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Members of the Association already have been informed of the death this past June of Charles C. Irby who had edited NAES publications since 1980. He made important contributions to this issue as well as the 1987 issue of *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*. The Associate Editors completed the work on this issue. The January 1988 issue will be in recognition of Charles' contributions to ethnic studies and in honor of his vision of the future.

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**Vol. 10, No. 2**

**July, 1987**

**EXPLORATIONS  
IN  
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## **From the Ground Up: Multiethnic Literature in the Humanities Curriculum**

**Margaret Bedrosian**

In “Relocation” by Simon Ortiz, the Native American speaker ends a catalogue of the troubles that have beset him since his uprooting with these emblematic lines:

i am ashamed  
i am hungry  
i speak words  
i am lonely for hills  
i am lonely for myself<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual dismemberment, which many associate with the plight of disinherited Native Americans, has dislocated millions of others in this country as well. Teaching multi-ethnic literature, I note in particular streams of students who like the narrator of Ortiz’s poem are lonely for an authentic connection to a personal history. Throughout the term, they read selections which extol or dramatize the palpable struggles of characters who have a strong bond with ethnic traditions. They attend class surrounded by identifiable, certifiable ethnics. They listen to the instructor hold forth on the apocalyptic possibilities open to any who have access to these worldviews. In response, they may close up, become hostile, sympathize from a distance. But underneath, another current may swell with a question that also concerns many teachers in the humanities: in a nation where millions no longer identify with a distinct ethnic background, where individuals can trace bloodlines to multiple sources divided by time and place, what role does multi-ethnic literature play? How might the experiences of some ethnic groups be used by others in their own quests to help create a stronger, more intimate sense of community? In practice these questions are not briefly nor simply dealt with; at the personal level they require an enormous commitment to introspection and the possible pain of discovering a history that one might prefer buried. Nevertheless, as students—no matter what their ethnic ties—continue to grapple with troublesome questions, instructors must move from textual analysis to confront matters of application and synthesis. The alternative is that the vitality and creative potential of this subject matter will be lost when it is most needed, as Americans step into a new level of chastened self-awareness. In beginning to apply and synthesize, I have been struck by how interwoven matters of ethnicity

are with other aspects of American life. As these informal observations will suggest, students are often forced to think about a nexus of issues—personal and immediate—as they interact with the texts.

Michael Novak writes that “America still has not dealt with the problem of preserving its diversity.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the dated flavor of Novak’s diatribe in *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (1971), statements such as his remain provocative. They force us to ask what it means to “preserve” a country’s diversity: what is it that is worth preserving? It certainly does not mean doing the impossible, putting traditions and attitudes in formaldehyde, hoping time will not corrode the weave. Nor does it mean trying to stop the agents of assimilation—intermarriage, public education, and shared work—from taking their course. Perhaps it is more accurate to frame the issue in this way: America has not yet dealt with the desirability of nurturing a diversified culture. Unable—or reluctant—to envision what such a culture might be like, we cling to self-images that breed pessimism and fear.

Multi-ethnic literature helps us flesh out that abstraction, “diversity,” providing students with images that help them fine tune their perceptions of American life. In the intensive comparing and contrasting of fiction, poetry, essays, and autobiography from multiple traditions, Walt Whitman’s watchwords “unity and diversity” are synchronized in gratifying ways. Reading of protagonists such as Toshio Mori’s *Seventh Street Philosopher*, Philip Roth’s *Eli the Fanatic*, or James Baldwin’s *Stranger in the Village* confronting and articulating the unspoken neuroses of the group helps us measure what Baldwin refers to as the “weight and complexity” of American experience at large. In turn, generalizations are more carefully filtered through a growing sympathy toward individuals of diverse backgrounds.

For those who already identify with a particular group (sometimes two or three), the literature highlights many of the questions that students have grown up with, alleviating the loneliness and inarticulateness many have felt. By contrast, those who have little or no sense of ethnic background are often spurred to ask questions which have long lain dormant. These questions are not only related to the specifics of the past—when, who, where, and how?—but more importantly, raise existential issues: what does it *mean* that my family history seems so convoluted? Has the mingling of many traditions in my past deprived me of all except the most general label, American? Is there any way to evoke the uniqueness of my heritage, even if it cannot be designated as “ethnic”? Although students might not frame their questions this succinctly, not a few leave this literature envious of the perceived solidarity of the tribes from which they are now in exile.

As students begin to sort out the strands of their past, the term “ethnicity” gets closely scrutinized, often losing its sharp edges. In *Beyond Ethnicity* (1986), Werner Sollors argues that this term is



confusing at best:

The dominant assumption among serious scholars who study ethnic literary history is that such history can best be written by separating the groups that produced literature in the United States. The published results of this procedure are the readers and compendiums made up of random essays on groups of ethnic writers who have little in common except so-called ethnic roots; meanwhile, obvious and important literature and cultural connections [with writers outside the group] are obfuscated.<sup>3</sup>

One might add that the dangers of this assumption are amplified without the multi-ethnic perspective. Students whose only relationship with “roots” experience via the academy is through Black Studies, Native American Studies, or occasionally an American literature class, are often in for a shock when they enter the multi-ethnic arena. Misleading generalizations which they—and their instructors—may have indulged in order to distinguish their history begin to leak. Sollors cites a humorous finding in David Schneider’s *American Kinship* (1968) to illustrate the type of goof even the most alert can fall into; in citing the distinctive family characteristics of their ethnic groups, various respondents had this to say:

For the Italians the matter was quite simple; it is not possible to fully understand the Italian family in America until one has understood the Italian mother. For the Irish the matter was equally clear; it is not really possible to understand the Irish family until one has understood the special place of the Irish mother. For the Jews the matter was beyond dispute; it is impossible to fully comprehend the complexities and special qualities of Jewish family life without understanding the Jewish mother.<sup>4</sup>

Assumptions such as the above and others that may be even harder to pin down surface in the comparative framework, particularly questions related to codes of conduct, values, even terms which one group has thought uniquely its own. As we discover what is universally shared, it paradoxically becomes possible to appreciate what has been unique about the history of a particular group. Thoughtless overclassifications about “all” Middle Eastern women being molded out of the same cultural milieu; or “all” Catholics; or “all” Native Americans are more easily seen as the reductive ploys that they are.

The myth of the generations falls even more quickly when examined in a multi-ethnic perspective. Sollors is not the only one to have observed the limitations of typecasting immigrants and their children in terms of first, second, and third generation labels. Anyone who has taught a course in ethnic literature to a classroom full of American students is bound to notice the rising confusion as students try to locate themselves generationally. I had one such experience recently after teaching Isaac Bashevis Singer’s “The Little Shoemakers,” a short story which portrays the classical progression of the generations from a Yiddish village in Poland to their new home in New Jersey. During discussion, questions such as these arose: What if one is born into a family where the mother’s father immigrated from Russia, her mother’s mother immigrated from Ireland, and her father’s family has been in this country for two hundred years? What *does* one do with the millions who don’t belong to any particular group or generation? Or entering even more difficult territory,

what if a person is multi-cultural in heritage, but mainly seen as belonging solely to one group because of skin color, as is the case with many students who identify themselves as black? The issues such questions raise are neither simple nor unimportant, for depending on how individuals come to terms with them, they either take responsibility for who they are (some might say for *choosing* who they are) or perpetuate the guilt-ridden naivete with which many Americans still view the past.

Multi-ethnic literature also brings into focus another pervasive hunger at this time: the urge to recapture a living relationship with the land. Repeatedly, ethnic writers evoke the specifics of geography and geology to show the role of place in sustaining or modifying group traditions. We not only see this theme in much Native American literature, but sprouting in the nooks and crannies of less expected sources. Even the academic Jewish intellectual Herzog of Saul Bellow's novel, one of the most dissociated characters in American literature, finds a new peace of mind by moving into the Berkshires at the end of the novel. By symbolically moving back into his body at the same time, Herzog is finally able to take charge of his life. Reading texts laden with the imagery of the Southwest of the Navaho, Hopi, and Pueblo; the Central Valley of the Japanese, Armenians, Chinese, Mexicans, and Assyrians; the New York and Chicago of Irish, Jews, and East European ethnics frees us to re-imagine America. In the process, we see anew how much impact the folkways of our ethnic groups have had on regional character.

"Living with Music," an autobiographical essay by Ralph Ellison, examines the relationship between ethnic and folk traditions, geography, and the discovery of American identity. It is a text central to the study of multi-ethnic literature because Ellison clearly sets forth the issue that binds Americans, no matter what their ethnic shading: how does one establish a secure stance in a society as fluid as ours? To illustrate how early the uprooting begins, Ellison recounts an incident that happened to him in a third-grade music appreciation class. Like other memorable anecdotes about the advent of knowledge, this one centers on a snake:

... a friend of mine insisted that it was a large green snake he saw swimming down a quiet brook instead of the snowy bird the teacher felt that Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* should evoke. The rest of us sat there and lied like little black, brown and yellow Trojans about that swan, but our stalwart classmate held firm to his snake. In the end he got himself spanked and reduced the teacher to tears, but truth, reality and our environment were redeemed.<sup>5</sup>

Though brief, this excerpt invites extended reflection, for it raises the most basic question about the source of culture: is it imported or homegrown? Is our model of what it means to be cultured that of a swan, gliding on the surface of the water, elegantly aloof from the murky depths? Or do we emulate the sinuous movements of the water snake, navigating the muddy recesses with a knowledgeable intimacy? Though it shares the fluidity of the swan, the green body of the water snake cleaves to the curving earth, an archetype of indestructible cultivating

energy. Yet, unwilling to let go of their lesson plans and their illusions of time and place, many teachers have grasped the neck of the swan and floated into an ethereal realm where abstractions about what culture *ought to be* substitute for what culture *is*. The cost has been that many Americans have never been able to see—to say nothing of take part in—the redeeming mysteries of the water snake.

Through the use of allusive anecdotes such as this, Ellison creates a matrix of images which offers an affirmative and complex view of what might be possible for Americans if they were to recognize and mine the gold of their native traditions. Close to the end of the essay he summarizes our task when he writes, “Those who know their culture and love it unchauvinistically are never lost when encountering the unfamiliar.”<sup>6</sup> The key words are of course “know” and “love.” Repelled or mesmerized by the veneer of the popular image of culture, many students aren’t even aware that there might be a substratum of culture worth cultivating, to say nothing of loving a culture found off the main drag in places hidden from the leveling impact of the trans-American network. As so much ethnic literature suggests, such places may be no larger than a neighborhood; in some cases they may only be a filament of distinction against the plastic backdrop. But as Ellison implies, the price of knowledge is cultivation, a conscious and in-depth exploration that discerns and extends the resources of the culture. Equally important, as Ellison and American folklorists have long argued, individualizing forces such as those in black culture—particularly jazz and folklore—remind us “that the roots of high culture lie in the expression of the common people.”<sup>7</sup> If this observation is valid for the wealth of black culture, it is proportionally valid for the contributions of other ethnic groups to American society. Even the smallest in size have created adaptive forms of group life: picnics, bazaars, hybrid folk arts, linguistic variations—the improvisations are endless.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, as immigrants continue to enter the United States, this literature not only introduces us to the challenges faced by each group in turn, but points toward a common center where we can address our common need: in a country where so much—economically, politically, and spiritually—seems to be at crisis pitch, where can we find stability? In depicting individuals who face the crises—some successfully, others not—multi-ethnic literature helps students plot strategy; its diversity becomes its greatest strength. To discover how some have tried to re-live the old world myth, they can turn to Marko Palamas in “The Wooing of Ariadne,” a Greek bartender in New York City, whose greatest desire is to consummate an epic passion in a world devoid of heroes. To enter into communion with ancestors from another world, they can take their cues from a poem such as Denise Levertov’s “Illustrious Ancestors,” where the imagination creates new links between two heritages; reflecting on her Russian Jewish and Welsh forebears, she writes:

Well, I would like to make, thinking some line still taut between me and then,  
poems as direct as what the birds said, hard as a floor, sound as a bench, mysterious  
as the silence when the tailor would pause with his needle in the air.<sup>9</sup>

If they are struggling with their ambivalence toward their heritage, works such as John Okada's *No-No Boy*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, or Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory* help them sort out the intricate dynamics that keep us wavering between choices.

