

The Co-opting of Ethnic Studies in the American University: A Critical View

Jesse M. Vazquez

The birth of ethnic studies in the American university was accompanied by the politics and pedagogy of rage, pride, and mistrust for the then prevailing curricular academic structures and its tradition-bound, academically conservative gatekeepers. The campus take-overs, student demands, and confrontations were a common expression of the times, and concomitantly these were also shapers of the changing times. The presence or absence of ethnic minority faculty and students in our universities was and continues to be one of many indices by which we measure the willingness of this society to live up to its responsibility and promise to guarantee expanding educational opportunity for all. The creation of ethnic studies programs as a legitimate academic course of study in the university was one key part of that long range objective. Many universities now boast of departments and programs in Afro-American Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and other ethnic studies entities. Today's student can leaf through the semester's schedule of courses and choose from a wide array of ethnic studies offerings and think only of whether or not it fits into his/her program. Even traditional academic departments, formerly resolute in their refusal to include ethnic studies courses in their curriculum, now cross-list, and in many instances generate their own version of ethnic studies courses in direct competition with existing ethnic studies programs.

Thus, the university, through a wide ranging set of curricular reforms and innovations—in the best “culturally pluralistic” tradition—has effectively managed to co-opt some of the more socially and politically palatable aspects of the ethnic studies movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is, therefore, not surprising to see the liberal arts sequences, and especially the pre-professional training programs (education, counseling, psychology, social work, criminal justice, and other mental health professions) now showing a marked interest in anything that focuses on the cross-cultural, multicultural, international, world or global studies perspective.

These latest curricular trends seem to be moving us away from the political and social urgency intended by the founders of ethnic studies,

and toward the kind of program design which conforms to and is consistent with the traditional academic structures. Are we now beginning to witness a gradual intellectual and political de-railing or erosion of a curriculum which once constituted a significant threat to the academy?

Certainly, the struggle to legitimize these programs academically has taken the edge and toughness out of the heart of some of our ethnic studies curriculum. Not all of these changes, however, have been negative or detrimental to the integrity of these programs. There is little doubt that some of the shifts in our approach, which have been either generated by us or in response to academic rigidity and intransigence, have been a sign of our own maturity. Similarly, these new perspectives and approaches have allowed us to survive in an ever-changing university environment. My argument is not with responsible adaptability for the sake of academic survival; it is with the issue of how far we have allowed ourselves to drift from the central intellectual and social issues that brought us into the university in the first place.

As we witness the abandonment of the inner cities, experience a greater separation between the poor and the middle class, struggle with the spiralling drop-out rates of ethnic minorities, and learn of the latest racial attacks, we in ethnic studies must ask ourselves what happened to the original or founding principles and concerns of these new and radical interdisciplinary programs of the 1960s and 1970s. While we recognize that the politics have shifted along with a restrictive economic climate, and while the administration in Washington has undermined whatever social programs there were that made a difference, nonetheless, the major social, political, and intellectual questions and issues of the sixties are still with us today. In many ways, conditions have worsened for the ethnic/racial minorities in American society.

What I see happening in the university directly affects ethnic studies. I believe that many of us, and indeed our programs, through the misapplication of our curriculum, have been seduced and lulled into believing that the institutionalization of our programs signals a dramatic positive shift in university policy and a change in traditional faculty attitudes. My contention is that it does not; but at the same time, this *glasnost*, if you will, in the university's approach towards ethnic studies does not necessarily have to represent a threat to the original principles of ethnic studies. Far from being a Luddite's proposal, which would have us turn the clock back to 1969, this essay strongly suggests a serious reappraisal of where we are, and how far we have strayed from some of our original objectives. Structures and academic entities notwithstanding, are we doing what we set out to do when we first entered the university almost twenty years ago? Rather than "a critical view," perhaps this essay should be more aptly sub-titled a "cautionary essay."

Founding Principles in University Ethnic Studies.

