AMERICAN IDENTITIES

An Introductory Textbook

Edited by Lois P. Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, *and* Rachel Lee Rubin

AMERICAN IDENTITIES

AMERICAN IDENTITIES

An Introductory Textbook

Edited by
Lois P. Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Lee Rubin

Blackwell
Publishing

BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

First published 2006 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2006

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

American identities : an introductory textbook / edited by Lois P. Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Lee Rubin
p. cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-631-23431-9 (hard cover : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-631-23431-4 (hard cover : alk. paper)
ISBN-13: 978-0-631-23432-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-631-23432-2 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. United States—History—1945– 2. United States—History—1945—Sources. 3. United States—Social conditions—1945–4. United States—Social conditions—1945—Sources. I. Rudnick, Lois Palken, 1944–II. Smith, Judith E., 1948– III. Rubin, Rachel, 1964–
E742.A66 2006
973.92—dc22

2005014105

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10½/13pt Dante
by SPI Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India
Printed and bound in the United Kingdom
by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

For further information on
Blackwell Publishing, visit our website:
www.blackwellpublishing.com

Table of Contents

Alternative Contents by Genre x

Preface: How to Use This Book xiii

Acknowledgments xiv

Introduction 1

PART I IDENTITY, FAMILY, AND MEMORY 6

Understanding Identity

1 Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who Are My People? 8
Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey

American Families in Historical Perspective

2 What We Really Miss About the 1950s 17
Stephanie Coontz

Memory and Community

3 Generational Memory in an American Town 29
John Bodnar

4 Growing Up Asian in America
Kesaya E. Noda 39

PART II WORLD WAR II AND THE POSTWAR ERA 1940–1960 **46**

World War II and American Families

5 War Babies 48
Maria Fleming Tymoczko

6 From *Citizen 13660* 56
Miné Okubo

The Cold War and Domestic Politics

7 Containment at Home: Cold War, Warm Hearth *65*
Elaine Tyler May

8 The Problem That Has No Name 71
Betty Friedan

9 The Civil Rights Revolution, 1945–1960 78
William H. Chafe

10 From *Like One of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life* 84
Alice Childress

Family Migrations, Urban and Suburban

11 Songs of the Chicago Blues 90

12 Halfway to Dick and Jane: A Puerto Rican Pilgrimage 93
Jack Agüeros

13 From *Goodbye, Columbus* 103
Philip Roth

PART III WAR AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, 1960–1975 **112**

The Civil Rights Movement

14 Letter from Birmingham City Jail 114
Martin Luther King, Jr.

15 Message to the Grass Roots 119
Malcolm X

16 Songs of the Civil Rights Movement 126

Student Activism

17 Port Huron Statement 130
Students for a Democratic Society

18 The Port Huron Statement at 40 134
Tom Hayden and Richard Flacks

The Vietnam War

19 From *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* 138
Christian G. Appy

20 From *Born on the Fourth of July* 143
Ron Kovic

21 From *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* 150
Richard J. Ford III

Black and Puerto Rican Power

22 Black Power: Its Need and Substance 158
Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton

23 "Respect" 166
Aretha Franklin

24 "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)" 168
James Brown

25 13-Point Program and Platform 170
Young Lords Party

Women's Lives, Women's Rights

26 Sources of the Second Wave: The Rebirth of Feminism 174
Sara M. Evans

27 NOW Bill of Rights 185
National Organization for Women

28 The Liberation of Black Women 187
Pauli Murray

29 Jessie Lopez De La Cruz: The Battle for Farmworkers' Rights 192
Ellen Cantarow

The American Indian Movement

30 This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It 203
Vine Deloria, Jr.

The Occupation of Alcatraz Island 208
Indians of All Tribes

The Gay Liberation Movement

31 Gay Liberation 212
John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman

32 The Fighting Irishman 218
A. Damien Martin

33 The Drag Queen 226
Rey "Sylvia Lee" Rivera

The New American Right

34 From *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* 233
Lisa McGirr

PART IV A POSTINDUSTRIAL AND GLOBAL SOCIETY, 1975–2000 **240**

Deindustrializing America

35 From *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America* 242
Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone

