely with the double consciousness, which is eternally stuck with an unpassable line of color. In a cross-cultural mirror, the WASPs should see themselves in the spiritual images of the African slaves, the two reflecting one another in the struggle for freedom and equality.

Douglass questions, can the slaves be negro and American simultaneously? In the immigrant milieu, can the Irish, Italians, Jewish, Catholics, and later, the Chinese, Hispanics, Muslims be who they are and American at once? Why was and is this never a question in the case of the WASPs? Any answers or attempted answers to these questions only perpetuate the double standard, the double consciousness, and the cultural paradox, that braid the American culture along the color line. Initially, the color line divided the WASPs and all others. Then, it separates general Euro-descent and the WASPs from more diversified non-WASPs, African slaves and the American Indians. Then, it makes the white the mainstream and throws all the others into the margins. During the three waves of immigration, the color line has evolved to become a cultural paradigm. It was construed at the beginning between the white and the black, and gradually came to full operation on different scales, in different degrees, with different shades, within different immigrant groups and contexts.

The immigrants throughout American history, like Douglass, have had to live the double standard, the double consciousness, and the paradox. Douglass resorts to Christianity to deal with it: "[a]nd he [God] made from one every nation of men to live on the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation" (Acts 17:26); "[a]nd Adam

called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20); "[h]ave we not all one father? has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 2:10).⁴ These Biblical verses do stress unity and brotherhood and were reexamined by the orator to regain strength in his Christian faith. He professed that Christians and churches should not stand idly while witnessing black men and women mistreated as properties or animals. He believes that the United States could do better, and the country can be one voice because progress like it has done before, in regard to the British rule. Douglass reminded his white audience that they were not living up to their proclaimed beliefs. Let us not forget that the WASPs also relied on the Bible to justify their superiority as God's chosen people to build a shining city on the hill, an American Garden, as the model for the entire world. The colonists used the Bible to challenge their oppressors. The Bible was used on both sides of the double consciousness or the paradox, making the double standards of being American even more confusing and disturbing.

Immigrants from the second and the third waves are increasingly diverse, and not all are Christian or even familiar with the teaching of the Bible. The patterns of immigration in the US have irreversibly made the WASPs' desire for a homogenous culture, language, and race more and more remote. Instead of finding answers and guidance in the Bible, the color line by mid-19th century started to draw a map of a multicultural and multiracial America, posing a gradually noticeable threat to the WASP base, undermining their "pot" to melt diverse people and diverse cultures. Due to never-ending immigration, the formation of American identity bifurcates; along the way it has become a competition between holding onto the "standard" and authoritative WASPs' values and incorporating/accepting non-WASPs' diversity. This brings us to the core questions in the formation of American culture: what are the criteria for being an American? Who gets to decide? What strikes the deepest cord with all Americans is perhaps the question of patriotism. To define and defend patriotism, must be a defender of the WASPs' unity and values? Is a challenger of the WASPs' base unpatriotic and, by extension, un-American?

We are taught to believe that America is built on the ideal of liberty and equality, but Douglass' speech tells his audience that more than anything, our nation rests on inconsistencies that have been unexamined and unquestioned for so long that they appear to be truths and righteous. According to Douglass, these inconsistencies have made the United States the object of mockery and often contempt (DOUGLASS (a), 1852; also: DOUGLASS (c), 1852). To demonstrate evidence of these inconsistencies, during the speech Douglass highlights the US Constitution as an abolition document and not a pro-slavery document, contrary to those politicians who justified

⁴ I used the version of RSV Old Testament, 1986, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The three quotes are from p. 965 (Acts 17:26), p. 3 (Genesis 3:20), and p. 830 (Malachi 2:10): (BIBLE, 1986, p. 965).

slavery with the Constitution. Douglass does not accept inconsistent interpretation of the Constitution:

Fellow-citizens! there is no matter in respect to which, the people of the North have allowed themselves to be so ruinously imposed upon, as that of the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. In that instrument I hold there is neither warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing; but, interpreted as it ought to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? It is neither (DOUGLASS (a), 1852).

However, if slavery were abolished and equal rights given to all, then not only the forced and mistreated African “immigrants” but also the later and voluntary immigrants from diverse cultures and parts of the world should be regarded as equal citizens as the WASPs, who were originally immigrants too. Douglass’ belief of and fight for equality and freedom dignified the African slaves but also benefitted anyone who was determined to pursue the American Dream, regardless of his or her racial and cultural background. In the end, Douglass goes back to his quintessential American element -- the faith and belief that this country is able to end slavery and to progress towards the ideal of freedom and equality, without WASPs’ cultural appropriation. Indeed, the Civil War broke out in 1861 and put slavery to an end.

