Speaking of Diversity

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Part One

Coming to Terms with Ethnicity
The background of this essay, insofar as I can reconstruct it, is described in the Introduction. This investigation convinced me that historical study of the terminology of ethnicity is a worthwhile and rewarding line of inquiry. Working through the materials discussed here persuaded me that the ambiguities of melting pot symbolism both reflected and contributed to confusion in the public mind about the processes of ethnic interaction actually taking place in American society. That is an unambiguous drawback to melting pot usage. But could it have been avoided? Not, in my opinion, by adopting any of the metaphoric alternatives reviewed in the essay—stew, salad bowl, mosaic, and so on. The problem, as I argue in the conclusion of this essay, is that none of these alternatives—and none of more recent vintage, for that matter—conveys as effectively as the melting pot the idea of ever-changing process, a crucial element in the process of ethnic interaction which any adequate symbol for it must somehow embody. As the concluding comments about cultural pluralism indicate, this project also alerted me to other terms and concepts that were candidates for historical analysis.

Most of this research on melting pot usage was done in 1962; the results were presented in abbreviated form at a meeting of the Ohio-Indiana American Studies Group, which took place at Case–Western Reserve University in May 1963, and the article was originally published the following year in American Quarterly. Hence when I say that the melting pot "is currently recovering a good deal of its respectability," the reader should keep in mind that I am referring to a time before the ethnic revival of the late sixties and early seventies. How that development affected melting pot usage is the subject of the second chapter.

Readers of the Republic will recall that after Socrates has outlined the structure of his ideal city, he devises a mythological explanation of its origin in order to furnish a symbolic representation and justification
for the distinctions that exist between Guardians, Auxiliaries, and the mass of the people. According to the "myth of the metals," the governing classes spring from races with gold or silver souls, while the ordinary citizens are members of a humbler iron-souled race. In the present century, a different sort of myth of the metals has flourished among Americans who would reject the Platonic variety. Our myth of the metals, compressed into one key image, is the melting pot. Unlike Plato's, it was not deliberately contrived to provide a supernatural sanction for the existing social order, but it is intimately related to the origins and nature of American society; and at a time when students of American civilization are absorbed in the scrutiny of images, myths, and symbols, it is appropriate to take a look also at the melting pot.

Hans Kohn regards the notion of the melting pot as "a fundamental trait of American nationalism," and few symbols associated with American nationality have entered more deeply into the language. References to the melting pot appear not only in formal studies of ethnic adjustment in the United States, but the expression is also used by foreign observers, and it crops up frequently in the press as well. A Chicago newspaper, for example, editorially commended the selection of Miss Hawaii to represent the United States in the 1962 Miss Universe contest because she was the "typical child" of "a true American-style 'melting pot'"; and before the 1962 election, Joseph Alsop surveyed a neighborhood in San Francisco where various ethnic elements "coexisted in an amiable melting-pot style." Television and the advertising industry also made use of the symbol. A national network's musical salute to the diverse elements in the American population was called "The Melting Pot"; and an advertisement for a recent book on cities asks, "Cities and suburbs—melting pots or trouble spots?"

Melting pot, then, is both widely current and used by a variety of writers with the evident expectation that its meaning will be clear; there is much evidence to support the assertion that the "melting pot concept is stubbornly entrenched in our national subconscious" and that it is "part of the American official mythology." On the other hand, there has been widespread disagreement about what the melting pot symbolizes, and many people have for differing reasons explicitly repudiated the symbol, believing that it distorts American experience or betrays American ideals. Is the melting pot even a symbol? The tendency to place the expression within quotation marks indicates that it is a somewhat self-conscious symbol, but at the same time it differs from such deliberately chosen national symbols as the flag; nor is it a specific real object, like the Liberty Bell, which is elevated to the level of a symbol because of
some historical association. Still less does the melting pot resemble a symbolic document such as the Constitution or our national heroes who have taken on symbolic stature. And, indeed, the melting pot is often referred to as a "concept" or a "theory" rather than a symbol.

In the following pages I propose to trace some of the ways in which the term *melting pot* has been understood and used and to evaluate it as a symbol. To forestall as much confusion of terminology as possible, it would be well to make clear at the outset that the term can be used as a simile (America is like a melting pot), a metaphor (America is a melting pot) or a symbol (Millions of immigrants came tumbling into the melting pot). What distinguishes the symbol from the simile or metaphor is the absence of any overt comparison between two things that are understood to bear an analogical relationship to each other. The symbol is, as it were, cut loose freely from the thing symbolized and enjoys a separate existence of its own, while at the same time it is recognized as a metaphor, half of which is left unstated. The melting pot is perhaps used with equal frequency as a metaphor and as a symbol, as these levels of figurative language are distinguished here; but since it has become so conventionally understood as representing the process of ethnic interaction, and since it has taken on such a vivid life of its own, the melting pot will, for the most part, be referred to here as a symbol.

The use of the melting pot as a symbol for the process whereby immigrants are absorbed into American society and somehow changed into Americans dates from 1908 when Israel Zangwill's play, *The Melting-Pot*, was first presented. The group of ideas and attitudes which the term is usually thought of as representing did not, however, originate with Zangwill but was much older. In general, that cluster of ideas included the belief that a new nation, a new national character, and a new nationality were forming in the United States and that the most heterogeneous human materials could be taken in and absorbed into this nationality. It was frequently maintained as a corollary that the "new man" who was to be produced by the cross-fertilization of various strains in America would be superior to any the world had previously seen; intermarriage between the different elements often figured as the chief agency in the formation of the new composite American.

