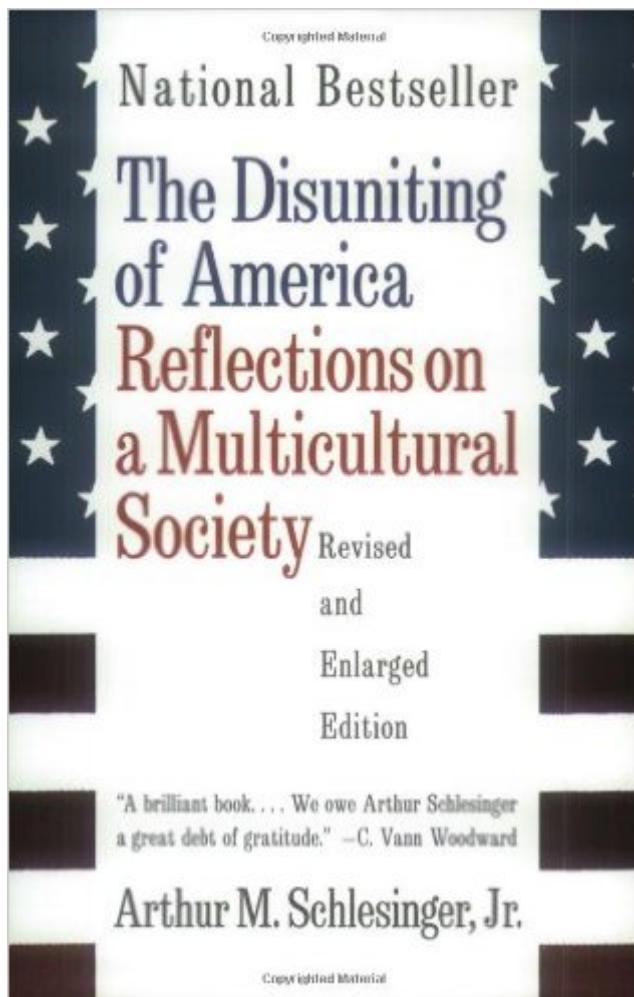


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The Disuniting Of America: Reflections On A Multicultural Society (Revised And Enlarged Edition)



Synopsis

The New York Times bestseller that reminded us what it means to be an American is more timely than ever in this updated and enlarged edition, including "Schlesinger's Syllabus," an annotated reading list of core books on the American experience. The classic image of the American nation • a melting pot in which differences of race, wealth, religion, and nationality are submerged in democracy • is being replaced by an orthodoxy that celebrates difference and abandons assimilation. While this upsurge in ethnic awareness has had many healthy consequences in a nation shamed by a history of prejudice, the cult of ethnicity, if pressed too far, threatens to fragment American society to a dangerous degree. Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner in history and adviser to the Kennedy and other administrations, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is uniquely positioned to wave the caution flag in the race to a politics of identity. Using a broader canvas in this updated and expanded edition, he examines the international dimension and the lessons of one polyglot country after another tearing itself apart or on the brink of doing so: among them the former Yugoslavia, Nigeria, even Canada. Closer to home, he finds troubling new evidence that multiculturalism gone awry here in the United States threatens to do the same. "One of the most devastating and articulate attacks on multiculturalism yet to appear."•Wall Street Journal "A brilliant book . . . we owe Arthur Schlesinger a great debt of gratitude."•C. Vann Woodward, *New Republic*

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Customer Reviews

Schlesinger served the Kennedy administration, heavily involved in advancing Civil Rights. Any

memory of pre-1960s America justifies his passion. Even lynching of African Americans was not illegal until Truman made it so in 1948. Images of fire hose and German Shepard attacks on peaceful black protestors or their white supporters remains a stark American memory. His book, however, is an alert to those of reason regardless of affiliation that the movement has run off its tracks. But that hasn't stopped its wreckage from continuing to plow a path of ruin through its original intent. As Schlesinger puts it, "A culture of ethnicity has arisen to denounce the idea of a melting pot, to protect and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities." Its underlying philosophy is that America is not a nation of individuals but a nation of groups, he says; ethnicity is the defining experience; division into ethnic communities establishes the structure of American society and the fundamental meaning of American history. "Multiethnic dogma abandons historic purposes, replacing assimilation by fragmentation, integration by separation." Our modern movements succeed where the Klan failed. Referencing multiculturalism he asks if it is the school's function to teach racial pride? When does obsession with difference threaten identity? Since this 1993 book, obsession has become an educational standard. Our calendar is split into months for one race pride or another (except white and European). It starts early - believing the purpose of history is therapeutic. He notes, "Once ethnic pride and self-esteem become the criterion for teaching history then certain things cannot be taught.

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