

EXPLORATIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES



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The Journal of the National
Association for Ethnic Studies

This issue is dedicated to
Charles C. Irby whose
leadership continues to inspire
those of us who shared his
vision.

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Table of Contents

<i>Ethnic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: A Proposal</i> by Charles C. Irby	1
<i>Ethnic and Women's Studies: An Attempt at Educating the Academy</i> by Lillian H. Jones	7
<i>Crossroads to the 21st Century: The Evolution of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green University</i> by Robert L. Perry and Susan Mae Pauly	13
<i>The Co-opting of Ethnic Studies in the American University: A Critical View</i> by Jesse M. Vazquez	23
<i>Ethnic Studies Past and Present: Towards Shaping the Future</i> by Otis L. Scott	37
The editor notes	49
Contributors	46
Author and Title Index, Volume 10, 1987	47

Ethnic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: A Proposal*

Charles C. Irby

If you will consider the dualistic thinking which undergirds Western philosophical tradition, then it comes as a surprise to no one that the periodization of history is based on white male experiences as the sum of western civilization, especially the glorification of war and the celebration of unbridled “raw-power.” So, too, it is not surprising that Aristotelian logic and Cartesian metaphysics form the godhead for monocultural and unisexual education in U.S. society, which is at the least bisexual and multicultural. For a decade-and-a-half now, ethnic, minority, and women’s studies proponents have suggested that their purposes for existence were to challenge and change the *status quo*. But ethnic and minority studies people, for the most part, became parties to the evils of the academy rather than revolutionaries against them during the past fifteen years.

The first decade of ethnic studies has been characterized as one where there was no real vision; no theory for providing linkages within a framework of strategies for attaining “the prize” was developed because ethnic and minority studies proponents had no vision of what the prize ought to be.¹ The proponents of women’s studies have probably fared no better. Simple inclusion with dignity, especially absolute equality of opportunity, could have been a goal if there had been a group large enough with dedication to bring that ideal to fruition. But expediency and tangents demanded colored ethnic minority experts get their share of the “booty” before the barnyard door closed; thereby leaving us in a position of being told by “them” how much money was spent on “us” and then “they” pointed to the negative results. So, colored ethnic people began to heap injustices upon other colored ethnic people, and for some reason this “colored” oppression was supposed to be somewhat less reprehensible and odious than “white” exploitation. Now, there is surely something awry with the line of thinking which rationalizes that “the white man is just using the ‘token’ to do his dirty work,” and the reasons for complicity ought to be examined. This discussion, however, is not about the first fifteen years of ethnic studies in the academy. Let us look beyond what is really on the horizon and visualize hope—hope, for ethnic and minority people entangled in and blinded by the web of the nation’s

monocultural iconography (system of symbols).

Ricardo Valdéz and Gladys Howell have shown two problem areas with which ethnic studies proponents must be concerned in the decade ahead—unitary thinking and dwindling financial resources.² This brief presentation looks beyond the next decade as well. The purpose of this presentation is to look at what we must accomplish in ethnic and minority studies to ensure survival with passion and substance at the turn of the twenty-first century.

At a basic level we need to know who we are, i.e., we must have an intact identity. Although there are cynics who will only see identity as a point for derision, arguing instead for full inclusion in the nation's political economy, my choice is to discuss components of identity as a focal area in developing a methodology for ethnic studies. We need to develop a series of choices and alternatives which allow us to understand, as John Hatfield argues, that

We all share some things in common because we are interbreeding members of a single species, that we have *cultural identities* which divide us into local groups, we have *personalities* that are capable of transcending *biological* and *cultural* determinants.³

Engaging the components of identity can only emerge when there is some understanding that they exist. People involved in ethnic and minority studies must understand that identity is the core value in a multicultural society, for it is only after we understand who we are that we will have the courage to be all that we can be.⁴

Briefly, the three components of identity are: the biological, the socio/cultural, and the psycho/personal. The biological component of identity is the rooting of the individual's genealogical continuity (and it does not matter who the ancestors are); that is, each one of us is but a leaf on a branch of a tree so ancient that it predates the concept of time. Although some of us choose to ignore the importance of this component, the nuances are capable of allowing for a more creative and active engagement of our present circumstances and corresponding relationships. In other words, an adequate understanding of the biological component of identity is significant for mental health. Only after we begin to *accept* people such as Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Chief Joseph, and Sojourner Truth as our own biological ancestors will we understand who we are as a people and as individuals.