For purposes of this discussion I would like to put forth a number of

statements which I believe capture the essence of what some of these original objectives or principles were expected to accomplish. Charles C. Irby, in “Ethnic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: A Proposal,” suggests a number of ideas which should serve as a measure for those struggling with an appraisal of where we are in our development. In the following statement, Irby joins some of his thoughts with those of Helen MacLam:

Ultimately, the purpose of ethnic studies is to invest people with the power to act and change; power to assume direction for their own lives and to alter the prevailing societal structure so we can all share in what is justly ours.¹ There are few people willing to share in the idealism of the previous statement, but committed persons are needed who are willing to struggle for a liberating educational process.²

And later in the piece, Irby elaborates upon what he believed the mission of ethnic studies should be as we near the end of the twentieth century:

The vibrant and healthy ethnic studies programs entering the twenty-first century will be those encompassing certain radical directions in the 1980s and 1990s. The following are minimal: reducing dependence on male Euroamerican studies in coloured faces; questioning societal priests, especially ourselves; restructuring institutions at every turn to reflect who we really are in this nation; involving individuals in the processes of liberation through dynamic consciousness; and a continuing willingness to accept and project the goals and promises of liberation studies to hesitant audiences. . . . The focus for ethnic studies must be seen in terms of a mission in the academy and broader institutional and cultural contexts. The mission is to bring liberation to fruition for all citizens. We must persist in spite of naysayers, for a liberating educational process should enhance the political economy, socio/cultural development, and psycho/personal health.³

While Irby’s thoughts are generally descriptive of ethnic studies as a whole, the ideas expressed by Frank Bonilla, although addressing the goals of Puerto Rican Studies, contain some of the essential guiding principles followed by most ethnic studies programs as they sought to carve out a place in the university:

Puerto Rican Studies now exist in the United States because consciously or intuitively enough of us *reject any version of education or learning that does not forthrightly affirm that our freedom as a people is a vital concern and an attainable goal*. That is, we have set out to contest effectively those visions of the world that assume or take for granted the inevitability and indefinite duration of the class and colonial oppression that has marked Puerto Rico’s history. All the disciplines that we are most directly drawing upon—history, economics, sociology, anthropology, literature, psychology, pedagogy—as they are practiced in the United States are deeply implicated in the construction of that vision of Puerto Ricans as an inferior, submissive people, trapped on the underside of relations from which there is no foreseeable exit.⁴

We could easily add to these statements, but we would simply be repeating ourselves. Suffice it to say that the mission or the various reasons for an ethnic studies presence in the American university are markedly different from those that preceded the entry or admission of the more traditional academic disciplines. If we are there in part to challenge or to “contest,” as Bonilla suggests, or to press for a “liberating educational process” as proposed by Irby, are we still actively engaged in any of these processes in the latter part of the 1980s? Or have we, in our drive to become a legitimate part of the institution, gradually allowed ourselves and our programs to become unwitting participants in a

process that will transform ethnic studies into just one more interdisciplinary department?

These are my concerns. I hope that I might stimulate further discussion by focusing on a number of institutional contradictions and current societal conditions which I am certain many have struggled with, and that represent a potential threat to the integrity and continuation of some of our ethnic studies programs as originally conceived.

Competing Visions of a Liberal University Education

In the past few years I have been involved in a number of activities which have given me the opportunity to observe some of the latest shifts and currents in university policy and practices related to ethnic studies. Some of these activities are familiar to those in ethnic studies and by no means do they represent an intentional or formal data gathering effort.⁵ These varied activities have given me the opportunity to observe, read in a variety of areas, actively participate in some of these policy making groups, and finally draw my own conclusions and suggest some interpretations about what I sense may be happening to ethnic studies in the university.

What I have witnessed most recently is a kind of institutional inversion, or more precisely a revolutionary paradox. Increasingly, I have noticed that those who were least inclined to join in the struggle to establish ethnic studies programs in the 1960s and 1970s are now actively engaged in a variety of activities which openly use the jargon and some of the concepts promoted and put into place by the earlier proponents of ethnic studies. Ironically, those who stormed the academic ivory towers in the 1960s, anticipating that their actions would shake the very foundations of the academy, are now being asked to sit in on affirmative action policy planning committees, draft grant proposals for cultural or world studies, consider cross-cultural curricular changes, join search committees looking for *qualitified minority* or *affirmative action candidates*. Now, does this kind of shift tell us anything about the way academia works? You bet it does! Chastened by these experiences, most of us approach these open invitations with some degree of cynicism and suspicion.