36 From *"It Ain't No Sin To Be Glad You're Alive": The Promise of Bruce Springsteen* 249
Eric Alterman

37 A Musical Representation of Work in Postindustrial America 254

38 Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000) 264
Gregory Mantsios

Marriage and Family: Modern and Postmodern

39 From *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* 272
Kristin Luker

40 The Making and Unmaking of Modern Families 281
Judith Stacey

Multicultural America

41 From *Jasmine* 290
Bharati Mukherjee

42 Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural 300
Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn

43 From *The Business of Fancydancing: Stories and Poems* 305
Sherman Alexie

The United States as Borderlands

44 Through a Glass Darkly: Toward the Twenty-first Century 309
Ronald Takaki

45 "To live in the Borderlands means you" 316
Gloria Anzaldúa

46 From *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* 318
Naomi Klein

PART V THE FUTURE OF US ALL? 326

47 Brave New World: Gray Boys, Funky Aztecs, and Honorary Homegirls 328
Lynell George

48 From *The Future of Us All* 335
Roger Sanjek

49 The Society That Unions Can Build 348
David Reynolds

Text and Illustration Credits 359

Index 364

Alternative Table of Contents:
Organized by Genre and Discipline

PRIMARY SOURCES

Political Writing

Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham City Jail
Malcolm X, Message to the Grass Roots
Students for a Democratic Society, Port Huron Statement
Tom Hayden and Richard Flacks, The Port Huron Statement at 40
Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power: Its Needs and Substance
Young Lords Party, 13-Point Program and Platform
National Organization for Women, NOW Bill of Rights
Pauli Murray, The Liberation of Black Women
Vine Deloria, Jr., This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It
Indians of All Tribes, The Occupation of Alcatraz Island

Literary Writing

Alice Childress, from *Like One of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life*
Philip Roth, from *Goodbye, Columbus*
Bharati Mukherjee, from *Jasmine*
Sherman Alexie, from *The Business of Fancydancing*
Gloria Anzaldúa, "To live in the Borderlands means you"

Autobiography and Memoir

Kesaya E. Noda, Growing Up Asian in America
Miné Okubo, from *Citizen 13660*
Maria Fleming Tymoczko, War Babies
Jack Agüeros, Halfway to Dick and Jane: A Puerto Rican Pilgrimage

Ron Kovic, from *Born on the Fourth of July*
Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn, Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural

Oral History

Richard J. Ford III, from *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*
Ellen Cantarow, Jessie Lopez de la Cruz: The Battle for Farmworkers' Rights
A. Damien Martin, The Fighting Irishman
Rey "Sylvia Lee" Rivera, The Drag Queen

Art and Music

Miné Okubo, from *Citizen 13660*
Songs of the Chicago Blues
Songs of the Civil Rights Movement
Aretha Franklin, "Respect"
James Brown, "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)"
A Musical Representation of Work in Postindustrial America

SECONDARY SOURCES

History

Stephanie Coontz, What We Really Miss About the 1950s
John Bodnar, Generational Memory in an American Town
Elaine Tyler May, Containment at Home: Cold War, Warm Hearth
William H. Chafe, The Civil Rights Revolution, 1945–1960
Christian G. Appy, from *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam*
Sara M. Evans, Sources of the Second Wave: The Rebirth of Feminism
John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, Gay Liberation
Lisa McGirr, from *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*
Ronald Takaki, Through a Glass Darkly: Toward the Twenty-first Century

Economics

Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone, from *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America*
Gregory Mantsios, Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000)
David Reynolds, The Society That Unions Can Build

Sociology

Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey, Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who Are My People?
Kristen Luker, from *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*
Judith Stacey, from *The Making and Unmaking of Modern Families*
Roger Sanjek, from *The Future of Us All*

Journalism

Betty Friedan, The Problem That Has No Name
Eric Alterman, from ''It Ain't No Sin To Be Glad You're Alive'': The Promise of Bruce Springsteen
Naomi Klein, from *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*
Lynell George, Brave New World: Gray Boys, Funky Aztecs, and Honorary Homegirls

Preface:
How to Use This Book

American Identities is designed as an introduction to the field of American Studies for high school and first-year college students. It addresses the often-asked question of what (and who) Americans are by focusing on the many different ways "American" has been defined from World War II to the present. Through the abridged works of scholars in the fields of history, sociology, economics, and cultural studies, and the first-person accounts of political activists, journalists, poets, songwriters, fiction writers, and memoirists, students can explore the powerful individual and social dynamics that shape family, ethnic, class, gender, sexual, and racial experiences and that form national and transnational identities.