If they are ready to go even deeper into the psychological core of their experience, works such as Leslie Silko's *Ceremony* and Peter Najarian's *Voyages* describe alternative paths to the transcending acceptance of one's temporal identity. In *Ceremony*, Tayo—half-white, half-Pueblo—is led from the trauma of the collective nuclear nightmare through a series of initiations modeled on the Pueblo variant of the classical hero's journey. His eventual realization of the Goddess and confrontation with the embodied archetype of evil mirrors our common task today. Refusing to succumb to the witchery that returns evil with evil, Tayo literally and symbolically breaks the cycle that has kept the world in darkness. Like a myth, this novel helps us tread the razor's edge: step by step, our awareness of the two realms, secular and sacred, is unified until the healing ceremony is complete.

If Tayo is guided toward self-knowledge by the grace of the feminine principle and the guides of the natural world, the Aram Tomasian of Najarian's novel must enter the labyrinth of his Armenian and American heritages and strip bare the monstrosity that lives at the bottom of his psyche. Prowling through the same psychological borderlands as Tayo and Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Aram learns to withdraw the projections he has cast onto his father, America, and his past. By the end of the novel, he manages to look at his face and see it clear: freed of caricature and his need to make it bear the betrayals of the Armenian past, it fills the mirror with the warmth and health that are also his Armenian and human heritage. Because works such as *Voyages* show characters in a state of deep introversion, radically restructuring their worldviews as they come to a new understanding of who they are, they read much like case histories in depth psychology; here individuals trace their experience to its "underlying and unconscious root." As M. Esther Harding explains, "the meditation with its inner concentration, . . . prevents the energy from flowing outward and leads ever deeper into the unconscious, where it activates the latent creative source at the center."<sup>10</sup>

The willingness of characters such as Aram Tomasian to explore the meaning of their experience, to follow its spiral all the way down, enables them to discover that there is a creative center in the psyche that is beyond ethnic labels, a source of inspiration that paradoxically helps them move past the limitations of their cultural conditioning and simultaneously helps them re-enter the community with a more mature sense of social responsibility. From this perspective, they can weld the old oppositions which have divided the world into "us" and a monstrous



“them,” and share in the Invisible Man’s ending realization, “Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you.”

Obviously, immersion in multi-ethnic literature and art does not guarantee that we will withdraw the layers of shadows we have cast onto each other. Nor will it ensure that students will have an easier time gaining a foothold in time and place. But it will make it impossible for anyone to assert that they are singled out for special suffering or grace; even more importantly, by reaffirming the sources of culture in the imagination and in the earth, these texts return us to the task at hand, to building community from the ground up.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Simon Ortiz. “Relocation.” *Speaking for Ourselves: American Ethnic Writing*. Lilian Faderman and Barbara Bradshaw, eds. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975) 59.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Novak. “White Ethnic.” *Speaking for Ourselves*, 549. This essay was taken from Novak’s longer work, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>Werner Sollors. *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 14.

<sup>4</sup>Sollors, 234.

<sup>5</sup>Ralph Ellison. “Living with Music.” *Shadow and Act*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1972) 191.

<sup>6</sup>Ellison, 198.

<sup>7</sup>Gene Bluestein. *The Voice of the Folk: Folklore and American Literary Theory*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1972) 139-40.

<sup>8</sup>Folklore is not only found in ethnic communities, As American folklorists attest, it thrives in the form of urban crime stories and the “xeroxlore” of the corporate office, to give just two examples. See “Folklore Thriving in Cities,” *New York Times*. (25 Feb., 1985) 18.

<sup>9</sup>Denise Levertov. “Illustrious Ancestors.” *Speaking for Ourselves*, 512.

<sup>10</sup>M. Esther Harding. *Psychic Energy and Its Transformation*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973) 434.

## Critique

Studies of multi-ethnic literature of the U.S., proposed in “From the Ground Up . . .” should be, if they are not already, accepted fields of study in colleges, universities and secondary schools. One would hope that by now, the unique perspective offered by multi-ethnic studies would be appreciated for the insight it offers in understanding the many elements which have created our heritage, history and contemporary “American Society”—and, by extension, global society as well. One would expect that multi-ethnic studies are, or will soon be requisite in “standard” humanities curricula for the same reasons that courses such as geography, world history and literature and studies of European and American history and literature are required.

Contemplating the achievements of the civil rights movements and minority group activities during the past two decades, one would not only hope, but *expect* studies of multi-ethnicity to have attained recognized status by now. As Bedrosian indicates, however, these studies, sadly, are still considered so special as to require elaborate apology and justification for their existence. The arguments offered in support of studying multi-ethnicity, however, should be applied, to *all* literary studies, as measures of validity for including them in “standard” curricula.

The author proposes a multi-faceted approach and the examination of specific works from both individual and world views. Bedrosian’s quest for personal identity and psychological/psychic vision (or “self-realization”) emerges clearly as the primary focus of study. The implications of this method are alarming. Are literature classes to become clinics in psychoanalysis in which vicarious crusades are mounted in search of a multi-cultural holy grail? Will professors of literature and multi-ethnicity be obliged to become, also, culturally peripatetic analysts? Leaving aside questions of pedagogical validity, this narcissistic focus must, inevitably, render us insensitive to the new visions and comprehension posited as rewards for the journey into self.

Certainly, our perceptions of the world are filtered through the screens of our personal experiences and attitudes. Indisputably, knowledge and understanding of ourselves is necessary in order to know and understand the world about us. Indisputably also, we measure our own perceptions, opinions, and attitudes by comparing them to challenging and conflicting notions. But how can we understand or even acknowledge variation or diversity of any sort when our attention is immutably fixed upon our own mirrored image?

Alarming too is the interpretation forced upon the literature under review, as a consequence of this approach. If literature describing multi-ethnic experiences and reflecting multi-cultural world views is not approached with an open, inquiring mind, but rather in relentless pursuit of testaments of self-realization, how are we to understand or

even recognize visions offered of the world outside the self? In this context, writings such as Ralph Ellison's are seen merely as springboards for flights of fancy. Ellison, however, in this anecdote describing the interpretation imposed upon the school children, neatly distinguishes the art of "teaching *how* to think" from the authoritarian tradition of "teaching *what* to think."

We might hope for other, richer rewards from multi-ethnic studies than Bedrosian offers. Ethnic diversity has been and is increasingly a definition of the world we live in, a description of contemporary reality. Our ability to survive in this world may depend on the success with which we learn to balance our personal identities and social relationships in a pan-cultural environment. The historical perspective to be gained in studies of the ethnic diversity that created our society is necessary not to "re-imagine America" but to help us understand and respond to the world we live in.

At very least, the exposure to values, mores, and customs of other cultures will make us more comfortable with diversity and less threatened by it.

In our acceptance we will learn not only to tolerate but also to actively cherish and nurture a "diversified culture," abandoning the "... self-images that breed pessimism and fear ...," and with them the blindfolds of negativism and intolerance with which we cripple ourselves and paralyze our society.

—Gloria Eive

## Critique

Bedrosian presents an interesting discussion on spiritual dismemberment and a series of subjects which are related to this concept. As a researcher in crosscultural communication, I find the article to be relevant, not only with multi-ethnic literature, but with human communication processes as well.

American recently celebrated her 211th birthday. In context with older societies, the American culture is very much a great experiment. Our diversity of cultural backgrounds provides strengths and weaknesses.

One of the weaknesses, in contrast with older cultures, is that we have limited distinction with our ethnic backgrounds. The lack of depth in this area is due to the degree of breadth, or diversity of ethnic backgrounds, which exists. Consequently, there are millions in our nation who cannot accurately trace their bloodlines more than a few generations. The situation is compounded as bloodlines in America frequently involve multi-ethnic backgrounds. Thus, many of us have a "diluted" bond with our primary ethnic background.

Many Americans have sought to learn more about their *roots and ethnic heritage*. In 1977, the movie "Roots" inspired the culture as a whole to examine its many backgrounds and trace these backgrounds to

the present day. As the author points out, sometimes we run the risk of “discovering a history that one might prefer buried.” Nonetheless many people, myself included, have dug up family bloodlines and traced them back to their pre-American origins. There can be pleasant and unpleasant surprises along such a journey, but I think it is a worthwhile exercise to better understand family history.

Our culture is weak in ethnic distinctions but, in a crosscultural context, it offers a unique blend of many ethnic backgrounds. We have experienced intense violence as a result of interaction among some ethnic backgrounds and we have also experienced positive interchanges which have been based on common experiences. In my travels outside of the country I find many foreigners to be intrigued with this interchange among ethnic backgrounds.

I had the opportunity to teach in The People’s Republic of China during the spring of 1987 and was surprised to see many of my students referring to the “United States” as a noun but to “America” as a verb. We traced this usage to the active lifestyles lived in the American culture and also to the high degree of ethnic interaction which occurs here. This ethnic interaction is perceived to be some sort of great experiment much like our form of government has been viewed.

The author offers interesting observations on how we can work with this diversity and the possible role multi-ethnic literature plays in this process. Such efforts can be helpful to a number of academic disciplines. For instance, crosscultural human interaction is enhanced when the participants have a sensitivity for, and sometimes a tolerance of, other ethnic backgrounds. Communicative behaviors can easily convey unintended meanings and when participants are aware of potential problems the exchange can be enhanced considerably. Sensitivity and tolerance can be nurtured through an understanding of the literature described by the author.

Inquiry into the role of literature in this process is relevant as it enhances not only our ability to understand multi-ethnic interaction but also our ability to promote positive interactions in this area. Bedrosian offers interesting and beneficial ideas for this enquiry.

—Jim Schnell



## Critique

The thesis of “From the Ground Up . . .” may be characterized as optimistic, imaginative, and inspirational, viewing as it does the extended role of multiethnic literature in humanities curricula. Unless a humane community, or even a sense of community, as envisioned, is built, the viability of America as a pluralistic nation is very much at risk. Placing the beginning of building such a realization of a “sense of community” upon the individual’s responsible actions resulting from the reflection and decision well justifies the title Bedrosian selected.

Of course, Bedrosian’s closing comment is realistic in its assertion that, although changing the literature curriculum may not totally exorcise racism, it still will set in motion a dynamic of thought bringing to many a perception that suffering is not the lot of any one cultural group. The awareness that there are commonalities of experience might lead us to discover a sense of community.

The essay should provoke advocates of the teaching of multi-ethnic literature to examine areas and processes that will achieve the social aim hoped for. For this, researchers, scholars, and teachers will have to go well beyond the walls of collegiate classrooms. This critique can only briefly suggest the scope of what remains to be done.

The term “From the Ground Up” can be applied to another type of “building”: the extension of such instruction to the elementary school grades, in the various secondary school years, and then at the collegiate level.

What should be investigated is how the elementary school language arts curriculum planner may substitute as soon as possible multi-ethnic material in texts and anthologies for what has been too often material that was mostly Anglo-American or Euro-American in content. Children in the United States should be acquainted at all levels with the various literatures of the United States.

Inevitably, inextricably bound with these modifications must come extended attention to teacher preparation. Teachers must have in-depth knowledge of the range of multi-ethnic literature as well as first-hand acquaintance with the ways of best bringing this material to the children and, later, to young people in pre-collegiate classes.

Reading and reviewing the essay being examined, one has to conclude that the author’s concern is with the centrality of the teacher in having instruction in multi-ethnic literature succeed. The role of the instructor is crucial in helping to bring about the changes desired. One may infer from the author’s caveats that teachers must guard against being insensitive to students’ reactions to the material. The literature should be taught so that no students feel alienated or believe the discussion is irrelevant in their lives. Bedrosian also warns against teachers indulging in intangible abstractions that are unclear to their students. Teachers

must be careful not to foist their judgments and perceptions upon the students; rather, students must be led to self-discovery after their own reading and reflection.

Bringing students to existential encounters such as this is not a simple process. It almost goes without saying that teachers have to be more than just knowledgeable of the subject matter. At collegiate and higher levels, the instructors must be able to provide students with enlightening experiences for “interaction with the texts.” Certainly, the classroom atmosphere has to be such that students will feel at ease in “opening up,” developing and asking questions. Experiences must be humane and humanistic. Students will be enabled thereby to arrive at perceptions of what is universally shared by individuals of all cultures.