The outstanding early statement of these notions was Crèvecoeur's celebrated answer to the question, "What then is the American, this new man?" Crèvecoeur's discussion in his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) developed or implied all of the themes listed above; moreover, he used the word *melt* to describe the process of forming a new nationality.
"Here," he wrote, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men." As a result of his use of the word, and his treatment of the general theme, Crèvecoeur has been called the originator of the melting pot symbol. This is incorrect. Crèvecoeur did not use the symbol of a melting pot at all, although he did give forceful expression to the ideas that it is often understood to symbolize. After Crèvecoeur, DeWitt Clinton used the key word melt in commenting on how the English tongue was "melting us down into one people," and in the 1840s a nativistic congressman recalled an earlier day when immigrants "melted into the mass of American population" instead of clannishly preserving their own identity. But if anyone used the expression melting pot, it attracted no attention and did not enter into general usage. Emerson seems to have come closest to the symbol when he wrote in his journal that the energies of the various nationalities in America would "construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature," which would be as vigorous "as the new Europe which came out of the smelting-pot of the Dark Ages." It seems, however, that no particular attention was drawn to Emerson's metaphor until 1921. Frederick Jackson Turner referred to the "composite nationality" of the American people in his famous address on the significance of the frontier in 1893; he described the frontier as a "crucible" where "the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics." Turner thus anticipated the use of a term that Zangwill used interchangeably with the melting pot in his drama. No doubt there were others in the nineteenth century who used similar terms, or even melting pot itself; it remains true, nevertheless, that the melting pot symbol did not go into general usage until the presentation of Zangwill's play. An article entitled "Are We a People?" which was reported in July 1908, in the Literary Digest furnishes a suggestive bit of negative evidence. This discussion by Franklin H. Giddings, the Columbia sociologist, concerned itself with immigrant assimilation and American nationality and employed a number of figurative expressions such as blending, fusing, melting, smelting process, and amalgam. But it did not contain the expression melting pot. It seems unlikely that this article would have contained no reference to the melting pot if it had appeared a year or so later.

A consideration of several background factors helps explain why The Melting-Pot had such impact and why the symbol passed into general use so rapidly. First, there was the tremendous immigration of the period. Between 1900 and the outbreak of World War I, an average of about one million immigrants a year entered the United States. Predominantly "new
immigrants” from Southern and Eastern Europe who gathered in conspicuous enclaves in the great cities, these millions attracted much public attention, and the “immigration problem,” which a governmental commission investigated to the tune of forty-one volumes, became involved in practically all the political and social issues of the Progressive Period. Public attitudes were shifting and uncertain in these years, which John Higham calls the most obscure in the whole history of American nativism. There were strong currents of opinion unfriendly to free immigration and fearful of the nation’s ability to absorb the newcomers. But the return of prosperity and the military and imperial feats at the turn of the century engendered a surge of nationalistic self-confidence strongly reinforcing the traditional view that America could welcome and assimilate all who came to her shores. Zangwill’s play thus appeared at a time when there were millions of immigrants in the country who were themselves immediately concerned with the matter of assimilation, and when the American people at large were troubled and uncertain about the question. The play was popular, the title was known to hundreds of thousands who never saw it performed, the times required discussion of immigration, and there was need for a handy and generally accepted symbol for the whole complicated business—more favorable circumstances for launching the new symbol could hardly be imagined.

The Melting-Pot opened in Washington on October 5, 1908. Theodore Roosevelt was among the first-nighters and later referred to it as an “extraordinarily able and powerful play.” “I do not know when I have seen a play that stirred me as much,” he wrote to Zangwill. Roosevelt and Oscar Straus, secretary of commerce and labor, were both quoted in subsequent advertising as saying, “It is a great play,” but Roosevelt probably attracted more attention to it by criticizing some lines that portrayed Americans as taking a lighthearted view of divorce and public corruption. The passage was rewritten by Zangwill, and the play moved to Chicago, where it played for one week and a short time later returned for a longer run. By September 6, 1909, when it opened in New York, The Melting-Pot had already been mentioned by Jane Addams as a play whose title could furnish the theme for an important sociological treatise, and the Literary Digest referred to it as a “much-discussed drama.”

Although the New York critics were unenthusiastic, The Melting-Pot played 136 times and “the public crowded the performances,” according to one reviewer, who explained its popularity by saying, “It is a play of the people, touched with the fire of democracy, and lighted radiantly with the national vision.” Oddly enough, it was an English Jew who was said to have captured the American spirit and who gave the
nation a new symbol for itself. Israel Zangwill had already established himself as a novelist and dramatist, especially by his *Children of the Ghetto*, and he was also the leading promoter of a modified Zionist program, being the founder of the Jewish Territorial Organization. His work in assisting Jewish emigrants familiarized Zangwill with the immigration situation in the United States, and it is a mistake to assert, as some critics of the melting pot have done, that he was simply naive and uninformed about the state of affairs in America. Furthermore, Zangwill's essay *The Principle of Nationalities* indicates that he had pondered long on themes related to nationalism and the interaction of different national groups in the same state; several of the ideas that are presented drastically in *The Melting-Pot* are restated in more systematic fashion in this study, published in 1917. A decade earlier, however, Zangwill had declared that *The Melting-Pot* was a "Tendenz-Schauspiel" in the sense that it dramatized a problem rather than trying to provide an answer to it.

The principal "problem" that Zangwill dealt with in *The Melting-Pot* concerned the situation of the Jews in the United States. This, of course, reflected his overriding preoccupation with the destiny of the Jews in the modern world and his conviction that for Jews it was a question of "renationalization or denationalization." To Zangwill, this set of alternatives meant that Jews should either acquire a homeland and develop their own nationality in their own nation, or they should become really and inwardly part of the nation in which they found themselves, thus "denationalizing" themselves as a distinct people. The notion of the United States as a melting pot—a place where Old World nationality drops away and various elements fuse into a new nationality—operates in the play as a general framework within which the drama of the Jewish protagonist is enacted.

The protagonist, whose speeches launched the melting pot as the symbol for the American assimilative process, is David Quixano, a young Jewish immigrant whose family has been murdered in the Kishineff pogrom; he is a composer who is at work on a great "American symphony" that will capture in music the vast racial and ethnic harmony gradually coming into being in America. David meets and falls in love with Vera, a settlement house worker who is also an immigrant from Russia. Vera is a Christian, but the lovers resolve to marry in spite of the religious difference, following David's conviction that in America immigrants are to cast off their inherited attitudes, loyalties, and prejudices. Then David learns that Vera's father is the Russian officer who directed the Kishineff massacre and whose face haunts David's memory of that terror. In his revulsion, he abruptly breaks off the romance with Vera, thus betraying...
in his own mind the ideal of the melting pot, which he interprets to mean that the European past is to have no hold at all upon the immigrant in America. After suffering remorse for this lapse from his principles, added to the customary agonies of a lover, David is reunited with Vera in the last scene, immediately after the triumphant performance of his American symphony. The play ends with a paean of praise and hope for the melting pot as David and Vera stand on the roof of the settlement house transfixed by the vision of the Statue of Liberty gilded in the distant sunset.