The organizing principles of *American Identities* are chronological and topical: from World War II and the era of the Cold War (1940–1960), to the generation that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War (1960–1975), and conclude with the impact of globalization and various "border crossings" on American society and culture (1975–2000). Each section of the book offers a comparative thematic focus on family/community life and work, and internal and international migrations and wars, as they are intersected by race, class, and gender.

The study questions that follow each text in this textbook are designed to stimulate active learning, engage students with the key thematic issues of the text, and help them to see patterns and make linkages across cultures, places, and times. The accompanying Instructor's Guide contains sample syllabi; family history guidelines for student family history projects; excerpts from student family histories; suggested timelines for each chronological section of the textbook that highlight important political, social, and cultural events, movements, and productions; viewing and listening guides for multimedia presentations; recommended US history textbooks to accompany the textbook; recommended history texts for international/immigrant students whose family histories begin outside of the USA; and short bibliographies and videographies of sources that enhance the themes of the course.

Acknowledgments

This book was a labor of love that could not have been completed without the inspiration and collaboration of the hundreds of students at the University of Massachusetts Boston who have taken our *American Identities* course. They continue to motivate us to find better ways to support their becoming engaged historians and active citizens of the US and the global community of which they are a part. We are indebted to our wonderful colleagues who have shared the teaching of various versions of this course, Shirley Tang, Patricia Raub, and Phil Chassler at UMass Boston; Carol Siriani and Annie Brown at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School; and Eric Goodson at The Dana Hall School. We owe many thanks to our terrific editorial assistant, Ellen Kuhl, for her research for the headnotes, fact checking, and illustrations. We are also grateful to our outstanding administrative assistant, Shauna Manning, whose efficient running of our office makes it possible for us to do this kind of work. And last, but by no means least, is our gratitude to our editor, Jayne Fargnoli, whose continuing encouragement and enthusiasm for this book is what finally made it happen, and to the staff we have worked with at Blackwell Publishing for their very helpful support of this project.

Introduction

About American Identities

American Identities addresses the often-asked question of what (and who) Americans are by focusing on the many different ways "American" has been defined in the era from World War II to the present. Through the abridged works of scholars in the fields of history, sociology, economics, and cultural studies, and the first-person accounts of political activists, journalists, poets, songwriters, fiction writers, and memoirists, students can explore the powerful individual and social dynamics that shape family, ethnic, class, gender, sexual, and racial experiences and that form national and transnational identities. Our instructor's guide offers practical advice for researching and writing family histories that are linked to the time period of the textbook, and for helping students analyze the multimedia texts and contexts that reflect how Americans have been represented from the second half of the twentieth century through the first decade of the twenty-first.

Who is This Book For?

American Identities is designed as an introduction to the field of American Studies for high school and first-year college students, providing the methods and texts necessary for students to read US society and culture from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our book has grown out of several years of practice at the University of Massachusetts Boston. UMass Boston's 12,000 students are mostly self-supporting, and work part or full time. About 39 percent of undergraduates are nonwhite, and a substantial number are the first in their families to attend college. Because "American Identities" serves a highly diverse student body as both an introduction to the major, a general distribution course, and a freshman seminar in the General Education program, it has

multiple agendas, perhaps the most important of which is acculturating students to college-level academic work.

American Identities has also been taught successfully at two area high schools, Cambridge Rindge and Latin, a large public secondary school, and the Dana Hall School, a small private academy. At Cambridge Rindge and Latin, the course has carried college credit for students who complete our requirements and has served as a vehicle for introducing students who are not college-bound to university-level work. This textbook reflects the collaborative nature of our project and our commitment to cross the boundaries between secondary and university education in order to provide our students with the requisite critical thinking and writing skills.

What Do We Mean by ''American Identities''?