The Emancipation Proclamation and abolition of slavery however did not erase the color line nor resolved the double consciousness. These cultural tropes have become interiorized and continued to divide American cultural identity. It was W.E.B. DuBois, during the second wave of immigration (1891-1920), who addressed the color line and the double consciousness in the post-slavery period. This period witnessed ever more diversified immigrants from Eastern European countries, the Mediterranean, and East and Southeast Asia. Like Douglass, DuBois is biracial with intimate cultural insights into both black and white communities; he advocates freedom and equality for all races. Like Douglass, DuBois’ struggle, thoughts, and cultural theories focus on the black-white relations, and then, timely and integrally, became discourses and tropes for those who are in search for an American cultural identity with consistency and integrity, whether African Americans or successive immigrants.

In his fight for racial equality and social justice, DuBois aimed more at mental and psychological emancipation for both the black and the white. He recognized that the black community could not, with its disadvantaged power base, achieve social changes completely on its own. Highlighted in his thoughts are the specific psychological and economic bonds and tensions that affect both races. His book *The Souls of Black Folk* (first published in 1903) is intended more for a white audience to see the black pride and dignity as equal fellow human beings. It sparked the awareness of black folks’ psychic trauma and their struggles to heal and recover from the depth of

the soul. On a spiritual level, the color line has no place to draw black and white but connects the two. In a double position, as a black soul and a white observer, as an individual and a collective voice, DuBois reiterates the double consciousness in being an American.

The first chapter of the book “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” is seemingly autobiographic. DuBois tells his personal story as a biracial young man growing up in New England. Among his white peers, his “blackness” did not allow him to be one of them, and did not allow him to be a full black either. He then “veiled” himself from the white students and the world, and then “held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows.” (DUBOIS, 1966, p. 214). The veil separates and blocks but also lets the vision and light penetrate the other side; the veil embodies transcending power beyond the color line. It is a metaphor of being while not being, fundamental to DuBois’ double conscious explored in his book.

From individual level as a young man in New England, the writer with the “veil” entered into national consciousness. The “veil” becomes a culture double consciousness; it describes a divided individual being, who in his/her fragmented self, struggles to become holistic and integral. This is the struggle in the souls of black folk. Once again, can the black folk be black and American together? The question continued to haunt us in DuBois’ days. The American context has made it difficult for black slaves as well as non-WASP immigrants to become American and does not really allow them to have an integral identity. With the double consciousness, DuBois asserts that the black folks can and should view themselves from their own unique perspective and also from a wholesome American perspective. Conversely, the white mainstream should also be equipped with the double consciousness to view fellow Americans not only from a white/WASPs’ position, but also from the other side of the “veil”.

Conclusion

Other than African slaves, immigrants from the three waves are largely people coming to this country on their own free wills and voluntary choices. The cultural duality that has made up the core of the WASPs and the double consciousness that has allowed an American identity in Douglass and DuBois, to various degrees, are shared by the Nordics, the Irish, the Italians, the Jewish, the Catholics, the Caribbean, the Chinese and Japanese, the Muslims and the Hispanics. On a racial and cultural hierarchy, the WASPs on the very top do see the difficulties and challenges that those at the bottom in assimilation to the Anglo-centered way of thinking and living. Those who come from a culture, a religion, and a language that are deemed to be remote and unfamiliar in relation to the WASP group find themselves at the bottom in the unsaid but hard-to-be-ignored

racial/cultural scheme. The double consciousness is particularly endearing to those at the bottom. For most immigrants, regardless of their backgrounds and birth places, holding onto their culture of origin and being American are more reconciliatory than conflictive. Some of them have more hurdles to overcome; some of them may have less, depending on how far and how close the immigrant is from the WASPs' core base. Clearly, not every immigrant is into American history and equipped with Douglass/DuBois' double consciousness, but the formation of an immigrant's cultural identity, aka, American cultural identity has unfailingly revolved around the indestructible racial divide – the indestructible color line: black-and-white, which perpetuates cultural duality.