David is “prophetically exalted” by this vision and delivers the following speech, which deserves quotation as the play’s fullest description of the working of the melting pot:

It is the fires of God round His Crucible. There she lies, the great Melting-Pot—listen! Can’t you hear the roaring and the bubbling? There gapes her mouth—the harbour where a thousand mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian,—black and yellow—

[Vera] Jew and Gentile—

Yes, East and West, and North and South, ... how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, Vera, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labour and look forward!

Peace, peace, to all ye unborn millions, fated to fill this giant continent— the God of our children give you Peace.  

In an earlier speech, which was used in advertising the play, David spoke of America as “God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming”; he also asserted that “the real American”—the fusion of all races, the coming superman”—had not yet made his appearance, but was “only in the Crucible.”

These “incidental dithyrambs on the ‘crucible’ theme,” as one reviewer called them, do not constitute a very detailed theory of ethnic adjustment in the United States, but insofar as it specifically concerned the Jews in America, *The Melting-Pot* seemed clearly to preach the doctrine of complete assimilation. Jews who did not wish to forget their
distinctive identity, it was suggested in one passage, should “work for a Jewish land” instead of emigrating to America. The emphasis on assimilation was not well received by many American Jews. An editorial in the *American Hebrew* called it a “counsel of despair” that could not be taken seriously, and several years later a Jewish writer declared that the Jews had no intention of denying their heritage for the contents of any pot—even though it be the Melting-Pot.”

Aside from the Jewish question, *The Melting-Pot* seems to imply that immigrants should actively will their own assimilation; but since the process is portrayed as automatic, it probably makes no difference whether they do or not. It is God’s melting pot; He is the Alchemist who presides over it, and presumably the process can go forward without conscious human collaboration. The play clearly indicates that the processes of the melting pot are unfinished; the product will be novel, but it has not yet come out of the crucible. This means that all that goes into the pot contributes to the “real American,” the coming superman who is to make his appearance in the future. The whole vision is oriented toward the future—“the ideals of the fathers shall not be foisted on the children.” Not only the immigrants but America as a whole is seen in the process of becoming. To a character who is a caricature of the idle-rich American, David prophesies: “There shall come a fire round the Crucible that will melt you and your breed like wax in a blowpipe— ... America shall make good!”

A reviewer in the *Forum* took issue with the assumption that immigration was still forming America. Speaking for the “traditional Americans to whom Mr. Zangwill would deny the national name,” he showed concern over the “indiscriminate commingling of alien races on our soil” and flatly denied that “the scum and dregs of Europe” could enrich America. On the other hand, many immigrant spokesmen have found the melting pot equally unacceptable because it seemed to require too great a degree of assimilation. According to a very nationalistic German-American writer, *The Melting-Pot* was “simply a mixture of insipid phrases and unhistorical thinking” and represented “just the contrary of that toward which we strive.” He warned that any attempt to “do away with our German cultural type ... in the smudge kitchen of a national melting pot” would come to naught. In addition to Jews and Germans, spokesmen for the Norwegian and the Slavic immigrants have been critical of the notion of the melting pot.

These immigrant critics obviously understand the melting pot differently from the *Forum* reviewer: the complaint of the former is that it means too much conformity to America as it already exists, while the
latter is fearful that America itself is to be transformed. This ambiguity in the meaning or “theory” of the melting pot was present at the beginning and was to persist. But before considering the “theoretical” aspects of the subject, we should examine the use of the melting pot as a symbol, because the theoretical ambiguity has not lessened the use of the symbol, and the popularity of the symbol has perpetuated and aggravated the ambiguities of meaning.

The melting pot symbol was introduced at a propitious moment, achieved almost instant popularity, and has been employed by countless writers with every imaginable embellishment and variation. Two magazines have used The Melting Pot as their title; a novel called On the Way to the Melting Pot was published in Norwegian; and a study of immigration was entitled The Melting-Pot Mistake. Librarians frequently arrange immigrant stories under some such rubric as “Out of the Melting Pot,” and the field of immigrant fiction was surveyed by Carl Wittke in an article entitled “Melting Pot Literature.” Dumas Malone summarized the information about immigrants who were included in the Dictionary of American Biography in an article on our “Intellectual Melting Pot.”

We have also had linguistic, rural, frontier, urban, and civil rights melting pots, as well as “melting pot wards.” The United States is usually thought of as the melting pot, but smaller units also claim the title: Puritan Boston was called a melting pot in the twentieth century; a very old state, Pennsylvania, and the newest one, Hawaii, share the same honor; and now the nation of Israel threatens to usurp America’s place as the modern melting pot.

“What’s in the Melting Pot?” asked the Survey in 1912, but not until 1922 did the House of Representatives furnish an “Expert Analysis of the Metal and Dross in America’s Modern Melting Pot.” The Pot’s Constituents” have usually been found to be various immigrant groups, but foreign bodies of a different sort are also spoken of as being in the crucible. W. F. Adams handled the symbol very straightforwardly when he said that “solid groups of Irish of the lowest class were thrown as cohesive masses into the melting pot”; but for some reason, it is the small Czech group whose career in the melting pot has been most closely scrutinized. Thomas Capek traced their passage “Through Intermarriage into the Melting-Pot,” another writer focused on the Czechs in the microcosmic melting pot of Colfax County, Nebraska, and a third had written more generally of the Czech “ingredient.”

The ordinary immigrants have sometimes had rather strange companions in the pot. Carl Russell Fish did not hesitate to bring the Pilgrim
Fathers perilously close to a dunking, and he declared that their story survived as a "vital spirit sweetening the melting pot." Both labor and religion have been in the pot, but one hopes that these inoffensive abstractions were not part of the "slag" that George Creel complained of in 1922. It is perhaps poetic justice that Israel Zangwill was deposited in his own pot, but the reader is brought up short at seeing the following heading in an index: "Melting pot: children in." It was suggested as early as 1912 that the universally held conceit of national superiority be cast into the melting pot, and in 1916 President Woodrow Wilson called for the enlargement of the melting pot to include the whole world; therefore, it is not surprising that Sisley Huddleston found "Europe in the Melting Pot" in 1922. But however much the melting pot might be internationalized, it still concerned Americans primarily as it related to this country and its history. Looking into our past, Americans could see the melting pot beginning to simmer in colonial Pennsylvania; it was still "simmering gently" at the end of the War of 1812, but by the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 it had come to "full boil." A century later the restrictive laws of the 1920s were said to bring the "America of the Melting Pot" to an end, and Henry Pratt Fairchild predicted with no regret that the symbol was so battered that it would not be called into service by subsequent writers.