We have constructed our textbook to highlight the ways in which American identities are made and remade over time, shaped by impetus from *the inside* (creating a public persona, choosing affiliations, and allying with communities) and from *the outside* (the class, race, gender positions we are born into, the social authority/public legitimacy associated with presumptions about our visible characteristics and occupational positions). Our reading selections play off one another in order to highlight how identities are constructed in the encounter with difference, as well as how identities change over time and in response to historical events: Japanese-American citizens are more racialized and seen as more alien as a result of the World War II internment order; African-American civil rights activism offered models for other racial and ethnic groups as they came to be articulated in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Asking students to consider and analyze the creation of American identities challenges any assumptions of overarching commonality or static categories. But we are also invested in a ''both . . . and'' strategy of teaching diversity. Ronald Takaki has criticized the growth of multiculturalism because of its ''tendency to fragmentize the study of society and thus deny opportunities for different groups to learn about one another . . . intergroup relationships remain invisible, and the big picture is missing'' (Takaki 1994: 10). Thus we have organized our textbook to enable students ''to connect the differences,'' to see the ways in which individual and group experiences are part of a larger national (and increasingly transnational) narrative. We have tried to balance readings that give attention to historically shaped common reference points with readings that demonstrate how even common experiences become multiple as they are filtered through unequal access to resources, social respect, and authority.

How is the Book Organized?

American Identities raises the question of multiple and conflicting identities within the context of historically situated social and economic processes. Our organizing principles are chronological and topical. We begin with World War II and the era of the

Cold War (1940–60), move on to the generation that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War (1960–75), and conclude with the impact of globalization and various ''border crossings'' on American society and culture (1975–2000). Each section of the textbook provides a comparative thematic focus on family/community life and work, and internal and international migrations and wars, as they are intersected by race, class, and gender.

The book begins with a section on ''Identity, Family, and Memory,'' which introduces students to the ways in which we come to know who we are as individuals and groups, the ways that political and social forces shape our idea of the family, and the ways in which different age cohorts construct different community memories. In every part of the textbook, students have the opportunity to discover the various methods and kinds of knowledge used and generated by men and women working in different disciplines and writing from different social locations and political agendas. Thus Kesaya Noda's autobiographical essay, ''Growing Up Asian in America'', personalizes the theories about the formulation of individual, family, and community that are presented by the scholarly authors of the first three readings. At the same time, it asks students to confront the issue of ''What does it mean to be an American?''

American Identities and the Family History Project

Noda's essay serves another purpose that has been important in the creation of this textbook: providing a model for how to write a richly historical family history. Although there are myriad ways the textbook can be used by secondary school and college teachers, our central project has involved students in creating a three-generation family history and timeline in which they link their families' stories to relevant political, social, economic, and cultural events and movements they study during the course.

We prepare students for this semester-length project in a variety of ways: nightly homework assignments; in-class study groups on selected texts; family history workshops; and student oral reports that place social and political movements, cultural productions, and historical actors in their sociohistorical contexts. We have developed study guides for reading, viewing, and listening to all of the assigned texts, which are geared to help high school and beginning college students learn how to analyze history texts, fiction, music, television, and documentary film.

Pedagogical Resources for the Instructor

The study questions that accompany each text in our textbook are designed to stimulate active learning, engage students with the key thematic issues of the text, and help them to see patterns and make linkages across cultures, places, and times. Our instructor's guide contains syllabi for the four versions of the course we teach;

family history guidelines for the student family history project; excerpts from our students' family histories; suggested timelines for each chronological section of the textbook that highlight important political, social, and cultural events, movements, and productions; viewing and listening guides for our multimedia presentations; recommended US history textbooks to accompany the textbook; recommended history texts for international/immigrant students whose family histories begin outside of the United States; and short bibliographies and videographies of sources we use in our course or that enhance the themes of the course.

Our Goals for the Reader

In designing this textbook and the accompanying family history guidelines and assignments, one of our greatest concerns as teachers has been to break down the substantial gulf that exists between our students' lives and the academic discourses they are expected to assimilate. We are also concerned with the deep alienation that many of our students feel toward the study of the past, and with their belief that they are ''outside'' history and historical forces. Thus one of our most important goals is to prepare them to become cultural and historical analysts of their own texts, through experiencing the agency of locating themselves and their families within historical frameworks.