Finally, it should be noted that Bedrosian stresses the importance of students being aware of cultural substrata in their searches for answers to questions about themselves. In this connection instructors must be the purveyors of information on ethnic or folk traditions. In doing research, teachers would be wise to depend upon relevant research done by their colleagues in other interdisciplinary ethnic studies areas. The pooling of resources and research in the area would bring about a fine range of insights and approaches regarding the effective presentation of material leading to the guidance of students toward the goals enumerated in the essay.

This essay is a fine springboard toward necessary studies that will lead us to recognize our shared concerns. With our own enlightenment and in developing new perceptions in our students, we shall be closer to achieving the “sense of community” Bedrosian seeks.

—Cortland P. Auser

**Abstracts from the Fifteenth Annual  
Conference on Ethnic and Minority Studies  
“Ethnicity: Propaganda, Persuasion, and  
Political Economy  
San Diego, California  
February 25-28, 1987**

Each year the conference organizers attempt to provide a complete overview of the Annual Conference by publishing abstracts of the papers and presentations as well as the comments provided by the respondents to each session. Although we usually fail to get a one hundred percent response, the following abstracts and comments provide an excellent representation of the variety of responses to the conference theme, “Ethnicity: Propaganda, Persuasion, and Political Economy.” These statements reflect both pedagogical and theoretical responses to the issues, suggesting directions both for teaching and further research on the topics.

**SESSION I — GENDER AND ETHNICITY**

Chair: Gloria Eive, El Cerrito, CA

Louise Mayo, County College of Morris. **“Rebecca in the New World: Jews and Other Minority Women in Nineteenth Century American Fiction.”**

The exotic figure of the lovely young “Jewess” was a recurring character in nineteenth century American fiction, both serious and popular. She was presented as a figure of great sexual allure, often contrasted to the pale, pure, asexual Anglo-Saxon maiden. She was the exotic dream figure who was permitted to assert her sexuality and to voice sentiments of outrage and self-assertion which would never have been permitted to either male Jews or female Christians. Other minority women, such as the Mexicans, were treated in a similar fashion. They were considerably more “liberated” than their white Christian counterparts in an era of sexual repression.

Rennie Simson, Syracuse University. **“Developing a Sense of Self: The Black Woman’s Struggle in America as Reflected in her Literature.”**

A significant number of contemporary psychologists and sociologists suggest that black women have been conditioned by society to view black men as nonproductive, unreliable, weak, etc. Thus black women have developed a high degree of self reliance which, in turn, has caused the black male to view the black female as aggressive, domineering, pushy, etc. These views are greatly oversimplified but have, nevertheless, played an important role in formulating relationships between black males and black females and in construction of the sexual self by the black woman. To understand the unique sexual identity of the black female it is important to examine the words of early Afroamerican women writers and describe their experiences as slaves and their own analysis of the factors leading to their construction of a sexual self.

Nancy Karen Herzberg, Eastport, ME. **“A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Single Step: The Story of the Passamaquoddy Women’s Project.”**

This presentation focuses on a nine-month project implemented with Passama-

quoddy women living on two reservations in rural Maine and facing a multitude of barriers to employment. The Project consisted of Assertiveness Training, a Self-Awareness Retreat, and Pre-Vocational Training. The presentation concentrates on the issues of empowerment, "insider-outsider" participation and direction.

**Gladys Ebert, Iowa State University. "A Pilot Program for Assisting American Indian Single Parents in Training/Education to be Better Able to Secure Meaningful Employment."**

To assist unemployed single Mesquakie Settlement parents in developing the confidence needed to enroll in educational/training programs, multi-faceted resources were organized to help them gain insight about their vocational interests and aptitudes, familiarize them with the procedures, personnel, and facilities at the educational/training site, and explore possibilities for subsequent meaningful employment. Resources drawn upon included workshops and individual counseling with teachers, professional people and personal assistance from older Mesquakie women in the community who served as mentors.

**Respondent: Walter Teachout, California School of Professional Psychology**

Women's roles across three cultures—Jewish, black, and American Indian—were the primary focus of this session. An interesting analysis of nineteenth century American fiction writers' portrayal of Jewish women concluded that Jewish women were most often described as "lovely, dark, and freely exhibiting a robust sexuality denied the Anglo-Saxon heroine." However, with the increase in Eastern European immigrants, "the beautiful Jewess began to lose her allure." In contrast, present day American fiction writers often portray the Jewish female as "frigid and selfish." Hence, prejudice against gender and ethnicity persists. One dare not underestimate the influence of literature in teaching values. Since prejudice is linked to prior learning, prejudicial portrayal of women in literature not only reflects cultural beliefs but also perpetuates those negative beliefs.

A paper on the black woman's historic struggle emphasized that American black women have had to be strong and self-reliant in order to survive. For 250 years they have been viewed as "pieces of property, workers, sexual objects and breeders of more slaves." Certainly this conception has been partially responsible for their problematic identity. Ironically, whereas sexual purity was highly esteemed for the white female, few considered this a virtue—or fought for it—for black women.

One can hypothesize that due to white negative treatment of blacks historically, they tend to ignore the present-day racial problems due to guilt and shame—a defense mechanism. After all, how *does* one remedy 250 years of inhumane treatment? For many, it may seem easier to assume that blacks' problems are their own, that they are simply "unmotivated." However, it could be that blacks have "withdrawn from the engagement of bettering their conditions" due to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and depression. It is naive to negate past injustices as insignificant or irrelevant. History *does* affect culture. The positive trait of "persistence amidst adversity" evident in the writings of many black women is commendable, and is a behavior society should reinforce.

The low self-efficacy among American Indian women is currently being addressed in two projects (Mesquakie and Passamaquoddy women in Iowa and Maine). The projects focus on the women continuing their educational or career training and include assertiveness training, support groups and working on bettering self-esteem. The programs are designed to offer an alternative to women who feel overwhelmed with the demands of many traditional "intervention programs." The alternative programs are designed to encourage the women to meet their objectives by taking gradual steps toward their goals.

Reinforcement comes through meeting goals and support groups. As successes are achieved, self-esteem and self-efficacy increase, thus increasing the chances of future successes.

Though rarely are there quick and easy solutions to social problems, the theoretical models upon which the American Indian projects are based are sound and based on current psychological research findings. Change must start with the present. Noone has the power to change the past, although one can work to accept it. Understanding the historical context of woman's roles is a start to change. Writers and orators can serve to keep the public aware of the issues and research. Social programs can and should be designed to creatively impact the dismal and unjust world of which many minority women are a part. Finally, all of us can use our influence on those around us to communicate alternative, positive views toward women, resulting in the possibility of some healing of infectious negative attitudes and beliefs.



## SESSION II — LITERATURE

Chair: Johnella Butler, Smith College

Judy Antell, University of California, Berkeley. **“Theme of Male Alienation and its Role in Expressing the Feminine Principle as Presented in Selected Novels by N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, and Leslie Silko.”**

Until this century, few Indian novelists received literary attention or acclaim. N. Scott Momaday was perhaps the first Indian writer to be internationally recognized for his Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*. Since the publication of this work in 1966, several other Indian authors have written novels which, like *House Made of Dawn*, tell the story of Indian people in modern times. These fictive works are extremely important not only for the literary accomplishments they represent, but also because through them we are able to hear the Indian voice which has so rarely been acknowledged. The Pocahontas myth is the way our fiction about Native Americans began and it began badly. And like Pocahontas, other Native Americans have rarely been able to tell their own story. It therefore becomes critically important to understand what Native American novelists are saying through the lives and actions of their fictional characters. Three Native American novelists discussed in this paper are N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, and Leslie Silko, and their novels are *House Made of Dawn*, *The Death of Jim Loney*, and *Ceremony*. These three novels have been selected for consideration because they have a great deal in common, including the fact that each is ostensibly the story of a young, alienated Indian man living in the middle decades of the 20th Century. As each author describes the protagonist's alienation and reveals the reasons for its existence, he or she also presents another, perhaps more significant, literary theme, that of the power and importance of the feminine principle. It is these two themes and the way they inform the novels of Momaday, Welch, and Silko which are the primary focus of this paper.

Cary D. Wintz, Texas Southern University. **“Black Writers and the Racial Mountain.: Politics, Propaganda, and Literature in the Harlem Renaissance.”**

The relationship between black writers and their promoters and critics in the black intellectual community during the Harlem Renaissance illustrates a dilemma common to ethnic/minority literature. Ethnic artists often must balance their desires to base their art on a realistic portrayal of the ethnic experience against the insistence of community leaders that ethnic art serve to correct negative stereotypes and present a picture of the ethnic experience that will aid them in their pursuit of political and social goals. During the Harlem Renaissance this dilemma stimulated a debate over the responsibilities of the artist to the community, and the responsibility of the community to the artist that is relevant to all ethnic groups.

Cortland P. Auser, Bronx Community College. **“Words as Weapons: Ethnic Poetry as Propaganda and Persuasion”**

This paper demonstrates the need of writers to use words as weapons to propagandize the experiences of repression and persecution, and thereby persuade readers of all ethnic traditions in America of the need for exorcising racism. Examples from Asian-American, Afro-American, Euro-American, Hispanic American, and Native American poetry will demonstrate the “parallelisms of pain” experienced by many peoples. The paper demonstrates that “by manipulation of the informative and effective connotation of words” attention will be called to facts not “noticed before” and arouse in readers “feelings not previously experienced.”

Edward E. Irwin, Austin Peay State University. **“Freedom and Slavery in Recent Southern Fiction.”**

Ideas of freedom and slavery and their ethnic bases have been central in the thematic concerns of Southern fiction. Recent novels, including Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Rita Mae Brown's *Southern Discomfort*, and Florence King's *Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady*, continue the tradition, but they do it with perspectives and targets different from those of their chief predecessors in the genre. Bondage is with us still, but in the shackles of ethnic identities, social expectations, and sexual stereotypes instead of the more overtly ominous branding irons of slave traders or the barely concealed racism and sexism of inhumane liberators. The *three novels* mentioned above represent not necessarily the literary best of recent Southern fiction, but they do represent well the wide variety of recent popular Southern fiction with a shared theme: the human spirit, regardless of the color of its embodiment, when

threatened with bondage, no matter the form or the vehicle of that bondage, will in defiance seek and usually find, often at heavy cost, the freedom and recognition which it must have. The consequent struggle and its results provide pain and hope both for people in the novels and for people who read them.

Respondent: Sara Brown-Clark, Youngstown State University

### SESSION III — INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Chair: Foster Brown, Southern Illinois University

Joanna Endter, University of California, Irvine. **“Water and Culture in the U.S. West.”**

As the struggles to control water resources in the western United States increase, conflicts are occurring because of cultural differences in values and beliefs different groups hold about water. Industry, government agencies, and the courts assume a commodity valuation of water wherein water is seen as something to be controlled and exploited for profit, used in productive and growth activities, and owned like other types of private property. The cultural biases of this view are inherent in western water law (prior appropriation), in free-market economics in water, and in governmental cost-benefit criteria for water projects. American Indians and some rural Anglos attach non-market and spiritual meanings to water, regard it as a gift which sustains the earth and all living things, and believe water is a source of life and power to be respected and preserved. These differences create fundamental contradictions for members of reservation and rural communities and often force them into decisions concerning their water where the only choices available to them are based upon values which contradict their own. This helps explain the problems they face in trying to protect their water and their often ambivalent responses to water projects and issues. This paper is based upon dissertation data collected during field research conducted in the Uintah Basin of eastern Utah, home to Northern Utes of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation and Mormon farmers, ranchers, and small entrepreneurs. Changes in water use are occurring in this rural area due to the Central Utah Project and a United States Department of Agriculture salinity control program. Textual analysis is used on in-depth interview transcripts and extensive journal notes to analyze cultural differences and contradictions in values toward water and secondary materials are used to provide an understanding of the historical and political-economic context of conflicts over water use and development in Utah and the Colorado River Basin. This provides the basis for explaining Northern Utes' and Mormon farmers' and ranchers' responses to various water issues.