Actually, my concern about these institutional shifts started in the late 1970s when the *cultural pluralism* model was rapidly replacing the mythical and woefully inadequate concept of the melting pot. And in 1980-81, when, with a group of colleagues, who met regularly as a study group for the purpose of looking at the history of Puerto Rican Studies in the university, we found that we had to, in our historical analysis, critically examine the concept of cultural pluralism and assess its impact on the development of ethnic studies. At about the same time, one of our group members was asked to deliver the keynote address at the First International Puerto Rican Studies Conference which was to be held at Brooklyn College. Our preparation for that keynote required that we take

a very close look at the first ten years of Puerto Rican Studies.⁶ One of the many areas considered in our analysis was the question of cultural pluralism and its central role in the evolution of the ethnic studies movement. We examined the idea from various perspectives so that we might understand how, if mis-applied, the concept of cultural pluralism might effectively inhibit the life and growth of select ethnic studies programs in the university. Our group at that time concluded the following:

This new "cultural pluralist" philosophy is now being used to submerge and deflect the most critical and fundamental concerns of our community: its economic, cultural, and political survival. Although on the surface this liberal philosophy seems to represent a most viable, intelligent alternative to the forced assimilation expressed in the melting pot model, it is deceptive and must be openly challenged. Cultural pluralism overlooks certain critical socio-economic distinctions between groups that transcend mere cultural differences. If, on the one hand, it purports to give all ethnic groups an equal opportunity to examine and preserve their cultural heritage and cultural folkways, it ignores historical issues and conditions which make for the continued oppression of particular ethnic and racial minorities Cultural pluralism, as practiced in the university today, has had the effect of significantly muting the urgency of the expressed needs and demands of the Puerto Rican community. It has taken the question of ethnicity out of the political and economic domain and reduced it to a debate about quality of curriculum, tenure, academic solvency, and "cultural" studies.⁷

How the idea of cultural pluralism is understood, and how it is defined by the shapers of the university curriculum, will be a determining factor in maintaining the strength and authenticity of our ethnic studies programs. Have we, through a broader, less challenging response to the seemingly egalitarian aspects of the pluralism model, as suggested by Irby, become "parties to the evils of the academy rather than revolutionaries against them during the past fifteen years?"⁸ I think that we might be somewhat culpable in this regard; and the challenge that lies ahead for us is in determining precisely how we interpret the pluralism approach as it directly affects the mission of ethnic studies in the university. As we become less concerned with the central issues of our communities, and as these concerns lose their place in our course work and in our research, the programs will become far more acceptable to the established order and to the academy.

Since their inception, the life chances and viability of our ethnic studies programs have been tied to a broader societal network of attitudes, values, beliefs, and educational policies and practices. While the locus of control is still clearly within the university, the debate that surrounds these programs extends well beyond the governing bodies of our institutions of higher learning. The debate actually spills out of the university and into the constituent ethnic communities and other sectors of the larger society.

As ethnic studies practitioners, we know that these societal influences and pressures continue to make the mere presence, merit, and legitimacy of ethnic studies a constantly contended issue. We can see the same phenomenon in the area of bilingual multicultural education. For the most part, the public debate that surrounds bilingual education springs

from the myths and realities that shape American social thought and beliefs about the place of “foreign” languages and other cultures in the society as well as in the school. Because bilingual education goes counter to the prevailing historical belief that English should be the exclusive language of instruction in the American school, it will, as an alternative pedagogical device, continue to be resisted by those who remain resolute in their vision of what language means in the American system. It is more than a pedagogy that is being debated; it is a dialogue expressing competing visions of what it means to be an American. Similarly, if ethnic studies proposes to address the fundamental racial and ethnic historical realities of this nation, it too will continue to engender the same depth of resistance and enmity, both intellectual and historical, which is directed at the supporters of bilingual education.

Our work in these two areas simply contradicts the romantic, populist and historical idea of what American society is or was intended to be—a monolingual, monocultural society with a very thin innocuous veneer of racial and cultural differences which, in the end, should not affect democratic societal interaction. That is the societal myth, and ethnic studies proposes an alternative vision. The myth, of course, is embedded in an economic system with its attendant rewards and punishments.