The focus on the socio/cultural component of identity attempts to make some sense of what is social and what is cultural—important for individuals to understand the manner by which they fit into groups, but equally important for them to understand how they are the creators of those groups. As is easily understood, fitting and creating are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the interactions of fitting and creating (the essence of our contradictory lives) can provide data for focusing the socio/cultural component of identity—the matter of racism/color and sexism in the United States make the socio/cultural component of

identity extremely complex, too difficult to exorcise in this brief span of time. But we ought to recognize that racism and sexism are inextricably linked in our environment.

Finally, the psycho/personal component of identity, which has been identified as the ego-self, makes present time of paramount importance. The ego-self is primarily responsible for all the “paper-chasing” and “hoop-hurling” paces we put ourselves through to be what “they” want “us” to be. The ego-self is the least manageable component of identity, for it is too difficult to “objectify.” Managing the ego-self, however, is important for allowing the biological and socio/cultural to reach fruition.

The thumbnail sketch of identity components provides an elementary methodological approach for confirming our identities as individuals. Such an approach makes the individual the subject matter of individual-oriented ethnic studies in a broadly organic sense. So, engaging the components of identity can grow and develop methodologically as we understand that engaging them is an on-going and ever-emerging process—a process which cannot be captured and fixed by the scientific method and statistical analysis.

In order for us to be clear in our focus, we must have a process which transcends the masculinist and “Anglo conformist position of the academy”; we must be willing to re-tool and hone our evaluative skills, for we must know who our enemies are before we can confront them with a sense of purpose and mission. A simple re-tooling can be the understanding of how “identity” is crucial to the development of individuals; a more complex re-tooling necessarily involves an understanding of what shackles us psychically, physically, and emotionally, and we need a vehicle which moves us forward to our goal of liberation through a revolutionary education—the promise of the 1970s. Indeed a complex re-tooling forces us to understand our plights in this country and how they are linked and related to international crises—crises that exist in large measure because of our silence. In this context, I am referring specifically to the plight of people in El Salvador, Haiti, South Africa, Lebanon, and other places such as northeast India and the United States.

If the purpose of ethnic and minority studies is to develop multiculturalist and non-sexist education as a liberating experience for people, then we must agree with Paulo Freire’s maxim. He wrote: “Education is always for the liberation or for the ‘domestication’ of people, for their humanization or their dehumanization, no matter whether educators are conscious of this or not.”⁵ But we must get beyond the maxim to make progress. We must understand and make it understood that mis-education is inherently destructive; and it will become readily apparent to anyone who tries that attempting to correct the “compulsory mis-educated” is nearly an impossible task—that is, nonetheless, the continuing task before those of us who want ethnic studies to thrive rather than merely survive.

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.⁶ 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.

If you can agree that the product of the standard educational process is monocultural and masculinist (regardless of ethnicity or sexual preference), then you can possibly help develop a procedure for a liberating multicultural educational process which includes a variety of educated people with emerging options by way of ethnic studies. *Any ethnic or minority studies program existing for less than the creative empowerment of individuals should be abolished!*

If the 1980s and 1990s for ethnic studies is to have significant meaning at the turn of the twenty-first century, then personnel associated with the programs must begin to use “traditional disciplines” without becoming entrapped by their methodologies. Ethnic studies, as an area of enquiry, should be approached as an art form, because our goals are better served when we focus on real issues of liberation which confront us on a daily basis (we can profitably learn from poets regarding this matter of daily liberation as a segment of the whole).

As an artistic endeavor, ethnic studies can stand as the linking point for disciplines in the same sense that medical practitioners use the biological and technological sciences for engaging in healing. We must necessarily understand that focusing on academic scholarship alone is not enough. Our methodologies must be active. Our methods must clearly show, for example, that our acceptance of the status of “minority” too often makes us minorities. And our studies must continually include community folk, disciplinarians, students, and others in the processes and procedures for discovering means and methods to break the shackles which bind. At our best, we are addressing questions of human values, and we must continually confront individuals who stand as captains of institutions to develop an understanding of “self” and allowing others to enhance themselves. Although I am aware that systemic and unyielding institutional structures will thwart every possible effort, I recognize that people, not institutions, will make a better way of life possible—at least for me; linking with others is important in this context.