One of the principal reasons for the durable popularity of the melting pot is that it brings before the mind's eye a vivid picture, and one is almost irresistibly impelled to describe what one sees happening in and around the pot. Once a person writes—or even thinks—heated pot, one is caught. Only the strongest can resist the temptation to embellish the image, and there are few phenomena of nature which have been more comprehensively reported than the workings of the melting pot. It is, for instance, obvious that a melting pot requires a fire; but what kind of fire? In the play, David Quixano called it a "purging flame," and Zangwill later spoke of the melting pot burning off at the top while new material was added at the bottom. Woodrow Wilson saw the need for a "fire of pure passion" around the crucible, while Max Farrand pointed out that it worked best when the fires were kept at "forced draught"; a reviewer of a recent book on Polish-Americans declared, however, that the fire could be cooled by "the winds of action of . . . patriotic immigrant societies."

Even greater efforts of the literary imagination have been expended in describing the action and contents of the melting pot. David Quixano contributed a number of images: he described the pot as roaring, bubbling, stirring, seething, melting, and fusing. Although this might seem
to furnish an adequate picture, it proved quite superficial. Other writers have shown that the pot also simmers, boils, ferments, devours, curdles, and coagulates. Furthermore, a critical West Coast observer was able to penetrate the vapors of the melting pot to see the “yellow froth” that defiled it; and, unhappily, the pot was not without both “scum” and “dross.”

Confronting the image of a great melting pot, one could appropriately take a variety of actions. One could, for example, keep watch over it, become concerned about its capacity, or draw lessons from it. For the person who desired a more active role, it was possible to stir the pot; but this had to be done cautiously since there was the danger of overtaxing it, and cracks had been detected. Some observers spoke of the need to make sure that the melting pot really melted its contents, especially when the cold draughts of World War I blew across the Atlantic and caused the contents of the pot to recrystallize, with dangerous lines of fracture appearing between ethnic masses. Occasionally a writer would call attention to the need for forms into which the molten contents might be poured, but unfortunately a good deal of vagueness enveloped the subject of what was to come from the melting pot. David Quixano foresaw a superman emerging from the crucible, while President Wilson would settle for “the fine gold of untainted Americanism” as a product; a hostile critic feared that a new language was supposed to “steam forth” from the pot. Many more, of course, were uneasily aware that the melting pot could fail completely; some even claimed that it did not exist.

The fact that the melting pot symbol has been used so often and in so many ways does not mean that it has won universal acceptance as the most satisfactory symbol for the process of ethnic adjustment and interaction in America. Indeed, it has been called a “startlingly bad” symbol, and a great number of alternatives have been suggested, many of them consciously offered as replacements for the melting pot. In the play, Zangwill used the term crucible as a synonym for melting pot, but it has never led an independent life as a symbol—it remains merely a synonym. George R. Stewart suggested the term transmuting pot as a clarifying replacement for melting pot; he feels that transmuting pot is better because it specifies that the immigrants are on the whole changed into traditional Americans instead of producing a new and exotic national type. Other alternatives to the melting pot can be grouped in five rough classifications:

1. Culinary. It is probably indicative of something about our national character that culinary symbolism supplies more replacements for the melting pot than any other source. In one of the more graphic examples,
Karl E. Meyer likens America to a pressure cooker rather than a melting pot, and other writers have suggested stew, soup, salad or salad bowl, and mixing bowl as alternatives.\(^{38}\)

2. Color. Other images suggest light or color in some way. America has been compared to a flower garden containing various blossoms (ethnic groups) of different color, size, fragrance, and so on. The country has also been called a mosaic, a kaleidoscope, and a cultural rainbow. Emily Green Balch, a respected student of immigration, suggested the metaphor of irradiation to describe the way in which various ethnic groups interact with each other and their American surroundings.\(^{39}\)

3. Musical. Two metaphors relate to music. In advocating his “federation of nationalities” ideas, Horace Kallen suggested visualizing America as an orchestra rather than as a melting pot because in an orchestra individuals and small groups work together to produce a harmony of sound from a variety of different instruments. Another writer described America as containing a host of different nationalities who were engaged in a stately and formal dance: America was “The Choir Dance of the Nations.”\(^{40}\)

4. Mechanical. For a gadget-minded people, we have been quite unimaginative in suggesting mechanical metaphors for the nation and what is going on in it. The most explicitly mechanistic symbol is that of a weaving machine that combines different elements into one fabric. This metaphor was mentioned by Fairchild in 1926 with the note that probably no one had ever heard of it. Denis Brogan has much more recently suggested that America resembles a pipeline where a number of different elements are all racing along in the same direction, but with little interaction between them.\(^{41}\)

5. Derogatory. At least four alternative symbols are unmistakably insulting to the immigrants who came to America and are in the process of assimilation. In 1921, George Creel asked whether dumping ground was not a more fitting metaphor than the melting pot, and five years later Henry Pratt Fairchild declared flatly that “if we must have a symbol for race mixture, much more accurate than the figure of the melting pot is the figure of the village pound.” Fairchild later added two other symbols to the derogatory category when he compared America to a catch basin and a cul-de-sac for immigrants.\(^{42}\)

If we turn from the symbolic to the theoretical melting pot we encounter more disagreement; indeed, it would be more correct to speak of theories of the melting pot because there are almost as many versions of the theory as there are embellishments of the symbol. The main dif-
difficulty in pinning down the theory is that many writers simply refer to “the melting pot theory” as though the figure of speech itself conveyed a clear and univocally understandable concept that requires no further definition; the symbol, in other words, is assumed to be a theory. The melting pot may be an example of “concrete symbolism,” as Zangwill put it, but it is hardly precise enough to constitute a theory; a theory of the melting pot should spell out just what is meant by the melting of various elements together and how it takes place. Unfortunately, few who speak of the melting pot theory do this; usually one must infer what the theory is thought to be from the way the symbol is handled.