We have had enough success over the past eight years to believe that other teachers can use these materials, in a variety of ways, to help students become historians of their own past, as it is linked to larger national and international arenas. When students are able to make these linkages between their family stories and the outside forces that provided for or withheld the social and cultural capital necessary for ''success,'' they develop the means to more fully assess and shape their own dearly held American dreams.

Reference

Takaki, Ronald (1994). ''Teaching American History Through a Different Mirror,'' *Perspectives* 32 (7): 1, 9–14.

PART I

Identity, Family, and Memory

What makes you who you are? What does it mean to be an ''American''? The first four essays in this book introduce you to the variety of ways that your identity is constructed, and to the forces *within* and *outside* of yourself that define your multiple and sometimes conflicting identities. These identities are individual, sexual, familial, racial, communal, national, and international, to name a few. They are determined by personal choice as well as by the historical ''moment'' or generation in which you have grown up. We hope you will find the challenge of figuring out your identity as an individual, and our collective identity as a nation, a fascinating puzzle, one that each of you will solve in your own way.

From the earliest days of American history, immigrants and travelers to the United States have been asking questions about what it means to be an American. They have come up with an array of definitions, many of them associated with the promises expressed in *The Declaration of Independence*, which asserts the American dream that all of us are ''created equal'' and have a basic right to ''life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'' While that promise originally excluded the majority of those living in the US in 1776, it has become a rallying cry for every group that has fought for equality since then, including Native Americans, slaves, women, and workers.

The first essay in this section, ''Identities and Social Locations,'' will help you begin to figure out how to make sense of the social and cultural factors that influence your personal development and identity. The three essays that follow explore the ways in which different generations understood, experienced, and acted on the promises of American life as they grew up at different historic moments during the second half of the twentieth century. Whether your family has lived in the US for generations or are recent arrivals, we think you will find these essays useful for thinking about how your family's past has shaped its present, and for discovering how your family has contributed to shaping the nation (or nations) in which they have lived and worked.

CHAPTER 1

Identities and Social Locations:
Who Am I? Who Are My People?

Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey

Born and educated in Great Britain, Gwyn Kirk (1945–) is a political sociologist, peace activist, and multimedia producer. Margo Okazawa-Rey (1949–) is a Japanese-born educator and social worker active in numerous public policy organizations and grassroots educational efforts. Both women work in the United States as writers, lecturers, lobbyists, and teachers. The following essay, excerpted from a chapter of their textbook, Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives *(2004), provides a perceptive analysis of the complex factors that shape our identities.*

Our identity is a specific marker of how we define ourselves at any particular moment in life. Discovering and claiming our unique identity is a process of growth, change, and renewal throughout our lifetime. As a specific marker, identity may seem tangible and fixed at any given point. Over the life span, however, identity is more fluid. For example, an able-bodied woman who suddenly finds herself confined to a wheelchair after an automobile accident, an assimilated Jewish woman who begins the journey of recovering her Jewish heritage, an immigrant woman from a traditional Guatemalan family "coming out" as a lesbian in the United States, or a young, middle-class college student, away from her sheltered home environment for the first time and becoming politicized by an environmental justice organization on campus, will probably find herself redefining who she is, what she values, and what "home" and "community" are. [. . .]

Identity formation is the result of a complex interplay among a range of factors: individual decisions and choices, particular life events, community recognition and expectations, societal categorization, classification and socialization, and key national or international events. It is an ongoing process that involves several key questions:

Who am I? Who do I want to be?
Who do others think I am and want me to be?
Who and what do societal and community institutions, such as schools, religious institutions, the media, and the law, say I am?
Where/what/who are my ''home'' and ''community''?
Which social group(s) do I want to affiliate with?
Who decides the answers to these questions, and on what basis?

Answers to these questions form the core of our existence. In this chapter, we examine the complex issue of identity and its importance in women's lives.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1993) defines *identity* as

> the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitely known or recognizable;
> a set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group;
> the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity; individuality.

The same dictionary defines *to identify* as ''to associate or affiliate (oneself) closely with a person or group; to establish an identification with another or others.''