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 colored 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. We must persist in spite of naysayers, for a liberating educational process should enhance the political economy, socio/cultural development, and psycho/personal health.

Intent gets translated into *action* by people who have programs committed to goals. The goals for ethnic studies during the 1980s and 1990s should include the following:

1. Developing self-growth within and among students, faculty, and staff as a way of life that allows for change in an ever-changing society;
2. Helping to develop the skills suitable for a person's particular lifestyle after leaving the academy;
3. Demonstrating that *learning the rules* is not the same as selling the soul;
4. Exploring with any individual ethnic heritage as part of the learning process—allowing differences to be positive and creative forces (disciplined exploration);
5. Being concerned with the knowledge, sensitivity, and understanding of culture constructs and groups (from all directions);
6. Laying bare the nature of sexism and racism and the means for combatting their oppressive natures;
7. Fostering sensitivities to alternative social and cultural perspectives for those people interested in “being professional”; and perhaps most important;
8. Meeting the relevant needs of individuals and members of broader communities and societies that are often overlooked by preexisting conceptual and structural models.

In meeting the enumerated goals, the educational process must be a living and relevant experience in the present (which knows the past and designs for the future) and one that continues beyond the academy—not only for professional attainment but for an education which sustains a sense of personal integrity.

We must refuse participation in our own oppression with a muted voice and inaction. Therefore, in an attempt to imbue a zest for learning ethnic studies in the academy, consciousness must be expanded to include the wedding of identity to new perspectives of feeling, experience, and knowledge. To ensure dynamic survival in the twenty-first century, ethnic studies must be “An insurrection to the habitual methods of the masculinist, monocultural ratiocination.”⁸ The future is not a waiting game.

*This article was originally published in the NAIES *Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (March 1984) pp. 32-37.

Notes

¹Charles C. Irby. "One Decade and the Politics of Ethnic Studies: Focus for the Future." *Explorations In Ethnic Studies*. Vol. 3, No. 2 (July, 1980) 3-10.

²Ricardo Valdés. "¿Déjenme Hablar por Mi Raza!" (Let Me Speak for My People). *NAIES Newsletter*. Vol. 7, No. 1 (May, 1982) 26-28; and Gladys Howell. "The Challenge for Ethnic Studies Ahead." *NAIES Newsletter*. Vol. 6, No. 1 (May, 1981) 27-28.

³John T. Hatfield. "Components of Identity." Unpublished Mss. (Pomona: California State Polytechnic University, Ethnic Studies Department, 1975) 1.

⁴This non-scientific and unquantified statement is based on reports on suicides per year in this country. Additional evidence comes from the numbers of mental health workers dealing with clients each year.

⁵Paulo Freire. "Showing a Man How to Name the World." Quoted from *The Ethnic Studies Departmental Working Paper XIX*. (Pomona: California State Polytechnic University, 1978) 19.

⁶Helen MacLam. "'Power to the People': Ethnic Studies as an Enabling Force." *NAIES Newsletter*. Vol. 4, No. 2 (October, 1979) 26.

⁷Vine Deloria, Jr. "Institutional Racism." *Explorations In Ethnic Studies*. Vol. 5, No. 1 (January, 1982) 40-68.

⁸Letitia Bonner, Ilesia Jones, Laura Martin, Victor Santa Cruz, and Tracy Weatherspoon. "What is Ethnic Studies?" Unpublished Mss. (Pomona: California State Polytechnic University, Ethnic and Women's Studies Department) 2.

Over a year ago, my colleague, Charles Irby, asked me to “share the history and deal with the current dimensions” of the Ethnic and Women’s Studies Department at Cal Poly Pomona. Since Chuck’s death in June, 1987, I have often thought of him as I was both writing and not writing this article, as I have attended to departmental activities, and, of course as I have wandered through my thoughts in the course of many days. Of all my departmental colleagues, he most understood the necessity and validity of race/class/gender analysis in intellectual life. We talked and argued for hours. He was often infuriating. He was always engaging. He gave of himself as he demanded of others. He refused to be ignored.