Bette Novit Evans, Creighton University. **“EEO Responses to Racial and Ethnic Harassment in the Workplace: Principles and Social Costs of Eliminating Poisoned Atmosphere.”**

One of the more subtle forms of racial and ethnic discrimination in the workplace is the creation of a “poisoned atmosphere” for the minority worker. Sometimes supervisors or managers are the perpetrators, and sometimes the intimidation is intentional. Perhaps more often, the harassment is done by co-workers, and it may be unintentional insensitivity to the special harms of ethnic humor, unreflected stereotypes, and unconscious prejudices. EEO law guarantees a worker an atmosphere free of such poisons; it does not guarantee to the most sensitive minority employee an environment totally free of every barb which might give offense. The question for EEO enforcement officials and ultimately for the courts is where to draw the line between permissible insensitivity and impermissible harassment. Enforcement officials must also consider the question of liability: when is an employer responsible for the offense created by co-workers, and when do unintentional offenses rise to the level of discrimination? The purpose of this paper is to describe and then to analyze the legal doctrines used in adjudicating claims of racial and ethnic harassment. More importantly, the paper seeks to place the enforcement of ethnic harassment claims within the broad context of political economy. Clearly, it is neither economically reasonable nor feasible for legal institutions to demand perfect behavior from all persons at all times; the workplace need not be sanitized of all unpleasantness. It is, however, reasonable and feasible to insist that minority workers not be subjected to psychological abuse in the workplace. Inevitably, then, enforcement officials and judges who handle these claims must make some practical decisions about the social costs employers, governmental institutions, and individual workers should be expected to bear in guaranteeing a workplace free of racial and ethnic harassment.

James A. Schnell, University of Cincinnati. **“Enhancement of Cross Cultural Communication Within a Multiethnic Environment: The Educational Function of the U.S. Air Force Office of Social Actions.”**

This paper focuses on the educational role of the U.S. Air Force Office of Social Actions in promoting positive cross-cultural interaction among the variety of ethnic groups represented in the Air Force. The U.S. Air Force, as a microcosm of the United States, draws from a wide variety of ethnic groups found within the American culture. The Air Force has developed a special office to address problems and concerns which evolve within such an environment and this office also seeks to educate Air Force personnel as a means of “preventive orientation.” This report will detail the variety of objectives which are addressed.

Respondent: Afesa M. Adams, University of Utah

**SESSION IV: PROPAGANDA: MEDIA AND POLITICS**

Chair: Barbara Paige-Pointer, California State University, Hayward

Henry Laskowsky, University of Wyoming. **“Alamo Bay and the Gook Syndrome.”**

The film *Alamo Bay* concerns the efforts of a Vietnamese immigrant to operate a fishing boat on the gulf coast of Texas, and the resulting efforts of local white fishermen to force him out. The “gook syndrome” is psychologist Robert Lifton’s term for the way Americans in Vietnam stereotyped natives of that country as belonging to an inferior race so as to justify the use of violence and brutality against them. This paper examines the origins of this American prejudice against certain brown-skinned or Oriental non-Christians, its culmination during the Vietnam war, and its continuing presence in this country as illustrated by the film *Alamo Bay*.

Jonathan A. Majak, University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse. **“Race, Ethnicity, and Public Policy in the 1980s: The Impact of Ideology and Propaganda.”**

The impressive victories by Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984 have apparently resuscitated and invigorated a seemingly moribund conservative movement in this country. Coincidentally, those victories came at a time the liberals appeared to have reached a state of creative fatigue. Suddenly, there was confident talk among conservatives about a Reagan revolution. While it may be debatable as to whether or not that so-called revolution has succeeded, it is quite clear that the conservative ideology of the Reagan administration has had a major impact on public policy. This paper reviews and analyzes the dynamics and the impact of conservative ideology and propaganda on public policy in general but with special consideration of the ethnic and racial dimensions.

Helan E. Page, University of Missouri, St. Louis. **“The Media Imagery of African-American Men.”**

“Mediated imagery” is being used by transnational corporations to evolve a global culture in which consumer interests are being homogenized while the political-economic interests of minority ethnic communities and of Third World societies are being fractionalized. Drawing on the theory of Karl Deutsch (1963), I argue that this fractionalization is being achieved, in part, by the use of “mediated imagery” to distract the attention of the underclass away from an analysis of their common subjugation. Instead of allocating their attention to the hypothesis that social problems are caused by structural arrangements that condition people to act against their own survival, consumer habits influence certain segments of the underclass to view other segments of the underclass as social problems.

Respondent: Proshanta Nandi, Sangamon State University

In *Alamo Bay and the Gook Syndrome*, Henry Laskowsky examines the phenomenon of racial prejudice and its expression in American history. Called the “gook syndrome,” manifestations of American hatred toward other races extend back to Puritan times and influence attitudes and actions today. Laskowsky sees the 1898 American takeover of the Philippines from the Spanish rule as epitomizing its relationship with other races. Americans believed themselves enlightened, civilized Christians whose duty was to uplift the racially inferior (i.e., non-white, non-Western) Filipinos. Desiring self-government, the Filipinos rebelled against their rulers. This would not do, according to the Americans, who viewed the “savages” Filipinos as incapable of handling independence responsibly. The senseless destruction of lives and property perpetrated by the American troops echoed previous methods used to

subdue Indians by the Puritans and later groups of predominantly white Americans and would set a precedent for American intervention in another foreign country: Vietnam.

The gook syndrome is described as closely related to the Biblical purification ritual involving the scapegoat. Laskowsky reviews the present status of the gook syndrome depicted in *Alamo Bay*, a film by French director, Louis Malle. Here, Vietnamese immigrants to America experience the consequences of the lingering gook syndrome in Alamo Bay, a small Texas fishing town. The Texas community lashes out against the intruding Vietnamese. The film ends with the Texans succeeding in driving out the Vietnamese newcomers.

Laskowsky's outline of the historical nature of American racism provides the reader with a possible glimpse of the future of American interactions with foreigners. He maintains that Americans must come to terms with their past prejudices in order to break the vicious cycle of the gook syndrome.

In his essay, Jonathan Majak proposes reviews and analyzes the dynamics and impact of conservative ideology and propaganda on public policy in general but with special consideration of racial and ethnic dimensions. He sees Reaganism as a new conservative ideology which prizes unregulated big business and the institutionalized repression of American pluralism.

Majak chastises Reagan for his anti-Soviet rhetoric, failure to agree on arms control, refusal to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, support of rebel forces in Nicaragua, loss of United States' "peace broker" status in the Middle East, and funding of national defense at the expense of beneficial social programs. The neoconservative zeal to deregulate private industry, claims Majak, has fostered an atmosphere of despicable greed. He cites the need for welfare reform and increase in student loans for higher education, both of which are stifled by budget cuts.

While Majak does not care for the President or his policies, he raises valid concern about Reagan's conservative ideology. Unfortunately, too much space was devoted to proof of Reagan's conservatism and not enough to the effects of this conservatism on racial and ethnic groups in America and the consequent challenges these groups may face in the near future.

## SESSION V — GROWING UP CHICANO

Chair: Arthur Ramirez, San Diego State University. "Growing up Chicano: The Fiction of Autobiography, the Autobiography of Fiction."

A summary of Luis Leal's analysis of *The House on Mango Street* focuses on two main points: the growing up perspective in Cisneros's novel is from a specifically female point of view in contrast to so many *bildungsromans* from the male point of view and the growing up process is in a distinctly urban context, in Chicago, in a multicultural setting. This is a contrast with many Chicano novels which are set in a rural locale. Leal concludes that the new perspective in Cisneros's novel as well as a high degree of narrative skill and perceptive insights contributed to a highly successful first novel which extended the parameters of Chicano literature.

Lupe Cardenas, Arizona State University West. "Growing Up Chicano: Crisis Time."

This presentation discusses the theme of "rites of passage" in three Chicano novels, each representative of the last three decades. They are: *Pocho*, . . . *y no se lo trago la tierra*, and *The Rain God*. This study is based on the theory of the Flemish anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep. In his classic work *The Rites of Passage* he classifies the rites of passage into eight categories. Only one, the rite of initiation is pertinent to my hypothesis. However, another interesting phenomenon, perhaps coincidental, is taken into account and it is the following: that in many of the Chicano literary works, principally the novel, one notices that there is a young protagonist for whom the process or the passage from childhood, including puberty, into adulthood is emphasized. This seems to coincide with the development of Chicano literature in itself. In other words, it appears that all of Chicano literature, often referred to as "renascent or flourishing" literature, has suffered the same phenomenon or rite of initiation which implies the pains of "coming of age." This theory of the rites of passage can be applied to a wider corpus of Chicano literature in an attempt to prove the previously stated hypothesis. There is a parallel between the rites of passage of the young Chicano protagonist and the development of Chicano literature.

Justo S. Alarcon, Arizona State University. "La Etnicidad como Elemento de Identidad Cultural."

El tema de la identidad, sea ésta personal o colectiva, está íntimamente relacionado



con el de la etnicidad, aunque ésta sea solamente uno de los elementos inherentes a aquélla. Trataremos de situar estos dos términos en un contexto sociohistórico para poder así interpretar mejor los textos a discutir en esta ponencia. Acercándonos más a los textos referidos, hablaremos también un poco sobre el estado de la crítica chicana, citando de paso algunos artículos pertinentes al caso y, en particular, a uno de los críticos chicanos más sobresalientes. Trataremos de relacionar al crítico con los textos y a éstos con la circunstancia vital del pueblo chicano para ver si hay alguna secuencia lógica. Por fin analizaremos dos textos representativos sobre el tema de la identidad a través de la etnicidad, el cuento *Un hijo del sol*, de Genaro González y el poema *Caribou Girl*, de Lorna D. Cervantes. Para ello trataremos de parafrasear e intercalar en nuestro análisis el que hace Juan Rodríguez hablando del mito del “viaje” y la imagen del “espejo.” Una vez hecho esto, veremos si existe congruencia entre lo que expone el crítico y lo que el texto dice, desde nuestro punto de vista.

Jose “Pepe” Villarino, San Diego State University: **“Growing Up Chicano: Tomas Rivera.”**

This presentation consists of two parts: first, a summary of the growing up and the life of the Chicano writer Tomas Rivera (1935-1984), the author of one of the most important of all Chicano novels, . . . *y no se lo trago la tierra/. . . and the Earth Did Not Part*. Rivera is seen as a Chicano hero, a role model, and an inspiration. He emerged from a poor migrant worker through sheer will power, hard work, vision, and the stress on the value of education to become chancellor of the University of California, Riverside. The second part was a musical tribute to Rivera titled “Corrido Homenaje a Tomas Rivera—y No se lo trago la tierra.” The song, a *corridor* ballad, traces the story of the life of Rivera.

#### SESSION VI: SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Chair: Allene Jones, Texas Christian University

Caroline E. Addison, University of Detroit. **“Factors Associated with Educational Success of Black Inner City Nursing Students.”**

This investigation identified new criteria that pointed to the likelihood of educational success of black inner city nursing students. To practice as a registered nurse, one must have graduated from a school of nursing and have successfully passed the National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, success is defined as graduation from a community college nursing program and successful completion of the National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. The study's population consisted of black students who were admitted to the nursing program in 1982 and 1983 at Passaic County Community College and Wayne County Community College. The research was organized into two parts. The first part consisted of researching background information from existing literature on achievement of black students in colleges and universities and a review of the strengths of the black family and its relationship to students' success. Past and current practices used to educate black students and their impact upon success were reviewed as success-related factors. Finally, testing mechanisms utilized to assess the educational needs of black nursing students were analyzed and evaluated as success factors. This investigation supports the view that traditional predictors (father's income and education) are not appropriate for non-traditional student population. Most of the students in the investigation were products of homes headed by mothers and the mothers had little formal education. The study did not investigate grade point average and success in nursing because 32.5 percent of the population has G.E.D. certificates.

M. Helen Castillo, University of Texas, El Paso. **“A Descriptive Study of 300 Hip-Fractured Anglos and Hispanics in a Border Community.”**

Home care of hip-fractured individuals, especially the elderly, requires that extensive teaching and discharge planning be conducted by professionals in the acute care setting. Discharge planning which includes a thorough assessment of patients' needs while hospitalized and a specific instructional plan for home care is expected to facilitate recovery from major hip surgery. This study of 300 hip-fractured Anglo and Hispanic patients in the border city of El Paso, Texas, validates the need for health care professionals to intensify their efforts to provide a comprehensive plan of care in English or Spanish for these patients and their families.