The popularity of the public pronouncements issued by Allan Bloom and William Bennett, among others, is simply an expression of the fundamental mythology of what education is supposed to be and do for American society and for the individual. But we must recognize that the push for ethnic studies in the university is expressive of something that is also an integral part of the American tradition. It is part of a tradition that seeks to address the ideas of community (public or social life), and which is as vital to the American enterprise as the idea of the self-determination and individualism (private life). However these two aspects of society interact, the ethnic studies experiment in the American university seeks to remind us that the “community of memory”—as phrased by Bellah, et al. in *Habits of the Heart*—must be understood in terms of what it can offer to the society as a whole.⁹ It can be viewed as a counterpoint to the unceasing tendency in our society towards greater and greater isolation, self-reliance, self-absorption, and separation from the larger collective purpose and concern for the common or public good.

The issue of relevance that we continue to struggle with in the latter part of the 1980s as we did in the 1960s, has once again reared its ugly head in the guise of the Bloom attack on higher education. But, Martha Nussbaum, in her detailed and critical review of Allan Bloom’s book, addresses the matter of curriculum and relevance as follows:

Bloom’s proposals can be criticized on many fronts. But above all it is important to see plainly what he intends the university to be. Those who believe that the highest search for the truth does not turn away from concern for the quality of moral and social life and that the universities of America should exist for the sake of all its citizens, not only for the sake of a few, must find themselves opposed to Bloom’s conception. In defending their position, they will find, contrary to Bloom’s claims,

strong support from the arguments of the ancient Greek thinkers, and especially of the Stoics, who spoke so eloquently of practical reason as a universal human possession, whose cultivation is a central human need. And what of the curriculum? The Stoics saw that, in order to extend the benefits of higher education to all human beings, teaching would have to be responsive to the needs of many different types of human beings.¹⁰

And those of us who have been engaged in a struggle “to extend the benefits of higher education” to the disenfranchised are constantly faced with the ever-present challenges from the traditionalists. In an effort to find a secure and permanent place in the university, the embattled ethnic studies faculty will, if not cautious and guarded, re-cast curriculum to fit into the standard and acceptable content and bibliographic requirements. The university gatekeepers—Bloom, Bennett and other back-to-basics naysayers—will simply not recognize anything that does not fit into the standard curricular form. The traditionalists will continue to be threatened by the more progressive curricular innovations introduced by ethnic and women’s studies programs. The irony, however, is that as of late there has been an increasing interest in cultural or ethnic studies-type courses emanating from the more traditional departments, and pre-professional and professional training programs. As suggested above, these requests, when they have not been part of the historical development of ethnic studies in a particular institution, are usually proffered as a way of promoting and reflecting the romantic vision of cultural pluralism that they believe exists in the larger society. Once again, we are called upon to be vigilant and guarded when we are asked to participate in the university’s effort to adapt or transport ethnic studies concepts to other departments or divisions in the institution. For it is in this adaptation that we run the risk of losing control of or watering down certain aspects of our programs.

The Pit-falls of Cultural Pluralism and Expanded Culture Studies

The “new ethnicity” literature, as typified by Michael Novak, Andrew Greeley, Richard Gambino, and others, came on the heels of campus struggles by ethnic/racial minorities.¹¹ This new ethnicity effectively opened up, broadened, and made more inclusive the definition of ethnic studies in the university. Competing for limited space and resources in the academy, this revised definition of ethnic studies forced many to accommodate to this new reality.¹² More recently, the *new immigrant* programs and studies now seem to be increasingly popular in regions where large numbers of Latin Americans, new Asian, and other immigrants have settled. While these are critically important areas of study, the increased focus on these new groups may have the net effect of moving the needs of the more traditional ethnic/racial minorities to the academic back-burner. This is especially problematic in an era of shrinking dollars for social science research. The pressing and persistent core problems affecting the black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Native American communities have not disappeared; yet, the funding agencies,

university departments, scholars on the prowl for “hot” new research projects, will move on to these newer more exotic and perhaps more fundable groups.¹³

The problem does not arise from the increased number of ethnic groups, but in how the new groups are studied, what kinds of courses or programs are designed, and finally how some of the new immigrants see themselves. Do they see themselves as immigrants waiting to enter the mainstream of American society, or do they in some ways see themselves as identifying with the persistent underclass in American society—the blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Native Americans? While the data are not in yet, the anecdotal impressions seem to point to a disassociation with the traditional minorities. Some, however, may indeed see themselves more like the turn of the century immigrants, or for that matter like the post-Castro Cubans who were primarily from the middle and upper classes, and who as merchants and professionals in Cuba were more equipped to move quickly into the economic system. Of course, pre-immigration conditions (level of education, class, trade, rural or urban, etc.) often serve as an indicator of how a particular ethnic group will move through (up or down) the American social economic structure.¹⁴

So the call for a more culturally diverse curriculum, coming as it has most recently from traditionally anti-ethnic studies quarters in the university, may indeed have the net effect of muting the demands and the persistent realities of the more traditional ethnic/racial minorities.