The most fundamental ambiguity in the melting pot as a symbol and the point of greatest confusion in the theory is whether only the immigrant is changed or whether America, the host society, is also changed by the processes of the melting pot. Does the theory imply that the entire make-up of American life is inevitably changed exactly in proportion to the quantity of the various immigrant ingredients thrown into the pot, as George R. Stewart seems to believe; or is Lawrence Frank Pisani correct in thinking that only the immigrants, the ingredients in the pot, are affected by the melting process? A closely related and equally basic question is, Does the melting pot receive immigrants, strip them of their cultural heritage, and make old-style, Anglo-Saxon Americans of them? or, Does it combine the immigrants with the native-born Americans in a new amalgam embodying the best qualities of both elements? Here again one can find diametrically opposed answers; in at least one case the contradictory versions were both advanced in the same book.

There are several other points of confusion about the melting pot theory. Does it refer to biological “blending,” that is, intermarriage, or does it refer to cultural assimilation? Is the theory to be understood as descriptive or prescriptive: does it show us how a process is taking place or tell us how to further the action of that process? There is also disagreement about the relationship of the melting pot theory to the Americanization movement of the World War I period: one writer asserts that the Americanization movement was an outgrowth of “the philosophy underlying the melting pot theory,” but another claims that it was a repudiation of the laissez-faire approach of the “melting-pot idea.” It is suggestive of the confusion surrounding the melting pot as a theory that Horace Kallen, who devoted much energy to attacking the melting pot, has recently been hailed for his vision in discerning what “so many others of us refused to see and to feel, . . . that our country is a true melting-pot.”

There are two general considerations that help to account for the
confusion that arose about the meaning of the expression *the melting pot*: the first of these concerns the play by Zangwill; the other, the subsequent use of the expression by persons who interpreted it in different ways.

Because the expression is so closely connected with Zangwill's play, one looks to *The Melting-Pot* to discover the theory of immigrant assimilation which is dramatized there. It is, as we have seen, possible to draw some inferences about Zangwill's ideas on immigrant assimilation from the play; nevertheless, that it was criticized by native-born American and immigrant spokesmen for opposite reasons indicates that a dramatic presentation is not a satisfactory method of conveying in unequivocal terms and adequate detail a theory about so complex a process as immigrant assimilation. Furthermore, Zangwill was primarily concerned in the play with Jewish assimilation in America, and his treatment therefore concentrates on this one relatively small, and particularly complicated, aspect of the larger problem, thus introducing other elements of uncertainty. In short, Zangwill's play did not provide a comprehensive statement of any theory of immigrant adjustment, and it was natural that such "theory" as was presented there should be interpreted differently by different persons.

What Zangwill did was to restate dramatically many of the imprecise traditional notions about America's absorptive power and supply a new symbol that soon gained widespread popularity. As a symbol, the melting pot could be freighted with any one of a number of meanings depending upon the view of immigration and assimilation held by those who used it. Those favorably disposed toward free immigration and confident of America's assimilative power might interpret the melting pot to mean that the nation could continue to receive immigrants, absorb them in some unspecified fashion, and profit from the diverse cultural traits that they added to the national composite. To those less favorably disposed and less confident the melting pot could symbolize a more purposeful process of purging away the inherited culture of the immigrant and remolding him into an old-line, Anglo-Saxon American with all the approved habits, attitudes, and beliefs.

An example of the former attitude is Percy Stickney Grant's article on "American Ideals and Race Mixture," which appeared in the *North American Review* in 1912 in answer to an alarmist view of "The Future of American Ideals" by the restrictionist, Prescott F. Hall. Grant argued that "fusion is the law of progress" and that America would be strengthened by the acceptance and assimilation of new and vigorous strains in the national mixture. He was sympathetic to the immigrant throughout
and concluded his discussion by quoting approvingly the "familiar words of Israel Zangwill" on the virtues of "the great Melting Pot." Within a few years, however, the outbreak of the war in Europe and its reverberations in this country caused attitudes toward the melting pot to shift drastically. The tolerant and optimistic view that it was automatically working to produce a new and better American declined sharply, and the conviction grew that it was the function of the melting pot to make immigrants into patriotic Americans after the pattern of the Americans who got here first.

The return to Europe of thousands of immigrants who were reservists in the armies of the belligerents, the burst of war enthusiasm on the part of those who remained, and the growing bitterness of various ethnic groups shocked many Americans by revealing the strength of the ties that bound the immigrants to their homelands. Most of the anxiety was centered on the German-Americans, but there was a more generalized suspicion that the nation could not count on the undivided loyalty of the entire immigrant population. In these circumstances, the movement to Americanize the immigrant which had gotten under way before the war was given a powerful new impetus, and there was much talk of heating the melting pot, stirring it, and "our bounden duty to keep our eye" on it.47 "Put baldly," wrote a contemporary student, the devotees of the crude, current notion of the 'melting pot,' bid America take the immigrant, . . . strip him of his cultural heritage, throw him into the great cauldron, stir the pot vigorously, speak the magic word 'Americanization' and through the mystic vapors would rise the newly created 'American.' "48

As American nationalism mounted during the war and the immediate postwar period, this view of the melting pot became almost unalterably fixed, and the American whom the pot was supposed to produce conformed more and more to the stereotype of the "hundred-percent American." In 1919 two critics of this attitude satirized it by imagining a "keeper of the melting pot" who addresses the immigrants as follows: "Jump into the cauldron, and behold! You emerge new creatures, up-to-date, with new customs, habits, traditions and ideals. Immediately you will become like us; the taint will disappear. . . . You will become full-fledged Americans. The magic process is certain."49 This, to be sure, is exaggerated, but consideration of the melting pot pageant of the Ford Motor Company's school for its immigrant employees suggests that the keeper's speech did not fundamentally misrepresent the expectations of some Americans. In one version, the pageant features a "Ford English School Melting Pot" perhaps seven to eight feet in height and ten to twelve in diameter; the legend E Pluribus Unum appears above the bail
of the pot. A number of immigrants, dressed in native costume and carrying placards showing their country of origin, descend into the center of the pot from the rear; the transmogrified “new Americans” appear in two lines on the steps leading up and over the rim on either side. Gone now are the beards and kerchiefs! All are dressed stiffly in business suits and bear in one hand a scroll—presumably their naturalization papers—and in the other a small American flag. According to some reports, the Americanized immigrants sang the national anthem as they left the pot, and one observer suspected that each carried an Eversharp pencil in his pocket.