References

- ALBA, Richard. Immigration and the American Reality of Assimilation and Multiculturalism. *Sociological Forum*, v. 14, n. 1, p. 3-25, March. 1999.
- ANDERSON, Douglas Firth. "We Have Here a Different Civilization:" A Protestant Identity in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1906-1909. *Western Historical Quarterly*, Oxford University Press, v. 23, n. 2, p. 199-221, May 1992.
- BAKER, G. American Dream. *Phylon (1940-1956)*, Atlanta: Clark Atlanta University Stable, v. 10, n. 4, p. 397-398, 4th Qtr., 1949.
- BIBLE, RSV *Old Testament*. New York: American Bible Society, the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. 1986.
- BRODWIN, Stanley. The Veil Transcended: Form and Meaning in W. E. B. DuBois' "The Souls of Black Folk". *Journal of Black Studies*, v. 2, n. 3, p. 303-321, March. 1972. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stabl>. Accessed on: Sept. 12, 2019.
- BLASSINGAME, John W. (ed.). *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches Debates, and Interviews*. Vol. 2, 1847-54. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 359-387.
- CURTIS, Christopher Michael. *Jefferson's Freeholders and the Politics of Ownership in the Old Dominion*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- DOUGLASS, Frederick (a). What to the slave is the Fourth of July. July 5, 1852. Retrieved from: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/> Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2019.
- DOUGLASS, Frederick (b). Rochester: Printed by Lee, Mann & Co., American Building, 1852/Frederick DOUGLASS Project: 5th of July [Speech/River Campus Libraries] Retrieved from: <https://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/2945>. Accessed on: Sept. 12, 2019.
- DOUGLASS, Frederick (c) (1852). Oration, Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, July 5, 1852. In: HARRIS, Leonard; PRATT, Scott L.; WATERS, Anne S. (eds.). *American Philosophies: An Anthology*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002.
- DUBOIS, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Publisher: Clydesdale, 1966.

FAULKNER, William. On Privacy: The American Dream, What Happened to it. In: MERIWEATHER, James B. (ed). *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters*. New York: Random House, 1965, p. 62-66.

HEATH, Robert L.; WAYMER, Damion. Activist Public Relations and the Paradox of the Positive: A Case Study of Frederick Douglass's Fourth of July Address. *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations*, v. II. New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 192-215.

HIGHAM, John. *Strangers in the land: patterns of American nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002 [1994].

HUNTINGTON, Samuel. *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon, 2004.

HURTADO, Albert. Bolton and Turner: The Borderlands and American Exceptionalism. *Western Historical Quarterly*, v. 44, n. 1, p. 4-20, Spring 2013.

JEFFERSON, Thomas. The Declaration of Independence. [In Congress, July 4, 1776]. Retrieved from: <http://www.ushistory.org/Declaration/document/> Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2019.

JOHNSON, Amanda Louise. Thomas Jefferson's Anglo-Saxon Genesis: A Romance. *Modern Philology*, v. 114, Issue 3, p. 680-701, Feb. 2017.

MARTIN, Robert A. Faulkner's American Dream and Hightower. *College Literature*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, v. 12, n. 3, p. 282-285, Fall, 1985.

MENDOZA, Jose Jorge. A "Nation" of Immigrants. *The Pluralist*, v. 5, n. 3, p. 41-48, fall 2010.

MERELMAN, Richard M. Unity and Diversity in American Political Culture: An Exploratory Study of the national Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. *Political Psychology*, v. 19, n. 4, p.781-807, Dec. 1998.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER Dictionary. "immigrate (verb)". Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/immigrate>. Accessed on: Nov. 9, 2019.

PAINE, Thomas. Common Sense. [Addressed to the Inhabitants of America]. February 14, 1776. Retrieved from: https://www.learner.org/workshops/primarysources/revolution/docs/Common_Sense.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 30, 2019.

SWAIN, Carol. *The New White Nationalism in America: Its Challenge to Integration*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

THE FREE DICTIONARY. [By Farlex]. "immigrate". Available on: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/immigrate>. Accessed on: Nov. 9, 2019.

TURNER, Frederick Jackson. *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays."* Commentary by John Mack Faragher. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994.

VANNEMAN, Reeve; CANNON, Lynn Weber. *The American Perception of Class*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

VECOLI, Rudolph J. The Significance of the Formation of an American Identity. *The History Teacher*, v. 30, n. 1, p. 9-27, Nov. 1996.

YANG, Mimi. Trumpism: A Disfigured Americanism. *Palgrave Communications*, London, v. 4, n. 5, p. 1-14, sept. 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-018-0170-0> . Accessed on: Sept. 9, 2019.