Julia V. Clark, Texas A & M University. **“A Critical Examination of Factors Contributing to Minority Participation in Science: Implications for Improved Interventions.”**

The historically low representation of minorities (blacks, Hispanics, and Native

Americans) in science and technology is well-documented. Their rates of participation in precollege science and mathematics courses and in undergraduate and graduate courses and engineering education are extremely low. As few minorities are studying science in this scientific and technological society, a well-focused and concentrated effort needs to be put in place that will illuminate the influencing factors that result in scientific careers by minorities. This paper reports on research conducted to identify factors that terminate in scientific careers by minorities. More than seventy-five minorities who have successfully pursued careers in science and are currently employed in several different scientific fields throughout the United States have revealed the factors that influenced them to study science and pursue careers in the field. These factors have led to educational strategies, role modeling and mentoring associations for the early fostering of confidence, and hence opportunities for many who might otherwise avoid fields requiring science. The tendency for minority students to opt out of science may have profound social, economic, and political consequences in a world where the impact of science and technology is becoming increasingly significant. The absence of minorities from today's science classes will lead to corresponding absence of minorities from professional science tomorrow.

**Ella P. Lacey, Southern Illinois University. "Pica: Considering the Effects of Culture/Ethnicity/Race on the Problem and the Solution."**

Pica is an eating behavior that involves an individual who experiences a craving that is satisfied by ingestion of either unusually large amounts of selected food items (e.g., baking soda) or repeated ingestion of nonfood items (e.g., clay, laundry starch). It began in antiquity, yet there is little question that it continues as a current practice. As a practice, pica has many implications for social welfare and public health as well as for clinical personnel who work in settings where they have potential for influencing health actions. Pica poses challenges for any professional persons whose work encompasses the development and enhancement of problem-solving models related to nutritional deficiencies. Collectively, the literature provides a wealth of information on pica, however, the literature is so fragmented that it is difficult to gain an overview of the knowns and unknowns. There is a lack of consistency in defining either the behavior, the implications, or the practitioners. This interdisciplinary review presents a framework that illustrates the need for more intensive assessment of issues surrounding pica. Understanding pica will require vigorous research and sensitive researchers who consider culture, race, and/or ethnicity as intervening variables rather than as end-stage ones.

Respondent: Miguel Carranza, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

**SESSION VI — ETHNICITY AND THE MEDIA**

Chair: Otis Scott, California State University, Sacramento

**Barbara Rubin, Jersey City State College. "Count These Women In: American Immigration History Through Family Photographs and Oral Interviews."**

Until very recently, women have been left offstage or relegated to minor roles in the dramatic reconstruction of immigration history. This mini-exhibit (20-25 20"x30" photos on styrofoam + narratives), drawn from the collections of students and staff at Jersey City State College, spotlights women immigrants—their experiences in leaving, crossing and settling. Some of the narratives are "classic" or representing immigration chronicles. Others, focusing on an Afro-American, a Native American and Puerto Rican migrant woman, are aspects of a broadened definition of American history as immigration history. The accompanying workshop describes a journey with our students in recovering the immigration history in their families. A model unit created to explore immigration issues and the techniques of historical inquiry will be presented. Biography and history intersect in recapitulating women's great immigration "adventure."

**David M. Gradwohl and Nancy Osborn, Iowa State University. "Blacks and Whites at Buxton: A Site Explored, a Town Remembered."**

Early in this century more than 5,000 people, the majority of whom were black, lived in a company-owned, coal-mining town called Buxton. Today, former residents remember the good life there. Archaeological excavations at the abandoned town site in Iowa reveal buried artifacts of the well-planned and relatively prosperous community. This audio-visual program is designed for a variety of audiences. Special targets are classes in black history, ethnic studies, and archaeology. The program can be used in conjunction with *Exploring Buried Buxton: Archaeology of an Abandoned Iowa Coal*

*Mining Town with a Large Black Population* published in 1984 by the I.S.U. Press.

Respondent: James Bracy, California State University, Northridge.

Both presenters should be commended for their enlightenment. The professionalism of their work and the importance of the subject matter enhanced their media presentations.

Barbara Rubin's "Count These Women In . . ." slide presentation gave a somewhat uneven chronological account of the struggle of immigrant women to better the lives of themselves and their families. In addition, the method of student participation (i.e., family interviews, write-ups, etc.) not only appears to enhance student learning, but offers an interesting teaching methodology for all. As this is obviously a "work-in-progress," there are a few suggestions which might help to enhance an already quality work.

First, since the presentation is used to recruit students to the topic as well as for mass audience appeal, it might be advisable to split the presentation into two segments; thus allowing the material to be more audience focused. This way, in the student recruitment segment, the instructors could give an overview of the training procedures as well as include student interns' oral remarks.

Another suggestion is the need for inclusion of Asian and West Indian women immigrants. Though the student population may cause certain representational constraints, the creators may find it worthwhile to the project's overall ethnic comprehensiveness.

It appears the new U.S. immigration policy might also have some interesting effects. How are some of the newer women immigrants coping with these recent immigration trends?

Finally, the creators may want to briefly discuss some of the overall patterns of commonalities, especially as they relate to certain strengths and fears these pioneering women possess. "Count These Women In . . ." is a major contribution.

David Gradwohl and Nancy Osborn's "Blacks and Whites at Buxton . . ." slide and audio tape player presentation is a welcome addition to their text, *Exploring Buried Buxton: Archaeology of an Abandoned Iowa Coal Mining Town with a Large Black Population* (1984). The twenty-five year existence of Buxton, Iowa (approx. 1900-25) from an archaeological perspective was brought to life in their working account of the "diggings." The interspersing of oral accounts by former residents and ancestral offspring added to what could have been a very tedious presentation.

Although an historian and sociologist have also written a separate report on Buxton, very little of their findings were discussed. Understandably, the text and presentation are oriented toward the layperson with an interest in archaeology, but to allude so very sparingly to the socio-historical aspects is almost tantamount to an injustice.

In addition, it may prove beneficial to include impressions of the intern descendants in the archaeological training program as well as greater detail of the interracial relationships between the mining company, its superintendent, the black townspeople, and the Swedish contingent.

Lest this sound too critical, it must be pointed out that the archaeological account provided this respondent the impetus to want to find out more about this fascinating early twentieth century "oasis"—reason enough for Gradwohl and Osborn's presentation. In addition, the presenters are to be commended for their effort in having the town of Buxton included on the National Register of Historic Places.

In conclusion, the session "Ethnicity and Media" was a welcome addition to the conference's proceedings. Both presentations gave insight into two very important areas and bode well for future works of similar orientation.

## SESSION VIII: POLITICS AND LAW

Chair: Calvin E. Harris, University of Oregon

Robert A. Catlin, Indiana University, Northwest. "Black Political Empowerment and Long Term Achievement: A Case Study of Gary, Indiana."

Presently there are 31 United States cities of 50,000 people or more with black mayors including three of the four largest (Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia). When the first mayors within this group were elected including Hatcher in Gary, Stokes in Cleveland (both in 1967) and Gibson in Newark, New Jersey (1970) there was great hope and expectation among black and liberal white political leaders and scholars (Silverman 1968, Arnstein 1969 and Carmichael/Hamilton 1969). There is now an emerging body of literature that begins to raise questions about the

effectiveness of black mayors in optimizing the delivery of services and tangible goods to low income black and other disadvantaged minorities (Persons 1985, Heady 1985). However there is very little in-depth case study research concerning this matter. This paper examines the twenty-year experience of Richard Gordon Hatcher as mayor of Gary, Indiana. Using urban planning and development issues as a "lens," the following topics are investigated: (1) relationships with Gary's business community and state government, (2) the impact of federal aid programs, and (3) citizen attitudes toward the administration and the concept of black political empowerment.

### Vagn Hansen, High Point College. "Ethnicity and Employment Directions of Change in the Supreme Court."

After a period in which the claims of victims of employment discrimination were treated favorably by the U.S. Supreme Court in a number of landmark cases, the Court has turned increasingly hostile to claims for job and promotion rights under the civil Rights Act of 1964. The ascendancy of William Rehnquist as a force within the Court, even before he became Chief Justice, offers some explanation for the Court's changes. Invalidating the provisions of some labor agreements which insulate the victims of past discrimination from layoffs has been a major thrust of the Supreme Court in recent years. Yet precedent is available for the use of retroactive seniority as a device for maintaining some protection.

### Cheri Lucas Jennings, California State University, Stanislaus. "The Texture but Not the Spirit of the Law."

An often used consideration in hiring is the number of years of on-the-job experience that a particular candidate has had. Such criteria are softened by considerations such as "minimum" qualifications, "minimum" years experience, "or equivalent," but they nevertheless form the bane of affirmative action plans. For the number of years spent signify only how much *experience* a particular individual has had at a particular job, and not the initial *qualifying skills* that an individual possesses. Experience is gained through the performance of the duties of a position or at the title of the position. And yet, Affirmative Action Offices and employment processes in general least monitor the informal mechanisms by which an individual gains the opportunity to serve in an "acting" capacity, or where an employee is assigned the duties that will later qualify him or her for reclassification. This is not to say that *no* progress has been made in terms of achieving upward mobility for affected classes. Certainly there are a significantly greater number of ethnic minorities and women serving in lower and mid-upper levels of administration. But the process by which many of these individuals gain access to these positions bears little difference from the traditional process. The new, "old boy" method at upper levels of administration is the "old girl" method at the middle and lower ranks.

### Ashton W. Welch, Creighton University. "Ethnicity and Jury Selection."

The American political creed mandates trial by a jury of one's peers. That principle is reinforced by a series of decisions by the Supreme Court which invalidated the use of color or ethnicity in any aspect of the judicial process. Nonetheless, color and ethnic-tinted inequality in the administration of justice remain a continuing problem within the American judicial system. The problem is grounded in the nature of American society: discrimination is still deeply rooted in some societal sections and many prejudiced persons cannot escape their biases; Atticus Finch suggested such in *To Kill a Mockingbird* when he noted that although "a man ought to get a square deal in the court room, be he any color of the rainbow, people have a way of carrying their resentment right into the jury box." Even then, however, Finch's observation identifies only part of the difficulty. The composition of juries is part of the continuing dilemma, as a current challenge to the death penalty—one which will be examined by the Supreme Court during its 1986-1987 term—attests.

Though perhaps unintentional, the very process through which juries are obtained produces discriminatory results. In most areas of the country jurors are chosen from lists of registered voters or from lists of volunteers. And since both voting and volunteerism are functions of class, inclusion of blacks and Hispanics in juries is not as extensive as it might be under other circumstances. Class also impacts on the quality of the attorney one hires. A lawyer's ability obviously can affect the direction of trials including the jury-examining stage. Moreover, use of non-attorney consultants as aides in selecting juries are becoming increasingly more commonplace. Such consultants tend to advise selecting or omitting jurors based on factors which include "race," color, and class. The system of preemptory challenges also minimizes the role of ethnic and linguistic minorities in the jury system. This paper analyzes the

evolution of jurisprudence and jury service. The paper demonstrates that jury service is intricately woven into the economic and political system.

Respondent: Lawrence J. Estrada, Colorado State University

## SESSION IX — IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANTS

Chair: Mark Hutter, Glassboro State College

Howard Green, New Jersey Historical Commission. **“The Irony of the Statue of Liberty: The Symbols and Politics of Immigration.”**

“The Ellis Island Experience” is an interactive computer simulation which details the process of immigration to America at the turn of the century. The simulation allows students and teachers to place themselves in the role of a Jewish or Italian family contemplating emigration to the United States. As the simulated experience takes the user through the process of immigration, from the decision to leave Europe, through the transatlantic ocean voyage in steerage, to the arrival at the Ellis Island immigration center, the user-as-immigrant learns of the daily decisions made by ordinary men and women as they contemplated a new life in America. The central theme of this work is the decision making process. Through the role-playing experience presented by the simulation, users learn about the economic, and to a degree, the political structure of the world, Europe and United States which seemingly made the reality of migration to the United States a necessity for millions. The process of immigration is directly linked to the immigration center at Ellis Island. Here, the user experiences Ellis Island as a bureaucracy constructed to implement and enforce American immigration laws prior to World War I.