Professional Training Programs and Multicultural Studies.

It is now quite common to see the occasional “multicultural perspectives” courses as part of the required training sequence which prepare the prospective teacher, counselor, social worker, other human services or health practitioner, for work in our culturally diverse communities. And, if a course doesn’t exist, these programs are planning to introduce one in the near future. If this is indeed quickly becoming the standard fare in the pre-professional training program, what is its content and substance, and what is the approach?¹⁵ Are these add-on courses learner centered, where the prospective practitioners seriously examine their own ethnic reality, come to terms with racial/ethnic biases, or is it simply offered as a smorgasbord of cultural or ethnic specifics? Of course, the danger lies in presenting the students with ethnic stereotypes of how they might expect members of culture-X to act under certain clinical situations.

The emerging literature in this field, on one level, seems to be quite encouraging because there seems to be a real debate about the best way to go about sensitizing professionals to the cultural, racial, and linguistic realities of their client’s, patient’s and student’s world. There seems to be a significant amount of research, most of it generated in the last ten or fifteen years, which has been dedicated primarily to understanding

cross-cultural issues in these fields. The pit-fall here may come with focusing exclusively on individual ethnic differences apart from the socio-economic conditions that often create and sometimes sustain certain realities for select groups in our society. Focusing exclusively on the psychological or cultural domain without attending to the economic and social realities can also lead to unreliable techniques in our applied clinical work.

On the matter of the developing technology in this area, one of the pioneers of cross-cultural counseling, Clemmont E. Vontress, in a recent interview, noted the following:

Finally, I notice a difference in terms of White and Black emphasis in cross-cultural counseling. In general, Blacks place a great deal of emphasis on the counselor changing himself or herself in order to be more effective in the helping role vis-a-vis black clients. On the other hand, I perceive that Whites place great emphasis on the tricks of the trade, the mechanics of counseling, if you will (e.g., how to sit, look, bend, or talk to come across as an accepting human being). For Blacks, what you are speaks so loudly that no amount of programmed behavior will conceal the true self.¹⁶

I found this particularly interesting, because a good deal of the emerging literature in this field is increasingly concerned with which technique works best with a particular population. There does seem to be a great emphasis on what formulas might be the most effective and less concern with who the clients and practitioners are ethnically, and what that represents to the consumer of a particular service.

A great many researchers are committed to making this kind of approach an integral part of the training of future practitioners. Our role in this process, as ethnic studies specialists, is, of course, critical. There are a number of things we could do to help strengthen the ethnic studies content in these programs. These efforts might include, among others, some of the following: where possible we could join these efforts through collaborative research; we could have direct input by actively participating in the curriculum design process; in some instances, we can contribute by providing bibliographic material or by giving guest lectures to these other departments or divisions. We can, if given the opportunity, effectively shape the nature and substance of these pre-professional courses in cross-cultural or multicultural studies.

At Queens College, for example, we are engaged in the beginning steps of a long-term project through which we intend to infuse or enrich all the courses in our School of Education with a multicultural component. One of our objectives is to look carefully at our teacher preparation curriculum and to introduce, where possible, those issues which would awaken the prospective educator (classroom teacher, counselor, administrator, school psychologist, etc.) to the ethnic realities of our community.¹⁷ Inasmuch as we have been able to attract a core group of active participants from each department in the School of Education as well from key ethnic studies, anthropology, and other non-education related departments and programs, this effort continues to be a collaborative one.

Ethnic studies participation in this kind of venture is essential,

especially if we expect these curricular innovations to reflect the realities of our ethnic communities and the realities of the society at large.

Impact of New Immigrant Groups on the Existing Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Many of us are now having to come to terms with the new waves of immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and some Western European countries. Most of our ethnic studies programs grew out of a very specific time in America's social-political history. The pedagogical foundations and academic justifications for our programs are written into the sequences of our curriculum, and appear as such in our respective college catalogues. Many of us are now facing increasing pressure from new immigrants who see our programs as the most logical place in the university where they too can begin to systematically explore their own ethnic experiences in American society.