Ethnic and Women’s Studies: An Attempt at Educating in the Academy

Lillian H. Jones

As I have written before in other places, the Ethnic and Women’s Studies Department at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona is a unique academic department in its history, structure, and ultimately in its agenda. The fact that Ethnic and Women’s Studies are combined in a setting where the two disciplines are more frequently suspicious if not hostile to each other is unusual and owes its partnership to the history of the university where it exists and to particular individuals who conceived it. This combination, while certainly subject to both political and philosophical criticism from a variety of voices and interests, is one that rests on the assumption that the “brother isms”—racism, sexism, and classicism—are, in harmony, appropriate organizing phenomena in both analyzing the American experience, and in exploring, in a global context, the American present and future.

Because I am a historian, I have a notion that contemporary explanations and analysis require beginning at the beginning. And, there is a context within which both the beginning and the present exist. Therefore, to understand the Ethnic and Women’s Studies Department, one needs to understand what institution it exists within and how it evolved. Cal Poly Pomona is one of the nineteen campuses in the California State University System, the largest state system in the country. Our campus is one of two polytechnic universities in this system, where the emphasis is on professional and technical training in such areas as engineering, business, computer science, architecture and agriculture. The largest college on campus is the College of Arts, actually a heterogeneous grouping combining the liberal arts, fine and performing arts, hu-

manities, and social sciences. This college provides most of the general education for the entire campus as well as courses for its twenty-four majors. It is in this college that the Ethnic and Women's Studies Department exists. The orientation of most students who come to Cal Poly Pomona is to gain professional training to get a job. The university sits on the eastern end of Los Angeles County in a polyethnic metropolitan area; it is 55% white and 57% male. The campus is located in a semi-rural setting with a student population of approximately 18,300.

In 1972, during a period of political turmoil, the first separate ethnic studies centers were established on campus. From this beginning, the Ethnic Studies Department formed when these centers were combined and given departmental status in 1978. Founding faculty were tenured in Ethnic Studies and were selected for their expertise in Afroamerican Studies, Chicano/Hispanic Studies, and American Indian Studies. In 1979, the first class dealing with women as a focus was offered. It was initiated by the chair of Ethnic Studies, Charles Irby. This was an Ethnic Studies course with a focus on female health and sexuality and was team-taught by a black male from Ethnic Studies and a white female whose training was in psychology. It became a sought-after class on this rather conservative campus, most probably because of what was considered its controversial content. In 1980, Yolanda Moses, a black, female anthropologist became chair of the department. She revamped the women's course, added additional courses, deleted others, and proceeded to create a full-fledged Women's Studies curriculum within the Ethnic Studies Department. At that time, no other department on campus had an interest in women's issues or women's scholarship even though women's studies nationwide was at least ten years old.

At Cal Poly Pomona, then, Women's Studies was developed within Ethnic Studies. As the course offerings changed and as the curriculum evolved, the goal of the department began to focus on the integration of race and class into the new Women's Studies courses and the integration of gender and class into the existing Ethnic Studies courses. And, some new classes such as "Racism and Sexism" were created. The name of the department was changed to Ethnic and Women's Studies in 1981, and the first year of the new combined department was spent designing a curriculum which included five minors in the following areas: Afroamerican Studies, Asian/Pacific American Studies, Chicano/Hispanic Studies, American Indian Studies, and Women's Studies. Once the program was in place, the next academic year was spent publicizing the minors.

Moses was promoted to serve as Dean of the College of Arts. Richard Santillan, a Hispanic political scientist who had been teaching in the department for several years, was made chair. A full-time, ex-officio position of Women's Studies Coordinator was created and Lillian Jones, a white female historian who had been teaching in the department on a part-time basis, was selected to fill it. The following year, at the

invitation of the tenured faculty, Jones became chair and serves in that capacity today.