These definitions point to the connections between us as individuals and how we are perceived by other people and classified by societal institutions. They also involve a sense of individual agency and choice regarding affiliations with others. Gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and language are all significant social categories by which people are recognized by others. Indeed, on the basis of these categories alone, others often think they know who we are and how we should behave. Personal decisions about our affiliations and loyalties to specific groups are also shaped by these categories. For example, in many communities of color, women struggle over the question of race versus gender. Is race a more important factor than gender in shaping their lives? If a Latina speaks out publicly about sexism within the Latino community, is she betraying her people? This separation of categories, mirrored by our segregated social lives, tends to set up false dichotomies in which people often feel that they have to choose one aspect of their identity over another. It also presents difficulties for mixed-race or bisexual people, who do not fit neatly into such narrow categories.

In order to understand the complexity and richness of women's experiences, we must examine them from the micro, meso, macro, and global levels of social relations. [. . .]

Critically analyzing the issue of identity at all of these levels of analysis will allow us to see that identity is much more than an individual decision or choice about who we are in the world. Rather, it is a set of complex and often contradictory and conflicting psychological, physical, geographical, political, cultural, historical, and spiritual factors, as shown in the readings that follow.

Being Myself: The Micro Level

At the micro level, individuals usually feel the most comfortable as themselves. Here one can say, for example, ''I am a woman, heterosexual, middle class, with a movement disability; but I am also much more than those categories.'' At this level we define ourselves and structure our daily activities according to our own preferences. At the micro level we can best feel and experience the process of identity formation, which includes naming specific forces and events that shape our identities. At this level we also seem to have more control of the process, although there are always interconnections between events and experiences at this level and the other levels.

Critical life events, such as entering kindergarten, losing a parent through death, separation, or divorce, or the onset of puberty, may all serve as catalysts for a shift in how we think about ourselves. A five-year-old Vietnamese American child from a traditional home and community may experience the first challenge to her sense of identity when her kindergarten teacher admonishes her to speak only in English. A White, middle-class professional woman who thinks of herself as ''a person'' and a ''competent attorney'' may begin to see the significance of gender and ''the glass ceiling'' for women when she witnesses younger, less experienced male colleagues in her law office passing her by for promotions. A woman who has been raped who attends her first meeting of a campus group organizing against date rape feels the power of connection with other rape survivors and their allies. An eighty-year-old woman, whose partner of fifty years has just died, must face the reality of having lost her life-time companion, friend, and lover. Such experiences shape each person's ongoing formulation of self, whether or not the process is conscious, deliberate, reflective, or even voluntary.

Identity formation is a lifelong endeavor that includes discovery of the new; recovery of the old, forgotten, or appropriated; and synthesis of the new and old [. . .]. At especially important junctures during the process, individuals mark an identity change in tangible ways. An African American woman may change her name from the anglicized Susan to Aisha, with roots in African culture. A Chinese Vietnamese immigrant woman, on the other hand, may adopt an anglicized name, exchanging Nu Lu for Yvonne Lu as part of becoming a US citizen. Another way of marking and effecting a shift in identity is by altering your physical appearance: changing your wardrobe or makeup; cutting your hair very short, wearing it natural rather than permed or pressed, dyeing it purple, or letting the gray show after years of using hair coloring. More permanent changes might include having a tattoo, having your body pierced, having a face lift or tummy tuck, or, for Asian American women, having eye surgery to ''Europeanize'' their eyes. Transsexuals – female to male and male to female – have surgery to make their physical appearance congruent with their internal sense of self. Other markers of a change in identity include redecorating your home, setting up home for the first time, or physically relocating

to another neighborhood, another city, or another part of the country in search of a new home.

For many people, home is where we grow up until we become independent, by going to college, for example, or getting married; where our parents, siblings, and maybe grandparents are; where our needs for safety, security, and material comfort are met. In reality, what we think of as home is often a complicated and contradictory place where some things we need are present and others are not. Some people's homes are comfortable and secure in a material sense but are also places of emotional or physical violence and cruelty. Some children grow up in homes that provide emotional comfort and a sense of belonging, but as they grow older and their values diverge from those of their parents, home becomes a source of discomfort and alienation.

Regardless of such experiences – perhaps because of them – most people continue to seek places of comfort and solace and others with whom they feel they belong and with whom they share common values and interests. Home may be a geographic, social, emotional, and spiritual space where we hope to find safety, security, familiarity, continuity, acceptance, and understanding, and where we can feel and be our best, whole selves. Home may be in several places at once or in different places at different times of our lives. Some women may have a difficult time finding a home, a place that feels comfortable and familiar, even if they know what it is. Finally, this search may involve not only searching outside ourselves but also piecing together in some coherent way the scattered parts of our identities – an inward as well as an outward journey.