Last year, the Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education convened a special forum to openly discuss what the implications and possible impact of these new immigrant groups might be for Puerto Rican Studies programs throughout the New York metropolitan area. Panelists representing a number of colleges in the City University system as well as from some of the private colleges in the area (senior and community colleges), were asked to talk about how their particular institution had, if at all, responded to the new influx of Caribbean and other Latin American students. The reported changes in curriculum resulting from these new populations were as varied as the structures of each of the programs. On the one hand, there were strict constructionist responses indicating that to move away from Puerto Rican Studies would effectively undermine their position in their particular institution; other responses described curricular innovations which were elegantly and politically quite innovative. Since many colleges in our area, as is the case across the nation, are going through a restructuring of the core requirements, some Puerto Rican Studies programs decided to re-vamp their entire curriculum and change the department's name to account for and include the academic needs and interests of these new groups. The program purists among us, however, saw these kinds of changes as representing a direct threat to the founding principles and integrity of Puerto Rican Studies. The more moderate, however, perceive the curricular accommodations as politically and pedagogically necessary, but will maintain a watchful eye over what they believe are the essential courses in a sound Puerto Rican Studies curriculum. In the final analysis, the students and faculty at each institution must come to terms with the political realities and academic regulations governing their own campus.

Again, as indicated above, many of the new groups do not see themselves as Puerto Ricans saw themselves when they first fought for and established Puerto Rican Studies programs in the late 1960s; however, some groups do see their struggles as analogous to the racial

and ethnic realities and experiences of the Puerto Rican community. At the same time, it is true that they can never really share the unique political, historical, and economic relationship that Puerto Rico has had with the United States. The fear of co-optation and possible elimination is very real and is founded on a history of continual threats from certain segments in the university that would like to weaken the more politically progressive ethnic studies programs and replace them with more amorphous, ethnically diverse, and less threatening academic entities.¹⁸

The Ethnic Studies Curriculum in the Core Requirements

The current struggle on some campuses to either include or not include specific ethnic studies courses as part of the students' required liberal arts sequence is part of the same process that can either bolster the ethnic studies program or keep it on the academic sidelines as a minor elective. How this question is resolved will either foster and reinforce the mission of ethnic studies in the university or contribute to its demise. At Brooklyn College (CUNY), a Puerto Rican Studies course has become an integral part of their new core sequence. As Stevens-Arroyo suggested,

The participation of Puerto Rican Studies in this project has been noteworthy, in that some of the department's suggestions were adopted. The net effect of the core curriculum at Brooklyn College has been to reduce the difference between Puerto Rican Studies and the general college without sacrificing our originality.¹⁹

Yet, on another CUNY campus, at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the Afro-American Studies and Puerto Rican Studies programs are struggling to make specific courses from these departments a part of the College's new core-curriculum. It seems clear that criminal justice education, especially in a place like New York City, must of necessity include courses on the black and Puerto Rican communities.²⁰

These ethnic studies programs very clearly typify the kinds of principles and mission suggested by Irby and Bonilla. Their inclusion in the newly revised core-curriculum will undoubtedly continue to enhance what is generally believed to represent a "vibrant and healthy ethnic studies program . . ." ²¹

At the same time that we are continuing to fend off the attacks of our adversaries in the university, we are also paradoxically witnessing a growing interest in ethnic and multicultural studies. This emerging interest presents itself as an exciting opportunity for us to introduce through an authentic ethnic studies curriculum, an alternative vision and interpretation of how we see and experience American society. Finally, the power of our vision must continue to be buttressed by an honest scholarship and pedagogy which sustains the study of ethnicity at a level which would actively explore critical connections that exist between our ethnic communities and the institutions in American society, as well as in the world around us.

Notes

¹Helen MacLam. "‘Power to the People’: Ethnic Studies as an Enabling Force." *NAIES Newsletter*. Vol. 4, No. 2 (October, 1979) 26.

²Charles C. Irby. "Ethnic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: A Proposal." *NAIES Newsletter*. Vol. 9, No. 1 (March, 1984) 34.

³Irby, p. 35.

