

Desmond King (2000) *Making Americans: immigration, race and the origins of the diverse democracy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, x + 388, £29.95, ISBN 0 674 00088 9

Multiculturalism has become somewhat of an international buzzword over the past thirty years, and has caused controversy wherever its aims have been enacted. Yet in few nations has the rise of multiculturalism been as traumatic and divisive as in the United States. The 'culture war' between multiculturalists and Americanizers has inspired numerous analyses and polemics, whether from academics or presidential candidates. However, much of the torrent of academic work in this area remains empirically shallow, with a time horizon going back no further than the 1960s. Writing against the grain of such work, Oxford political scientist Desmond King's recent book, *Making Americans*, provides a fresh alternative. The book is empirically exhaustive, and draws its theoretical and normative conclusions from a wider picture of American history that traces continuities between the turn of the century, the 1920s, 1960s, and the present.

King's primary-source based analyses focus on the early part of the twentieth century: the 1911 Dillingham Commission report, 100 per cent Americanization, the Eugenics movement and immigration restrictionism, and the 1920s National Origins quota immigration act. He suggests that these discourses established a set of ethnic and racial boundaries for the American community, and an 'ideal-type' for the American 'race' based on an Anglo-Saxon prototype. This model of citizenship relegated those of southern and eastern European ancestry to second-class status, while nonwhites were summarily excluded. With the emancipatory politics of the 1960s came a 'return of the repressed' minorities: non-WASP European Americans turned to ethnic revival and nonwhites gravitated to the more radical mantras of multiculturalism and identity politics. In this manner, the roots of contemporary multiculturalism lie in the critical nativist ferment of the 1920s. This is an excellent contribution to a vast literature and should be mandatory reading for students of American politics and culture.