Community Recognition, Expectations, and Interactions: The Meso Level

It is at the meso level – at school, in the workplace, or on the street – that people most frequently ask ''Who are you?'' or ''Where are you from?'' in an attempt to categorize us and determine their relationship to us. Moreover, it is here that people experience the complexities, conflicts, and contradictions of multiple identities, which we consider later.

The single most visible signifier of identity is physical appearance. How we look to others affects their perceptions, judgments, and treatment of us. Questions such as ''Where do you come from?'' and questioning behaviors, such as feeling the texture of your hair or asking if you speak a particular language, are commonly used to interrogate people whose physical appearances especially, but also behaviors, do not match the characteristics designated as belonging to established categories. At root, we are being asked, ''Are you one of us or not?'' These questioners usually expect singular and simplistic answers, assuming that everyone will fit existing social categories, which are conceived of as undifferentiated and unambiguous. Among people with disabilities, for example, people wanting to identify each other may

expect to hear details of another's disability rather than the fact that the person being questioned also identifies equally strongly as, say, a woman who is White, working class, and bisexual.

Community, like home, may be geographic and emotional, or both, and provides a way for people to express group affiliations. ''Where are you from?'' is a commonplace question in the United States among strangers, a way to break the ice and start a conversation, expecting answers like ''I'm from Tallahassee, Florida,'' or ''I'm from the Bronx.'' Community might also be an organized group like Alcoholics Anonymous, a religious group, or a political organization like the African American civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Community may be something much more abstract, as in ''the women's community'' or ''the queer community,'' where there is presumed to be an identifiable group. In these examples there is an assumption of shared values, interests, culture, or language sometimes thought of as essential qualities that define group membership and belonging. This can lead to essentialism, where complex identities get reduced to specific qualities deemed to be essential for membership of a particular group: being Jewish or gay, for example.

At the community level, individual identities and needs meet group standards, expectations, obligations, responsibilities, and demands. You compare yourself with others and are subtly compared. Others size up your clothing, accent, personal style, and knowledge of the group's history and culture. You may be challenged directly, ''You say you're Latina. How come you don't speak Spanish?'' ''You say you're working class. What are you doing in a professional job?'' These experiences may both affirm our identities and create or highlight inconsistencies, incongruities, and contradictions in who we believe we are, how we are viewed by others, our role and status in the community, and our sense of belonging.

Some individuals experience marginality if they can move in two or more worlds and, in part, be accepted as insiders (Stonequist 1961). Examples include bisexuals, mixed-race people, and immigrants, who all live in at least two cultures. Margaret, a White, working-class woman, for instance, leaves her friends behind after high school graduation as she goes off to an elite university. Though excited and eager to be in a new setting, she often feels alienated at college because her culture, upbringing, and level of economic security differ from those of the many upper-middle-class and upper-class students. During the winter break she returns to her hometown, where she discovers a gulf between herself and her old friends who remained at home and took full-time jobs. She notices that she is now speaking a slightly different language from them and that her interests and preoccupations are different from theirs. Margaret has a foot in both worlds. She has become sufficiently acculturated at college to begin to know that community as an insider, and she has retained her old community of friends, but she is not entirely at ease or wholly accepted by either community. Her identity is complex, composed of several parts. [. . .]

Social Categories, Classifications, and Structural Inequality: Macro and Global Levels

Classifying and labeling human beings, often according to real or assumed physical, biological, or genetic differences, is a way to distinguish who is included and who is excluded from a group, to ascribe particular characteristics, to prescribe social roles, and to assign status, power, and privilege. People are to know their places. Thus social categories such as gender, race, and class are used to establish and maintain a particular kind of social order. The classifications and their specific features, meanings, and significance are socially constructed through history, politics, and culture. The specific meanings and significance were often imputed to justify the conquest, colonization, domination, and exploitation of entire groups of people, and although the specifics may have changed over time, this system of categorizing and classifying remains intact. For example, Native American people were described as brutal, uncivilized, and ungovernable savages in the writings of early colonizers on this continent. This justified the near-genocide of Native Americans by White settlers and the US military and public officials, as well as the breaking of treaties between the US government and Native American tribes (Zinn 1995). Today, Native Americans are no longer called savages but are often thought of as a vanishing species, or a nonexistent people, already wiped out, thereby rationalizing their neglect by the dominant culture and erasing their long-standing and continuing resistance. [. . .]