As a result of identification with such activities, the melting pot came to be looked upon as almost exclusively a purger of “foreign dross” and “impurities”; the melting pot “theory” tended to lose all association with the idea that immigrants could make valuable contributions to a yet unfinished American culture. Consequently those who were repelled by the narrowness of the more extreme Americanizers tended also to reject the melting pot, which stood, in their minds, for enforced conformity to a repugnant version of Americanism. The melting pot acquired in World War I a bad reputation with liberals which it has not yet fully lived down. The critics of that era who did most to fix liberals’ distaste for the melting pot were Horace M. Kallen and Randolph S. Bourne.

Kallen’s first discussion of the subject appeared early in 1915 in a lengthy two-part article in the Nation, “Democracy versus the Melting-Pot,” which was reprinted in 1924 with very minor changes in a volume containing other essays by Kallen on ethnic adjustment in America. He attacked the melting pot, not only because he found the hundred-percentism of the Americanization program abhorrent, but also because he did not want immigrants to be “melted” at all: he was convinced that they neither could nor should divest themselves of their ethnic identity.

What is inalienable in the life of mankind is its intrinsic positive quality—its psycho-physical inheritance. Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent; they cannot change their grandfathers. Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, would have to cease to be, while they could cease to be citizens or church members or carpenters or lawyers without ceasing to be. The selfhood which is inalienable in them, and for the realization of which they require ‘inalienable’ liberty is ancestrally determined, and the hap-
piness which they pursue has its form implied in ancestral endowments.\textsuperscript{51}

Not only the exaggerated form of the melting pot was wrong, according to Kallen, but any kind of policy which had as its goal assimilation of the immigrant. Instead of assimilation, Kallen proposed as the correct policy the recognition and deliberate fostering of the enduring quality of ethnic differences; the goal, properly envisaged, was that America should become a federation of distinct nationalities using English as “the language of its great tradition,” but preserving for the “emotional and involuntary life” of each nationality “its own peculiar dialect or speech, its own individual and inevitable esthetic and intellectual forms.”

Thus “American civilization” may come to mean the perfection of the cooperative harmonies of “European civilization”—the waste, the squalor and the distress of Europe being eliminated—a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind. As in an orchestra every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; ... so in society, each ethnic group may be the natural instrument, its temper and culture may be its theme and melody and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all may make the symphony of civilization.\textsuperscript{52}

When he restated his position in 1924, Kallen rejected—without changing his fundamental point—the criticism that his ancestrally endowed, inalienable psycho-physical ethnic identities were based on a faulty theory of race. At the same time he coined the term cultural pluralism to describe his approach.\textsuperscript{53}

Kallen, who was German born, Jewish, and a supporter of Zionism, had a personal emotional involvement in the preservation of ethnic distinctiveness, but Randolph Bourne, who came from old American stock, also advocated roughly the same policy. He and John Dewey, who held similar views, represented American cultural nationalists, who, disgusted by the extremes of the Americanizers, nevertheless firmly believed in the necessity to work purposefully for a genuine American nationality and culture. The nationalism they wanted, however, would be truly democratic and international, and they allowed for the active partnership of the immigrant in the creation and life of the American national culture. Bourne’s position was outlined in an article entitled “Trans-National America,” which appeared about a year after Kallen’s essay was first
published. He referred critically to the melting pot a dozen times, declaring among other things that it had never existed and that as long as Americans had thought in melting pot terms, they were looking to the past instead of the future. While denying the existence of the melting pot, Bourne paradoxically attacked the Americanized second-generation immigrants who were products of the melting process; indeed, he quite forgot his democratic tolerance in describing the “tame flabbiness” of the “cultural half-breeds” who were unlucky enough to have lost their “foreign savor.”

Bourne’s ideal was a cosmopolitan dual nationality that would permit one to be fully American and at the same time fully Italian, Polish, and so on. John Dewey had the same thing in mind when he asserted that the true American is “not American plus Pole or Germans. But the American is himself Pole-German-English-French-Spanish-Italian-Greek-Irish-Scandinavian-Bohemian-Jew-and so on.” Dewey’s remarks were addressed to educators, and he saw the schools as a key agency in actualizing his rather baffling prescription for nationality. A few years later some sort of high point was reached in the proposals for systematically inculcating cosmopolitan nationalism in the American people: a series of articles in the Survey which began by criticizing the Americanizers’ view of the melting pot ended with the suggestion that a cabinet-level department of “Nation Building” be established in Washington.

Another hostile critic of the melting pot was Horace J. Bridges, who included in his essays On Becoming an American an analysis of “The Fallacy of the Melting-Pot.” Bridges’ quarrel was really only with that version of the melting pot which conceived it as a device for reducing everyone to a predetermined homogeneity. In his positive prescription for cultural cross-fertilization, Bridges did not differ too widely from the interpretation of the melting pot as a blender of diverse cultural heritages, and he explicitly rejected the view that foreign nationalities should be preserved intact. There was, however, one student of ethnic adjustment who saw clearly that the melting pot could be interpreted in tolerant and liberal fashion. Isaac B. Berkson’s Theories of Americanization contained a perceptive analysis of the “melting pot theory” which commended its hospitality to the contributions of all groups and characterized it as pervaded by “a spirit of humane toleration, and a notion of the dynamic nature of society.” But, in the end, Berkson also rejected the melting pot because it required that the unique identity of each ethnic group be “annihilated” as the price of that group’s adding its bit to the composite American culture.