Steve Golin, Bloomfield College. **“Immigration and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913.”**

The Italian and Jewish silk weavers of Paterson do not fit the stereotype of rural immigrants to industrializing America. The stereotype is of European peasants, steeped in religion and other aspects of traditional culture, with no experience of factory work, labor conflict, or class solidarity. By contrast, most of the Northern Italian men and women, and most of the Jewish men, who came to Paterson between 1880 and 1910 were already experienced textile workers, and they brought traditions of militance, collective protest, and anti-clericalism with them. Of all textiles, silk was the most delicate, requiring the most skill to weave; Paterson’s silk manufacturers needed a steady supply of experienced, skilled weavers from Europe. From Biella, in Piedmont, and Bialystok and Lodz, in Poland, weavers came to Paterson to work in the silk mills. Proud of their skills and their militant traditions, the Italian and Jewish weavers contested the manufacturers’ control of the shop and the city. The climax of labor struggle in Paterson came in the 1913 silk strike, when Italian and Jewish men and women joined together to shut down the mills for five months. Supported by the Sons of Italy and the Workman’s Circle, the 1913 strikers drew on their respective ethnic traditions to create a genuinely multi-ethnic and democratic strike.

Mark Hutter, Glassboro State College. **“Social Disorganization and Immigrant Families: The Politics of Assimilation.”**

This paper examines the social disorganization perspective as articulated by the Chicago School and as applied by social reformers working with immigrants in the rapidly growing industrial cities at the turn of the century. The pervasive poverty of the immigrants led many to the erroneous conclusion that it was the immigrants themselves who were to blame for their poverty not their economic circumstances. This belief led to the development of a wide range of social programs aimed directly at changing the immigrant families themselves. Immigrant families and especially their children became the major targets for discipline and reformation and programs were designed to intervene in the affairs of immigrant families. The concern was to Americanize them into what they saw as the great American melting pot where the cultural variations of the given immigrant group would be altered to the standard American way of life. The argument put forth in this paper is rather than view this period in terms of social disorganization, sufficient attention should be placed on the nature of social interactional patterns that were developing among the immigrant groups. We owe the spectacular rise of the industrial urban centers like New York and Chicago to the vitality of the immigrants and their social support structures.

Sidney Stahl Weinberg, Ramapo College of New Jersey. **“Becoming Americans: The Strains of Transition in Jewish Immigrant Women.”**

This paper describes and analyzes the effect upon young Jewish immigrant women and their families of the strains of making the transition from the culture of Eastern

Europe to that of the United States early in the twentieth century. It is based in part upon forty-five extensive interviews with Jewish women who emigrated from Eastern Europe before 1925 and were at least six years old when they arrived in this country. The major points are first, that success or failure in becoming Americanized depended, most obviously, on age at time of emigration, with younger women usually having an easier time. Second, it related equally strongly to individual assessments of what it meant to be a “real American.” Was it learning English? Dressing smartly? Becoming educated? Marrying a native-born man? Third, I discuss the tensions in family life that often resulted from differences in attitude between parents and daughters or husbands and wives over the desirability of Americanization and the speed at which this transformation was being made. It was more difficult for mature Jewish women, as for older women of all immigrant groups, more housebound than their husbands or children, to learn English or to make a rapid transition to American life. How did these women fare, and how were they affected by the reversal in traditional relations within the family, with the children often the teachers and the parents the learners? Some peripheral issues are, first, the cultural background of these women, which sometimes aided and occasionally inhibited such changes. A second issue is the aid available to younger women in particular in their quest for Americanization, namely the school and the workplace. The paper focuses mainly on the process of Americanization as perceived by these women themselves. Some aimed at becoming fully acculturated, while others pursued more limited goals. What determined their objectives and their success at achieving them? And for both groups, what was the emotional cost—what did they gain and what of their old culture did they have to surrender to achieve their objectives?

**Respondent:** Floyd W. Hayes, San Diego State University

This session’s presentations focus on the trends, developments, and challenges associated with the experiences of European immigrants (largely Italian and Jewish) in America during the period of urbanization and industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The authors expose the complexities, contradictions, and dilemmas that emerged in the clash between old and new world cultural orientations and practices.

Howard Green chronicles the origin, development, and changing meaning of the Statue of Liberty. He reveals that the idea of the statue was designed as a nineteenth century French political strategy to link symbolically France and the United States with respect to their common heritage of liberty and freedom. The French architects of the plan were also liberals and advocates of the abolition of slavery in America. Green shows that from the project’s outset—the statue’s pedestal was to be financed and constructed in America—Americans were largely indifferent to its construction. It was not until Joseph Pulitzer, the Hungarian immigrant and journalist, stepped into the picture to help finance the Statue’s pedestal in the early 1880s that the project was completed and its meaning subtly transformed by European immigrants. For example, Green notes that it was Emma Lazarus, a descendant of colonial upper class Sephardic Jews, whose early 1880s poem, “The New Colossus,” would later single-handedly create and define the lasting image of the Statue of Liberty with these words:

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

These words came to reflect the hopes and aspirations of European immigrants, while the Statue of Liberty’s original symbolic meaning faded into the past. Ironically, Green points out, the more popular the statue became during the World War I period, the less receptive Americans became to European immigrants, many of whom were deported because of socialist and anarchist tendencies.

Michael Parella’s paper is a guide designed as a teacher’s aid for a computer simulation course on American immigration history, focusing on the Ellis Island experience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The guide provides substantial source material on the central issues of urbanization, industrialization, nativism, ethnic politics, and the social reform movement. The guide deals with the immigration experiences of southern Italians and eastern European Jews—the socioeconomic, cultural, and political circumstances influencing their decisions to leave Europe, the trans-Atlantic voyage, and the bureaucratic people-processing encounters at Ellis Island. Parella suggests that the classroom computer simulation is an innovative teaching process because it provides students creative

ways of knowing and understanding immigration history by allowing them to participate in the kinds of conditions and decisions with which immigrants were confronted. Through role-playing, students are able to move beyond the mastery of specific information and to develop advanced analytical skills.

Steve Golin also examines the experiences of Italian and Jewish immigrants during the period of urbanization and industrialization in America. His subject, however, is the development of class consciousness and unity between Italian and Jewish textile workers in Paterson, New Jersey, and the resultant silk worker's strike of 1913. Golin points out that while the silk workers called upon the Industrial Workers of the World for some organizational assistance, progressive Italian and Jewish silk workers drew on their respective ethnic traditions of militance in Europe and America—Italian anarchism and Jewish socialism—and common working conditions in Paterson to develop a genuinely multi-ethnic labor movement and strike.

Mark Hutter's paper challenges the conventional Chicago School's social disorganization thesis regarding the life experiences of European immigrants in America's rapidly expanding industrial cities in the Midwest and Northeast during the turn of the century. He investigates the severe problems immigrants faced: urban poverty, poor housing, and family distress. Hutter shows how the public outcry, resulting from public-spirited writers and reformers, led to various social reforms directed more at changing immigrants themselves than their economic and material conditions. In the process, social reformers developed erroneous perspectives about immigrants; scholars at the University of Chicago developed the pathological thesis of urban immigrant culture and social structure. Hence, reformers saw immigrants, rather than their economic circumstances as problematical and sought to implement numerous managerial strategies and policies—especially public and private welfare agencies and urban school systems—to eliminate immigrant culture and values and to replace them with American culture and values. Immigrant children were the key target of acculturation and absorption strategies. Hutter examines the migration patterns of immigrant families to both rural and industrial communities, revealing that this movement did not destroy traditional kinship relations and structures. Families served as important intermediary structures to facilitate immigrants' transition into urban industrial life. Hutter concludes that the Chicago School's social pathology perspective is incorrect; urbanization and industrialization destroyed neither traditional kinship linkages nor the interdependence of immigrant families and their communities.

Sydney Weinberg skillfully uses the oral history method, augmented by immigrant literature, to examine the complexities, contradictions, and dilemmas that immigrant Jewish women confronted in their efforts to become American. She probes the sources of family and religious tensions, the problems of language and cultural change, the relationship between age differences and the process of becoming American, institutions designed to encourage Americanization, Jewish social mechanisms employed to ease family and cultural conflict, and the hopes and aspirations of young Jewish women in transition from old world culture to new world culture and experiences. Weinberg shows that for some young women the transition was particularly difficult, for they were torn between their parents' traditional culture and their own desires to be fully American. This resulted in an experience of existential duality for some and psychological breakdown for others. Weinberg explores the experiences of other young immigrant working class women who remained close to the immigrant environment and joined Jewish organizations, such as the Workman's Circle and the socialist Party. They tended to avoid the wrenching familial and internal conflicts that seemed to plague many who sought absolute Americanization.

These presentations provoke several questions the answers to which might be material for further research.

Both Howard Green and Steve Golin touch, but do not explore the implications of cultural/class contradictions *within* the Jewish immigrant experience. What was the nature of the interaction between the earlier Sephardic Jewish immigrants and newly arriving Jewish immigrants at the turn of the century? What was the nature of class conflict within the Jewish community in America's developing urban industrial centers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? What were the culture/class contradictions like with the increasing immigration of the Ashkenazis following World War II?

What are the similarities and differences between the Jewish/Italian immigrant experiences and the Irish immigrant experience, particularly with regard to the rise of urban machine politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and



emergence of urban reform politics in the 1920s?

While captured Africans, as chattel slaves, and conquered Hispanics did not make decisions to immigrate to colonial America, the postemancipation migratory experiences of Afro-Americans to urban industrial centers and the recent immigration of Hispanics resemble, in many respects, the European immigration experience addressed in this session's presentations. In many instances, past and present social managers and policy intellectuals have viewed Afro-American and Hispanic urban poverty, not from the standpoint of structural inequality and material economic underdevelopment in America, but from the "culture of poverty" perspective (a variant of the Chicago School's social pathology thesis). If social reformers and policy intellectuals and researchers made erroneous assumptions about traditional immigrant cultural forms, and sought to implement managerial programs and policies to transform immigrants based upon these false assumptions, as Mark Hutter shows and Sydney Weinberg implies, are similar assumptions and managerial strategies being directed at today's emerging urban underclass, which is disproportionately Afro-American and Hispanic? What is the significance of California voters' recent decision to make English the state's official language?

What are the social, economic and educational implications for various racial/ethnic groups in the context of the progressive transformation of urban economies from industrial manufacturing centers of the first half of this century to postindustrial human-resources-based, information-processing, administrative systems in the last half of this century? What are the probabilities and possibilities of multi-ethnic/racial class consciousness and solidarity among the oppressed Afro-American, Hispanic, and Asian nationalities in the emerging postindustrial-managerial cities? Or will these groups struggle against each other, e.g., the left-behinds versus the left-behinds? Will we see the struggle between rising and declining social forces in the evolving postindustrial-managerial cities?

In view of the rise of black urban administrative regimes in major U.S. cities—for example, Thomas Bradley in Los Angeles, Andrew Young in Atlanta, Wilson Goode in Philadelphia, and Harold Washington in Chicago—what are the roles of the Jewish population and other "old" immigrant groups in contemporary urban politics? What are the future challenges and prospects to "old" immigrant groups posed by the emergence of Hispanic and Asian immigrants as new political actors on the urban scene? What are the trends in the development of the new ethnic/racial urban politics?

## **SESSION X — THEORY AND METHOD**

Chair: Robert Perry, Bowling Green State University

**June Murray-Gill, University of California, Berkeley. "Race/Class/Gender as a Theoretical Model for the Study of Social Stratification."**

Social stratification has been studied from various perspectives; in my paper I examine an emerging theoretical perspective: race/class/gender combined as an approach to social/economic relations in modern society. During the past twenty years we have witnessed a variety of sociological studies of social environments and relations that have utilized class as the dominant variable as confounded by gender as combined with race and class. The tendency has been to accept an overview of society without factoring out the roles females play in a society stratified by race and class and the effect those roles have on social/economic relations. Nevertheless, we are on the brink of change in sociological combination of race/class/gender, and its attendant methodology is beginning to be more widely utilized. My paper reviews the results of this pioneering research on the roles women play in areas such as employment, the community, education and the changing roles in the family. I also suggest concrete questions, most appropriately addressed from this new perspective, for future research, for example: what effects would the combination of the race/class/gender model have as applied to the theory of "Internal Colonialism"? The effects of gender as combined with race and class has largely been over-looked in traditional studies of social stratification; my paper draws attention to the need for a change in theory and methodology as well as explores the early results of the application of a new theoretical perspective.