⁴Frank Bonilla. "Puerto Rican Studies and the Interdisciplinary Approach." in *Towards a Renaissance of Puerto Rican Studies: Ethnic and Area Studies in University Education*. Editors: Maria E. Sanchez and Antonio Stevens-Arroyo. Social Science Monographs, Boulder Colorado, Atlantic Research and Publications, Inc., Highland Lakes, New Jersey. Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1987. p. 17.

⁵These activities, among others, include the following: college-wide committee work, university-wide advocacy for ethnic studies, teaching in and directing an ethnic studies program for the past thirteen years, and teaching in the counselor education department as well as carrying out other research and grant related tasks in the School of Education.

⁶Josephine Nieves, Maria Canino, Sherry Gorelick, Hildamar Ortiz, Camile Rodriguez, and Jesse M. Vazquez. "Puerto Rican Studies: Roots and Challenges." *Toward A Renaissance of Puerto Rican Studies: Ethnic and Area Studies in University Education*.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸Irby, p. 32.

⁹Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Harper & Row: New York. 1986. p. 152.

¹⁰Martha Nussbaum. Review of *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. *The New York Review of Books*. Nov. 5, 1987, Vol. 34, No. 17. p. 25.

¹¹The work of these authors, among others, successfully broadened our conceptions of what the university could include in its ethnic studies categories. Shortly after the Afro-American, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American and Asian-Americans carved out a place in the university through the politics of confrontation, these writers focused on the experience of European white ethnics in American society and introduced a reality that could not easily be challenged—that they too have been and continue to struggle with issues of their own identity as distinct cultures in American society. See Michael Novak. *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies*. (Macmillan

Publishing: New York, 1971), and also *Further Reflections on Ethnicity*. (Jednota Press: Middletown, PA., 1977). For a broad spectrum introductory approach to understanding ethnicity, see Andrew Greeley's *Why Can't They Be Like Us?/Facts and Fallacies About Ethnic Differences and Group Conflict in America*. (Institute of Human Relations Press, The American Jewish Committee, 1969). For a thorough and comprehensive view of the Italian-American, see Richard Gambino's *Blood of my Blood; The Dilemma of the Italian-Americans*. (Anchor Press/Doubleday: Garden City, New York, 1974).

¹²For a more detailed discussion on the issue of competing agendas among American ethnic groups, see the section on "Shifts in Ethnic Consciousness" in Jesse M. Vazquez' "The Ethnic Matrix: Implications for the Human Service Practitioners." *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*. Vol. 9, No. 2 (July, 1986), pp. 1-18.

¹³At Queens College, generous legislative funding was recently secured to establish a new Asian-American Studies Institute, while the older more established African Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, Latin American Area Studies and other college-supported ethnic studies programs continue to struggle with marginal budgetary support. This is in no way intended as an invidious comparison; we do support the establishment of this long over-due program. What we wonder about is the ease with which college administrations continue to disregard the basic needs of some of these older ethnic studies programs.

¹⁴For a more detailed discussion of the complexity of this phenomenon see Stephen Steinberg. *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America*. New York: Atheneum Press, 1981.

¹⁵Jesse M. Vazquez. "Exploring the Ethnic Self of the Bilingual Teacher in Training." *Journal of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education*. Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1985), pp. 26-36.

¹⁶Morris L. Jackson. "Cross-Cultural Counseling at the Crossroads: A Dialogue with Clemmont E. Vontress." *Journal of Counseling and Development*. Vol. 66. (September 1987) p. 23.

¹⁷The initial phase of this project is currently being funded through a New York State Education Department Teacher Opportunity Grant awarded to Susanna W. Pflaum, Dean of the School of Education at Queens. (1987) Project Director is Dr. William Proefriedt.

¹⁸For a discussion of how Queens College has dealt with this challenge see Jesse M. Vazquez. "Puerto Rican Studies: An Interdisciplinary/Interdepartmental Approach." Presented at the *Second Forum on Puerto Rican Studies*. Sponsored by the Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education. Convened on December 10, 1986 at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College-City University of New York.

¹⁹Antonio Stevens-Arroyo in Maria Sanchez and Antonio Stevens-Arroyo (Editors). *Towards a Renaissance of Puerto Rican Studies*. p. 138.

²⁰At the time of the writing of this paper, the issue at John Jay College remains unresolved.

²¹Irby, p. 35.