By the early 1920s, hostility to the melting pot “theory” probably
prevailed among the majority of those who held liberal views on immigration and ethnic adjustment; most—but not all—of this hostility stemmed from the belief that the theory required the stripping away of inherited cultures and the imposition of Anglo-Saxonism by indoctrination. At the same time, many of those who did feel that such was the proper function of the melting pot had become disillusioned by its failure to operate in the desired fashion. Immigrant resistance to Americanization programs, the bickering of nationalities over the provisions of the Versailles treaty, and the spread of “bolshevik” tendencies all contributed to the conviction that the melting pot had failed. The suspicion that the “dross” outweighed the “metal” was reinforced by the “expert analysis of the melting-pot” of the eugenicist H. H. Laughlin whose report to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization dealt with the proportion of the “socially inadequate” in the immigrant population. To those who stressed racial considerations, the melting pot was wrong, not so much because it had failed, but because the notion of race mixing was itself misguided; race mixing meant mongrelization, not the production of a superior nationality. The most important frontal attack was Henry Pratt Fairchild’s Melting-Pot Mistake (1926), which criticized the melting pot for encouraging racial amalgamation, although admitting it was a fairly good symbol for the process. However, Fairchild found the melting pot as a symbol for cultural assimilation “pitiably inadequate” because cultural heritages could not be melted together and because it focused on the process of interaction rather than the result.

Even those who disagreed with Fairchild on many points might concur in calling the melting pot a mistake, and since both friends of immigration and restrictionists were critical of the symbol, he seemed quite justified in predicting “that it is not likely ever to be dragged into service again.” For at least two reasons, this turned out to be another “melting pot mistake”: the first reason is that the symbol had already become firmly embedded in American speech; the second, which is perhaps hardly to be distinguished from the first, is that in spite of its theoretical vagueness, the melting pot continued to find occasional employment by students of society as a conceptual tool.

All through his career Frederick Jackson Turner looked upon the frontier as a melting pot in which the distinctive American nationality was forged. Edward N. Saveth says that for Turner “the melting pot becomes an important institutional determinant” and that the “concept” is recurrent in his writings; Merle Curti refers to the melting pot in his recent case study of the validity of certain aspects of the Turnerian approach. Another student of society who used the melting pot as a con-
ceptual tool was Bessie Bloom Wessel, who formally defined it to refer to the amalgamation of different stocks through intermarriage in her *Ethnic Survey of Woonsocket, Rhode Island*. This examination of the “melting” process was endorsed, as to both method and results, in a Foreword by the noted anthropologist Clark Wissler. On the whole, however, sociologists regarded the “melting pot theory” as outmoded or unsophisticated; even so, they usually mentioned it as a primitive earlier approach. The study that undoubtedly gave the greatest impetus to the use of the melting pot as a conceptual tool was Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy’s survey of the patterns of mate selection in New Haven from 1870 to 1940. Her article, “Single or Triple Melting-Pot” (1944), introduced the multiple, or compartmentalized, melting pot. Since her research showed that marriages between different nationalities were increasing but still tended to take place within the confines of the three major religious divisions, Kennedy concluded that immigrant assimilation took place within the “triple-melting-pots” of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. Kennedy’s triple-melting-pot thesis was given popular currency and applied much more broadly to religious sociology in Will Herberg’s widely read and influential study, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*.

Because of the sociologists’ discovery of the multiple melting pot, or perhaps because of the mounting evidence that some sort of “melting” has indeed occurred in the American population since 1900, the melting pot is currently recovering a good deal of its respectability. There are still those whose distaste for the term has not abated: Horace Kallen remains unconverted, in spite of admirers who would credit him with the discovery of the melting pot, and Carl N. Degler, Karl E. Meyer, Amitai Etzioni, and Franklin D. Scott have all lately found fault with it, while a recent writer in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* criticized the melting pot with racial arguments reminiscent of the 1920s. On the other hand, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., included the melting pot, “in the best sense of the term,” among America’s ten greatest contributions to civilization; an editor of the *New Republic* associated prejudice and narrow provincialism with cultural pluralism and seemed more favorably inclined toward the melting pot; David Riesman found that the early melting pot had some attractive features, and Theodore H. White, Louis B. Wright, and the authors of a recent college text in American history have also spoken positively of it within the last few years. Hans Kohn, along with Herberg, feels that those who saw America as a melting pot early in this century were more accurate observers than those who held that ethnic identity would persist indefinitely.
Resisting the temptation to ask what the melting pot boils down to, we may now attempt to draw some conclusions. We should note, first of all, that it is the melting pot as symbol rather than as theory which is of primary importance; the difficulty in framing an adequate theory of immigrant adjustment was, in fact, one of the principal reasons for the popularity of the symbol. As a symbol, the melting pot stands in some fashion for the process of interaction of different ethnic groups and for the society in which the process is taking place. At the time the symbol came into general usage, this process was not understood in any clear and comprehensive way, yet it was of great public importance and was much discussed. Theoretical concepts such as “assimilation” were employed in this discussion, and so were popular figurative terms like mixing, melting, blending, and fusing. The melting pot provided a large symbol, a comprehensive figurative framework, which subsumed into itself many metaphoric terms already in common use; it seemed to conform in some way to the process that was going on, and it lent itself to picturesque elaboration that made it ideal for colorful use by journalists. Consequently, the symbol became extremely popular and entered deeply into the whole thought process respecting immigration; for many people, no doubt, it was the basic piece of intellectual equipment where immigration was concerned. But considering the lack of precise understanding of the subject and the very loose use of the symbol, it was bound to be ambiguous; it could not convey anything univocal because what it stood for was neither clearly nor univocally understood.

If we concede that the ambiguities of the melting pot symbol reflected the confusion existing in the public mind about the processes of immigrant adjustment, the next question is, Did the symbol of the melting pot add to that confusion? The answer is that it did. All of us, as George Eliot observed, “get our thoughts entangled in metaphors”; we tend to equate literally the symbol with the thing symbolized. In this particular instance, the substitution in thought and discussion of a very concrete symbol (melting pot) for a very subtle and complex thing symbolized (ethnic interaction) was almost bound to result in added confusion. The very effectiveness of the symbol tended to focus undue attention upon it rather than transferring attention to the thing symbolized, and all too frequently discussion of immigration was cast into the wrong terms. Human beings are not metals; they do not literally “melt”; they do not “fuse”; groups of human beings are not really “alloys.” Everyone, of course, “knew” this—but to talk continually in terms of the melting pot, employing the vocabulary of metallurgy, tended inevitably to color the
general public understanding of immigration and ethnic adjustment. Unconsciously, one suspects, many people came to feel that there was something wrong with immigrants if they did not visibly start "blending." Furthermore, the elaboration of the symbol proceeded, quite naturally, along lines proper to the operation of a melting pot. But were all these elaborations appropriate to the processes that were supposed to be symbolized? Does it not seem likely that figures such as heating up the pot or pouring into molds suggested ideas respecting immigration that might not otherwise have been thought of at all? At the very least, these figures of speech lent a spurious plausibility to certain ideas simply because they fitted in so nicely with the symbolism of the melting pot, not necessarily because they were appropriate to the reality of ethnic interaction.