**James H. Williams, California State Polytechnic University. "Ethics and Ethnic Studies: A Moral Imperative."**

This paper introduces and examines the validity of incorporating ethics in the teaching of ethnic studies courses. The collaboration of ethics and ethnic studies in an effort to understand ethical theory and its implications in ethnic studies curricula has

never been seriously pursued. Strong ethnic studies courses should contain a problem solving and dilemma resolution component. They should address theory construction and critique. This writer maintains that a lack of exposure to ethics explains, in part, why students seem so indifferent to learning the skills of careful and critical reading and of clear and logical writing. The interdisciplinary thrust of ethnic studies provides the ideal learning environment for incorporating ethics.

**John T. Hatfield, California State Polytechnic University. "Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, Religious Studies, and the Crisis in Education."**

The University is in a critical and transitory stage. The fragmentation of knowledge and the reality of a plurality of cultures threatens the University, which maintains the Enlightenment agenda of privileging rationality. Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and Religious Studies could lead the way in the criticism of this agenda and in the development of the University's *raison d'être*: the kind of person the University, rather than any particular department or discipline, intends to create. Critical and historical analysis of the notion of ethnicity and the nature of ethnic studies/women's studies/religious studies will lead to the conclusion that a new humanism is possible, but that it cannot be dependent upon the polar opposition between ethnic and dominant cultures. In a paradoxical way, Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and Religious Studies programs will succeed in creating a new humanism to the degree that they become redundant.

**Gregory Tillman, Bowling Green State University. "Black Women as Multidimensional Writers."**

The research explores the multiple lenses through which one might view a number of major works by contemporary black American, Caribbean, and African women writers. I explore questions of interpretation and its effects and pedagogy; to what extent should these works be read as cultural documents; do new critical rules have to be suspended in the reading of works about unfamiliar cultures and peoples; do contemporary structuralist readings of black texts violate these texts or help replace the preoccupation with sociology in criticism of such works.

**Respondent: Stewart Rodnon, Rider College**

This was a wonderfully diverse set of papers which required some knowledge of sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy of ethics and psychology of education. To try to synthesize is impossible, but a few larger generalities are worth suggesting. Our economic and social system conditions most of us to believe in competition rather than in cooperative efforts. Inevitably a system of superior vs. inferior classifications is established. These classifications, it seems, are invented for the convenience of the classifier, frequently for their power-producing effect. This pattern established by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males gave inferiority status to women, persons of color, and minority religious groups; ethical considerations had no place in that process, pragmatism did: it was necessary to have an exploitable working class, necessary to create a classic view of American history and literature so distorted to the disadvantage of women and minorities that it borders on disinformation, necessary to put the country on the cutting edge of racial genocide. This session on theory and method, although in part theoretical, faces the contemporary practical issues with directness and courage. In a way we here are trying to destroy that system of classification outlined above and replace it with one based on truth, impeccable morality, and equality. Each of these papers, successfully I believe, deals with component pieces of this jigsaw puzzle of prejudice. The Murray-Gill paper delineated recent gender stereotyping; Williams pursued the moral-implicative implications of race relations, arguing persuasively against the lack of moral discipline and for the seeking of truth in academe; the Hatfield presentation called vigorously for the raising of status of ethnic and minority studies, and Tillman passionately defended his views of black women as multidimensional writers. These diverse papers clearly improved our vision of contemporary educational, philosophic and literary problems.

**SESSION XI—SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS**

Chair: Natalie Isser, Pennsylvania State University, Ogotz

**Wolde-Michael Akalou, Texas Southern University. "The Advent, Dilemma, and Prospects of Ethiopians in America."**

Ethiopians are among the latest addition to the American scene. Most came after the 1974 Ethiopian "revolution." Approximately 50,000 Ethiopians live in the U.S. today. Most are concentrated in major urban centers, notably Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. The rest are scattered all over the country. Very little is known about the

Ethiopians in America. Virtually nothing tangible has been written about them. Many features of the Ethiopians have contributed to this lack of interest. These include, inter alia, ethnic pride and cohesiveness, a seemingly impassive demeanor and a sojourner mentality. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the impact of these features on the economic achievement, acculturation, and adjustment problems of the Ethiopians in America.

**Phillips G. Davies, Iowa State University. "The Gymanfa Ganu: The Main Welsh-American Contribution to North American Ethnicity."**

Although there have been several Welsh-American institutions and traditions, most have passed away along with the decline of the common use of the Welsh language. Gymanfas, meetings at which hymns are sung by a group or people under the leadership of a trained conductor, still are held both periodically in various towns and villages as well as nationally once a year. The custom was started in Wales in 1859, and began to be held in this country within a decade. My paper discusses the history of this tradition and, based upon personal experience, I discuss the event from an analytical perspective.

**Steven J. Gold, Whittier College. "Definitions of Ethnicity as Subgroup Ideologies: Conflict and Unification among Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese Refugees."**

Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees are wary of political mobilization. However, members of both groups are interested in community organization and ethnic identity. This paper describes efforts made by refugee subgroups to use definitions of ethnicity as ideologies that serve members' needs. Each subgroup defines ethnicity to reflect its members' experiences, to remove responsibility for past failures and to solve cultural and motivational conflicts. Competing community activists use definitions of ethnicity to justify their claims for leadership. In conclusion, ethnicity is used as a flexible and situationally-based tool in order to unite refugees who resist political appeals.

**Dimitri Monos, West Chester University. "The Assimilation and the Upward Socio-Economic Mobility of the Greeks in America."**

This study examines the assimilation and the upward socio-economic mobility of the Greeks in America, particularly the Greeks of Boston and Philadelphia. The major findings focus on education, occupational assimilation, income, unemployment rates, success rates, linguistic assimilation, and marital assimilation.

**Respondent: Ernest Champion, Bowling Green State University**

The contributions of professors Gold, Davies, and Monos have added to the existing knowledge of how ethnic groups adapt, acculturate, and assimilate into American society.

Davies' paper proved most interesting to me because of my close association with the people of South Wales where I taught for some time. Welsh ethnicity lies in the music and the poetry of Wales. It comes from the beautiful valleys, the rugged mountains, and the hard life in the coal mines. Most of all, Welsh ethnicity, in a real sense, is defined by everything that is not English. It is further defined by the Welsh language itself.

Davies therefore is right when he refers to the Welsh and the unWelsh character of Welsh ethnicity in the new world. This is further heightened by the divisions between the Canadian Welsh and the American Welsh. He would rather see a return to the indigenous and original Welsh which is under attack by the introduction of a few English customs and habits. He even goes to the extent that the traditional hymn, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," as being unWelsh when sung next to the Welsh anthem.

Davies cautions the American Welsh against what he feels to be the unWelsh influences, but this is inevitable and perhaps will progress as each ethnic group struggles to maintain its native identity.

The one problem I have with Davies' paper is that he takes a great deal for granted and expects the reader to be familiar with the Welsh terms. For example, he does not define what a "gymanfa ganu" is. It is only after one has read a good portion of the paper that its meaning and function becomes clear. Similarly, he does not introduce the reader to the "eisteddfod," the great Welsh festival. These by no means distracted from the content and quality of his paper.

Monos' agony is the agony of reliving a glorious past that has now become history. His task is to restore an understanding of the greatness of Greek culture to the people of the United States, but more importantly to those Greeks who have left Greece and are not Greek-Americans. I find this to be extremely interesting. If George Seferis, the

Greek Nobel Laureate, sighed "Greece, wherever I go you hurt me," Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist, also said when asked why he wrote as he did, "I write to heal the pain of the wound in the soul." The burden of Greekness has been forgotten, Africa's heritage has been neglected and denigrated. The pain of the wound in the soul is universal among all ethnic groups in the United States; however, therein also lie the roots of ethnicity in America. Out of our pain will come the well springs of creativity which will forever keep ethnicity alive, as new immigrants come they will look back with love, experience pain in the present, and perhaps bring forth a labor of love as Monos has done.

Gold's paper highlights the problems of groups such as Soviet Jews and Vietnamese refugees who bring with them a certain "ethnic baggage." In the case of the Soviet Jews, it is orthodoxy as against reform and with the Vietnamese it is the elites and upper classes as against the assimilators who were subjects of suppression in their homeland and now seek to forge a new life in a new world. This theme, again, is universal in character. For example, those coming from the Indian subcontinent and even Sri Lanka bring with them the "baggage" of caste. The Brahmins of India and the higher castes of India and Sri Lanka still tend to preserve their caste by marrying within that caste. The long arm of caste reaches out even to America and Canada. The Hindu temples that are being built in California and Pittsburg and other major cities will become citadels of caste. The lower classes that have stood outside of the social order will be more assimilationist in the United States. Ethnicity therefore has its dichotomy and we should not fail to see this. Gold's paper should be a stepping stone for other scholars to explore. This dichotomy in ethnicity is inherited and not peculiarly American.

Gold, Monos, and Davies have drawn our attention to the "ethnic baggage" that all groups bring with them and in the case of some there is a darker side to ethnicity which one hopes will not take root in this country such as caste and religious elitism. There is ample material for scholars to pursue in these matters of social and cultural adaptations and how they manifest themselves.

## SESSION XII — INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Chair: Arthur J. Hughes, St. Francis College

### Reed Coughlan, Empire State College. "Terrorism: 'Propaganda by Deed': The IRA and the Suasion of Public Opinion."

Terrorism has, since 1968, rapidly assumed center stage as the most visible and widely used strategy by minority ethnic and nationalist groups bent on presenting their case to the world community. For a variety of reasons the American public seems abysmally ignorant of the many and complex causes that terrorists espouse. At the same time it is quite apparent that Americans are increasingly identified as the target of terrorist violence. It is, therefore, important that we begin to understand the underlying logic of terrorism so that the injustices and perceived oppression of ethnic and national minorities can be addressed more adequately. Following a general discussion of these issues, this paper develops an analysis of terrorist action in Northern Ireland by both Protestant and Catholic communities in an attempt to evaluate the effect such action has had on public opinion both in the United States and in Britain. The media will be examined as the lens through which the public views such violence. The paper contends that the quest for sensationalism and the commercial value of reports of violence tend to preclude media discussion and analysis of the complex and underlying causes and issues. The connections between the state and the media, especially in Britain (e.g., the British Broadcasting Company and censorship by the British government) is explored in this context. The paper concludes with a discussion and critique of current American and Western European policies on the prevention of terrorism.

### Juan L. Gonzales, Jr., California State University, Hayward. "Naturalization Rates Among Mexican Nationals: The Key to Political Representation among Hispanics in California."

The introduction to this paper provides a close review and analysis of the rates of naturalization of Mexican nationals from the historical perspective as compared to the naturalization rates that are commonly found among other immigrant groups in this country. The paper then examines the primary reasons for this very low rate of naturalization among Mexican nationals in general. To this end, the major sociological and cultural factors are given close consideration. The voter participation rates among Hispanics are studied and compared to the Hispanic voter potential in the political

arena if only the eligible legal resident aliens in the Hispanic community would take the necessary steps toward achieving American citizenship. It is clear that at the present time Hispanics are woefully underrepresented at every level of government and at every stage in the political process.

**David C. Knowton, University of Texas. "We Are Men: Political Economy and the Ideology of Ethnicity in LaPaz, Bolivia."**

Bolivia is a multiethnic nation, in which the semiotic of ethnicity is constrained by but not reducible to political economy. In fact, ethnicity is one of the major forces organizing the relations of production there. Yet it shows a certain independence as well. In the formation of the country, the imported ideology of "nationalism" has struggled with this plural reality in an attempt to construct a single, national ethos. Recently the ideology of "ethnicity" has entered into open conflict with unitary nationalism, particularly as manifested in the Indianist *Katarista* movement. This paper explores the convoluted relations among the formation of ideologies, the semiotic of ethnicity, political conflict, and the reality of the political economic base, using the presidential elections of 1985 as text.

**Luis L. Pinto, Bronx Community College. "Evaluating the Effects of the United States Historical Tax Overhaul on the Political Economies of the Caribbean Basin Countries."**

The economies of the Caribbean and Latin American countries confront a self-destructive cycle. After Canada, Latin America is our most natural trading partner. Its rapidly expanding population ought to spur brisk trade growth. Politically, how we handle the devastating effects that the recent United States Tax Overhaul and the debt crisis will have on the economies of those countries may color our relations with countries of the region for some years to come. These countries are to some extent sacrificing their futures in order to pay their debts. They are impoverishing themselves so that we can enjoy higher unemployment and protectionist pressures.