Colonization, Immigration, and the US Landscape of Race and Class

Global-level factors affecting people's identities include colonization and immigration. Popular folklore would have us believe that the United States has welcomed "the tired, huddled masses yearning to breathe free" (Young et al. 1997). This ideology that the United States is "a land of immigrants" obscures several important issues excluded from much mainstream debate about immigration. Not all Americans came to this country voluntarily. Native American peoples and Mexicans were already here on this continent, but the former experienced near-genocide and the latter were made foreigners in their own land. African peoples were captured, enslaved, and forcibly imported to this country to be laborers. All were brutally exploited and violated – physically, psychologically, culturally, and spiritually – to serve the interests of those in power. The relationships between these groups and this nation and their experiences in the United States are fundamentally different from the experiences of those who chose to immigrate here, though this is not to negate the hardships the latter may have faced. These differences profoundly shaped the social, cultural, political, and economic realities faced by these groups throughout history and continue to do so today.

Robert Blauner (1972) makes a useful analytical distinction between colonized minorities, whose original presence in this nation was involuntary, and all of whom are people of color, and immigrant minorities, whose presence was voluntary.

According to Blauner, colonized minorities faced insurmountable structural inequalities, based primarily on race, that have prevented their full participation in social, economic, political, and cultural arenas of US life. Early in the history of this country, for example, the Naturalization Law of 1790 (which was repealed as recently as 1952) prohibited peoples of color from becoming US citizens, and the Slave Codes restricted every aspect of life for enslaved African peoples. These laws made race into an indelible line that separated ''insiders'' from ''outsiders.'' White people were designated insiders and granted many privileges while all others were confined to systematic disadvantage. [. . .]

Studies of US immigration ''reveal discrimination and unequal positioning of different ethnic groups'' (Yans-McLaughlin 1990, p. 6), challenging the myth of equal opportunity for all. According to political scientist Lawrence Fuchs (1990), ''Freedom and opportunity for poor immigrant Whites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were connected fundamentally with the spread of slavery'' (p. 294). It was then that European immigrants, such as Irish, Polish, and Italian people began to learn to be White (Roediger 1991). Thus the common belief among descendants of European immigrants that the successful assimilation of their foremothers and forefathers against great odds is evidence that everyone can pull themselves up by the bootstraps if they work hard enough does not take into account the racialization of immigration that favored White people.

On coming to the United States, immigrants are drawn into the racial landscape of this country. In media debates and official statistics, this is still dominated by a Black/White polarization in which everyone is assumed to fit into one of these two groups. Demographically, the situation is much more complex and diverse, but people of color, who comprise the more inclusive group, are still set off against White people, the dominant group. Immigrants identify themselves according to nationality – for example, as Cambodian or Guatemalan. Once in the United States they learn the significance of racial divisions in this country and may adopt the term *people of color* as an aspect of their identity here. [. . .]

This emphasis on race tends to mask differences based on class, another important distinction among immigrant groups. For example, the Chinese and Japanese people who came in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to work on plantations in Hawai'i, as loggers in Oregon, or building roads and railroads in several western states were poor and from rural areas of China and Japan. The 1965 immigration law made way for ''the second wave'' of Asian immigration (Takaki 1987). It set preferences for professionals, highly skilled workers, and members of the middle and upper-middle classes, making this group ''the most highly skilled of any immigrant group our country has ever had'' (quoted in Takaki 1987, p. 420). The first wave of Vietnamese refugees who immigrated between the mid-1970s and 1980 were from the middle and upper classes, and many were professionals; by contrast, the second wave of immigrants from Vietnam was composed of poor and rural people. The class backgrounds of immigrants affect not only their sense of themselves and their expectations but also how they can succeed as strangers in a foreign land. For example, a poor woman who arrives with no literacy skills in her own language will have a more