Perhaps the most serious distortion of understanding that the melting pot symbolism entailed was the notion of uniformity of product. We think of what comes out of a melting pot as uniform in color, consistency, texture, and other qualities; the repeated use of melting pot symbolism reinforced, if it did not generate, the expectation that the result of ethnic interaction should also be absolutely uniform. It is this emphasis on uniformity which more than anything else has caused liberals to condemn the melting pot "theory."

But granting all its confusions and even the particularly unfortunate connotation of uniformity—which can be mitigated by interpretation—the melting pot remains the best symbol that has been devised for ethnic interaction in America. It is by far the most popular symbol, and its very ambiguity allows its use by those who disagree about what it means, but these are not the chief reasons for calling it the best symbol. It is the unique merit of the melting pot that the element of ever changing process is intrinsic to the symbol itself and that what is symbolized, ethnic interaction, is above all an ever changing dynamic process. There are two other distinctive merits of the melting pot symbol: first, the strong implication that the interaction of the various elements proceeds according to its own inner laws in the general direction of reducing the most glaring differences and is subject to human manipulation to only a limited degree; and, second, the suggestion that the final result of the interaction cannot with certainty be known beforehand.

If we compare the melting pot with some of the alternative symbols mentioned earlier, its superiority is, I believe, clear. If the melting pot can be validly criticized because it suggests too strongly uniformity of product, this is surely even more true of George R. Stewart's "transmuting pot"; what this verbal change in fact does is specify one version of the melting pot—the version in which immigrants are to be changed into
something that is predetermined. Unless one thinks that the element of
predetermination is present to a greater degree than can be implied by
melting pot, it is hard to see why transmuting pot should be preferred.
The alternative symbols of soup, stew and the like certainly have nothing
to recommend them on aesthetic grounds and are usually justified by
arguments exactly the opposite of Stewart's: they are urged as substitutes
because the melting pot is alleged to imply too strongly that the distinctive
ethnic identities disappear, while in a stew, carrots, for example, do
remain somehow carrots even after an indefinite period of stewing. Here
the matter resolves itself into the question of whether one would agree
that a third-generation Irish-American is to an immigrant Irishman as a
carrot-in-the-pot-nine-days-old is to a raw carrot. Furthermore, these
symbols do not convey as forcefully as the melting pot the sense of ever
changing process, and they suggest a chef more strongly than the melting
pot suggests a directive human manipulator. Practically all the other
alternative symbols surveyed—salad, mosaic, flower garden, and so on—
are fundamentally defective in that they are essentially static; they do
not convey the notion that the materials involved are in a process of
transformation. Even those that seem to involve action (e.g., weaving
machine, orchestra) fall down here since the constitutive elements are
themselves unchanging. Furthermore, a weaving machine implies a
weaver, and an orchestra requires a conductor. Perhaps something could
be done with irradiation, but it hardly seems worthwhile to take up all
the others from choir dance to dog pound.

As a symbol the melting pot seems to me superior to these, and it
certainly has in its favor the weight of popular usage. Among intellectuals
the real challenger of the melting pot symbol is not another symbol but
rather the concept of cultural pluralism. This concept, which is almost
as old as the melting pot, and whose history is equally involved, cannot
be discussed here. It is pertinent to note, however, that although it is an
abstract concept, “cultural pluralism” has accumulated an emotional
charge equal to that carried by any symbol; moreover, it is not without
a few ambiguities of its own and has perhaps even generated a little
confusion. In the form first proposed by Kallen, cultural pluralism
amounted to a kind of “ethnic predestination,” and it did not prove to
be an accurate prognosis of the future development of immigrant groups
in the United States. It is now much modified and amounts, on the
whole, to tolerance of as much cultural diversity as is compatible with
the minimum essential national unity. Every idea—even cultural plu-
ralism—can be interpreted in narrow and dogmatic fashion, and it is
worth pointing out to the cultural pluralist critics of the melting pot that
that much abused symbol has represented, for many Americans, aspirations and values that resemble those cherished by pluralists—openness toward the future; receptiveness to immigrants and the cultural values they bring; and the gradual and harmonious integration of these immigrants and their descendants into the ever evolving life of the nation.

NOTES

Source: *American Quarterly*, 16 (Spring 1964), 20–46. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.


7. Emerson’s remarks were first published in 1912 in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson with Annotations*, 10 vols., ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes (Boston, 1909–14), 7:116. Stuart P. Sherman drew particular attention to this “notable passage” in his Introduction to *Essays and Poems of Emerson* (New York, 1921), xxxiv.


17. Ibid.
20. *Chicago Inter Ocean*, October 22, 1908.
28. W. F. Adams, quoted in Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America. The Saga of the*


43. Zangwill, "America—The Melting Pot."
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52. Kallen, Culture and Democracy, 124–25.
53. Ibid., 155ff., 43.
57. Horace J. Bridges, On Becoming an American. Some Meditations of a Newly Naturalized Immigrant (Boston, 1919), chaps. 8–10; see also the review of this book quoted in Handlin, Immigration as a Factor, 156–58.
60. Fairchild, Melting-Pot Mistake, esp. 119–20.
61. Ibid., 11.
62. Saveth, American Historians and European Immigrants, 122ff.; Merle Curti et al., The Making of an American Community, A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County (Stanford, Calif., 1959), 61, 105, 297.
68. Quoted as epigraph in Black, The Importance of Language.
69. The stress on uniformity is largely obviated by thinking of the melting pot as an unfinished process, where there is no “drawing off” of the product. If we picture
a pot without a tap, in continuous interaction, would it not conform to the reality to suppose that if one dipped into the contents in 1960 one would find the specimen one took considerably more “melted” than it might have been in 1930 or 1900? Still, this would not imply absolute homogeneity of contents throughout in 1960 any more than in 1900.