**Respondent: Elizabeth Whalley, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona**

In each paper presented in the "International Issues" session, the issue related to politics: political terrorism, political representation, and political economy. Whether people declare an interest in politics or not, politics plays an important role in people's everyday lives, and the three areas of politics covered in these presentations are important to people throughout the world.

Obviously political terrorism, unfortunately, has become commonplace in the news. After presenting a review of research on terrorism, Coughlan defines terrorism as "an instrumental form of political violence," meaning that the purpose of violence is political, and he reminds us that the audience of the violence is different from the violence victims. Because violence is, as Coughlan accurately asserts, a public act, it does affect us: the public. Coughlan concludes that the IRA has used various forms of violence to direct public opinion in England so that the government will withdraw its troops from Ulster; in spite of this, of course, the troops remain because it is believed that the conflict would become worse if the troops were withdrawn. In a vast number of countries terrorism is prevalent and the terrorists are right about one thing: violence does catch the public's attention.

Terrorists express their opinions by violence. In contrast to these dramatic expressions of opinion and brutal attempts to influence government is voting, another way in which people try to have their opinions heard. Yet some groups forego this opportunity. Juan L. Gonzales, Jr., found almost 2/3 of the Mexican nationals in Alameda County, California, are eligible to vote by age alone, but that 3/4 are not eligible to vote because they have not become citizens. The Chicano vote could be a powerful voice in the community because contrary to popular myth, once a Hispanic is registered to vote, s/he is more likely to vote than a non-Hispanic (by about 3%). There has been recently an increase in the number of Hispanics who do vote. Gonzales rightfully calls for the continued increase in electoral participation by Hispanics and reminds us of the need for Hispanic leaders to guide the community.

Leadership is needed because political leaders have a great influence over the economic life of people in a given community. Two papers dealt with political economy. First David C. Knowton described the abolition of ethnicity in Bolivia with the revolution of 1952 and the agrarian reform that followed it, because politicians demanded an amalgam of the peoples. *Class* replaced *ethnicity* in the category breakdowns used by sociologists during this period. After 1982 when democracy

returned to Bolivia, ethnicity was again central to political discussion and political leaders tried to obtain the "peasant," (read Indian) vote. Knowlton went on to explain the differences among the various terms used for different groups, criollo, mestizo, cholo, indian, jaqi and q'ara and how language use and clothing, in part, are indicators of ethnicity, although people vary in terms of how identified they are with any particular ethnic group at a given point in time. Knowlton concluded with a discussion of Bolivian nationalism astutely observing that Bolivia is "a country where ethnic difference has always organized political economy by never being completely definable by political economic organization."

Again the effects of politics on everyday life were brought to light by Luis Pinto's carefully researched discussion of the U.S. tax overhaul on the political economies of Caribbean Basin countries. The passing of the Gramm-Rudman bill means that the tax incentives which motivated socially and economically worthwhile endeavors have been undermined. Those are the indirect effects; the direct effects are also monumental. The U.S. sugar quotas directly affect the working force in Caribbean Basin countries. Over the last twenty-five years, the U.S. sugar policy has cost the Caribbean Basin about 130,000 jobs, while just since 1984 sugar producers have lost \$300 million. Pinto elicited the devastating effects of the tax laws on many Caribbean Basin countries including Santo Domingo, Barbados, and Costa Rica. He concluded with a call for understanding of the effects of our laws for the economies of our southern neighbors and for regional cooperation and development.

Each of the papers contributed to our specific and general knowledge of the effects of politics on minorities, and by doing so reminded us how interconnected we are with one another's lives.

### **SESSION XIII - SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES: POETRY AND INTERPRETATION**

Chair: Helen Jaskoski, California State University, Fullerton

Misuye Yamada, Cypress College.

Misuye Yamada teaches English at Cypress College in Cypress, California, and is poet-in-residence during spring 1987 at Pitzer College in Claremont. She read and discussed poems from her collection *Desert Run* forthcoming from Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. She has also published *Camp Notes & Other Poems*. She is active in MELUS as membership coordinator and program chair for the Creative Writers' sessions at the 1987 conference.

Silvester J. Brito, University of Wyoming.

Silvester Brito is President of NAES and teaches folklore and ethnic literature at the University of Wyoming. He read and discussed poems from *Red Cedar Warrior* just published by Jelm Mountain Press. His other collections include *Looking Through a Squared-Off Circle*, *Man From a Rainbow*, and *Spirit Shadows*.

### **SESSION XIV — EDUCATION**

Chair: Phillips G. Davies, Iowa State University

Glen M. Kraig, California State University, San Bernardino. **"Self-Esteem and Achievement in the Chicano Child."**

Americans boast that in the United States all students have an equal opportunity for a free, quality, general education. All Americans should be proud of this. A question remains, however, if this is, indeed, true. Do all students, in fact, have an equal opportunity to learn? A perusal of the literature suggests that this question must, unfortunately, be answered in the negative. Chicano students have not had, historically, an equal opportunity to a quality education. In this country "language minority students have had a history of higher dropout rates, over-agedness, and academic lag. . . for which monolingual education has not proven successful." In the southwestern part of the United States forty percent of the Chicano students drop out of high school. In this same region only fourteen percent of non-Hispanic whites fail to complete high school. What makes matters worse is that this gap is widening. On almost every scale of measurement of academic success the Chicano student lags behind the Anglo student. This is a situation that cannot be tolerated by a society which boasts of equal educational opportunity. Rather it is a situation which clamors for investigation and change. Insofar that Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in America today, a growing, undereducated populace will only further augment the woes in American society. Higher welfare rolls, an increasing crime rate, and higher unemployment figures are only a few of the problems which can be expected to result.

**Sam Rios, Jr., California State University, Sacramento. "La Chicana: Conflicts in Enculturation, Socialization and Education."**

This paper examines the ongoing conflicts which occur when Mexican child rearing practices (enculturation) are seen as incongruent with the values, beliefs, and norms of the dominant society (socialization), especially in a formal educational setting. This presentation emphasizes the diversity and broad spectrum of Mexican migrants who have historically moved north to the U.S. from Mexico in direct proportion to the labor demands and the socioeconomic conditions of both countries. Enculturation to past, present and future migrants to this country reflects their basic family values which often conflict with the values and behavior orientation of the "dominant" society. This is especially evident in the failure of public education for the Mexican migrant child and the urban Mexican student. This paper concludes with a perspective which argues that a monolingual, mono-cultural education system will continue to fail the Mexican student because the system is incongruent to a large and growing bilingual multi-cultural population.

**Lena C. Solis, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. "Contemporary Multicultural Education in Pomona."**

This paper investigates the multicultural education programs in the Pomona Unified School District. The primary aim is to determine the effectiveness of the programs in terms of identity, self-esteem and basic skills. My attention was drawn to Mendoza Elementary School's program by an article in the Pomona, California, *Progress Bulletin*. Richard Perez-Pena wrote "Multicultural Awareness Stressed" about Mendoza Elementary School within the Pomona Unified School District. He noted: "Of the 640 students [at the school] 70 percent are from Hispanic backgrounds, 20 percent Asian, 8 percent black and only 2 percent white." The article is intriguing, because "92 percent [of 640] students have limited proficiency in English." As a future educator and presently a substitute teacher in surroundings similar to Pomona, El Monte and Baldwin Park, California, my interest was piqued. I understand multicultural education to be a balance between ethnic content and the incorporation of themes of identity into the school curriculum, a distinct difference from multiethnic education which is based on ethnic content only. "Multicultural Awareness Stressed" was the beginning of my investigation into the education processes taking place in the Pomona Unified School District.

**Respondent: Lita Linzer Schwartz, Pennsylvania State University, Ogontz.**

The core of the three papers presented is concern with the self-esteem of the Chicano child and its relationship to the child's educational achievement. There are numerous parallels to this concern in our nation's history. The difficulties of educating children from minority ethnic/racial/religious groups, while concurrently maintaining their self-esteem, has been of major concern to parents, teachers, politicians, and others in the community throughout the centuries of immigration from non-English-speaking countries.

Kraig began his paper with the question, "Do all students, in fact, have an equal opportunity to learn?" One must define terms. If he means "equal access to the schools," under the laws of the several States and Congress, all students are supposed to have that opportunity. If he means "equal opportunity to achieve," then I must agree with his negative conclusion. Chicanos, however, are only one segment of the school-age population that suffers from inequality in the opportunity to achieve.

I agree with Kraig's summary of the reasons why Chicano children have both low self-esteem and low educational achievement, but regret his lack of recognition that many groups live in two cultural systems concurrently, that acculturation differs from assimilation, and that we have, as a nation, come to be aware in the past two decades that the "melting pot" image is not true and never was. What we have in this country is cultural pluralism.

Kraig cites relevant research about children's self-concepts and their derivation. The sense of alienation suffered by Chicano children is rooted in a complex web—low social status, poverty in many cases, absence of Hispanic heroes and history in the textbooks, lack of understanding of Hispanic heritage, values, and mores by teachers—to indicate a few. These are factors also faced by other children. Kraig's proposed solutions to the problem, based in part on research he cites, are quite appropriate.

Rios has referred to some of the same historical and economic factors in his paper as Kraig cited. He has, however, emphasized the generational differences within the Mexican-American population, and the continuum from monolingual, monocultural



(Mexican) to completely bilingual, bicultural elements in this large group. He has also listed the numerous stereotypes associated by non-Mexicans with people of Mexican ancestry. Some of these views, correct or not, are the same ones ascribed to other minority groups—isolated, foreign speaker, family centered, nationalistic, high juvenile and felony crime rates, etc. Some of the views are typical of at least parts of the low socio-economic population at large, which includes the powerless and the ones without hope. Delayed gratification, for example, is a luxury if you are in need of food today, or a roof, or medical care. Being family centered and religious, though, are not negative values unless you perceive them that way. In essence, the alteration of current perceptions is what Rios seeks. He recognizes, and wants the educational establishment to recognize, that there are many stages and varieties of acculturation, and that these must be taken into account in the education of Chicano children.

Solis' paper focuses on her study of contemporary multicultural educational processes. She differentiates between multicultural and multiethnic education in a way that is unclear, inferring that the former has affective aspects that the latter does not. The terms more often are used interchangeably. However, her investigation of the programs adds another piece to the puzzle of how education can best serve Chicano children.

Each presenter made recommendations that might ultimately enhance self-esteem and achievement. One key element in their suggestions is a pervasive program rather than a mere interjection. This should be true not only for the children, but in their teacher's education as well.

## **Contributors**

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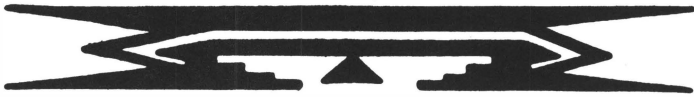
**MARGARET BEDROSIAN** teaches multiethnic literature at the University of California, Davis. Her primary research interest is in Armenian American literature.

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Newsletter Article	<sup>3</sup> James H. Williams. "Ethnicity and Human Rights: Raising the National Consciousness." <i>NAIES Newsletter</i> . Vol. 5, No. 2 (October, 1980) 19.
Newspaper Article	<sup>4</sup> Jack Slater. "Where Are the Blacks in Ballet?" <i>Los Angeles Times</i> . (June 8, 1980) 18.
Article in a Book	<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg. "Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Socialization." <i>Handbook of Socialization</i> . D. Goslin, ed. (New York: Rand McNally, 1969) 347-580.
Thesis/Dissertation	<sup>6</sup> Michael G. Karni. "Yhteishyra"—or <i>For the Common Good: Finnish Radicalism in the Western Great Lakes Region 1900-1940</i> . Ph.D. Dissertation. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1975) 115-195.
Multiple Authors	<sup>7</sup> A.K. Bahn, E.A. Gardner, L. Alltop, G.L. Knatterud, and M. Solomon. "Admissions and Prevalence Rates for Psychiatric Facilities in Four Register Areas." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> . Vol. 56, No. 12 (December, 1966) 2033-2051.
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