Currently, the department has five tenure-track positions and each academic year an additional four to six part-time faculty are hired to teach on an ongoing basis. Because of changes in faculty teaching service areas and faculty moves to administrative positions, the department finds itself offering the majority of its courses taught not by the original tenured faculty but by non-tenured faculty who work on a yearly or quarter-to-quarter basis. This is not a wholly unique phenomena in contemporary university circles but one that gives rise, as one might suspect, to both positive and negative results. On the one hand, the department's current needs in an ever-evolving program can be, and are, well served by the selection of faculty who share the current agenda of the department (race/class/gender), who understand the tasks in implementing that agenda, and who are willing to contribute intellectually to it. The burden of old conflicts and old animosities, both personal and intellectual, are not brought to bear on the present and future by the newer and often temporary faculty. There is, however, a generic understanding of the history of the department born out of communal experiences in Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies everywhere and at Cal Poly. I don't want to imply that the tenured faculty do not also support the race/class/gender agenda. Several, in fact, not only support it but provide real leadership in this area for the department and the university. But there are, obviously, real problems with (a) the prevalence of part-time faculty and non-tenure track faculty teaching so many of the class offerings, not least a lack of sense of security for the faculty and a lack of stability in staffing the program and, (b) the feeling on the part of some senior faculty that the department has changed in ways in which they are not prepared to go.

There are larger issues, however, than those of staffing. Ultimately, the largest pedagogical issue confronting the department is how to take leadership in educating students to live in both a complex, polyethnic immediate community (California, Southern California, and Los Angeles and Orange counties) as well as the complex, cross-cultural context of the global setting. Students in our classes are from all ethnic groups, both genders, and primarily middle-class (as they define themselves). They are also primarily suburban. Like most other Americans, they are not particularly sophisticated about people who reside outside the United States, nor are they sophisticated about people who live in communities other than their own. Most of our white students see their own Euro-American culture as a generic one, most of our male students see their experiences as the human one, and many of our ethnic students of color are atuned to both their own communities and the Euro-American one but not to other peoples of color. Many of our students are very young and have difficulty getting outside themselves and their personal history. Previous education has not taught them to analyze in terms of

race/class/gender. Furthermore, what we do in our department is perceived not only as intellectual, but also as political (as is the rest of the university but not acknowledged as such). What we teach is equally often perceived as controversial and disturbing. Frequently we tell students that education, if done correctly, is difficult and painful, and indeed, might be revolutionary. To accomplish this within the structure of one of the most conservative institutions in American society, the university, is obviously challenging for faculty and students.

Curriculum development and teaching are only a part of our responsibility. While race/class/gender is the primary agenda of the Ethnic and Women's Studies Department, we understand the need to encourage all academic departments to attend to these issues, in their curriculum, in their student recruitment and retention activities, and in their faculty hiring. To that end, the small number of faculty in the department participate in numerous university-wide committees, do guest lectures, conduct workshops and seminars, politick continually, serve on fact-finding groups, and attempt to maintain ties to student organizations. We ask a great deal of our faculty and we can offer little in terms of reward. And, as in any group, there are always those few on whom the burden falls more heavily.

Several of our classes are on the university's General Education list. By taking one of our lower division courses, for instance, a student can fulfill the requirement in Social Sciences. Many students come to us for this reason. We find, however, that a good number of students who took their first class in Ethnic and Women's Studies as a way to fulfill a G.E. requirement, return for at least one follow-up class at the lower or upper division level. Oftentimes, in the written comments section of student evaluations (which we require in each class each quarter), students will write that never have they before in their education been exposed to such material or been asked to think about such issues. Frequently they will comment, "This class should be required for all students." We agree. Although new policies at our university require all classes in G.E. to now have a "cross-cultural" and/or "cross-disciplinary" approach, the requirement of having completed an Ethnic and Women's Studies class before graduation is still not in the immediate future.

The challenges of faculty staffing, curriculum development, and university politics are only part of the appointed task, however. We are, after all, a part of the university and as such are involved in the intellectual process of debate on the theoretical and philosophical issues raised in the focus on race/class/gender. Ethnic and Women's Studies (by definition) is a statement of challenge to not only the traditional academy but to Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies. It promises a new contribution and a different vision. This is perhaps our most difficult task at Cal Poly—because it requires time and energy not often allotted to state university faculty at a teaching institution, because it requires intellectual support not easily found in a small, isolated department, and

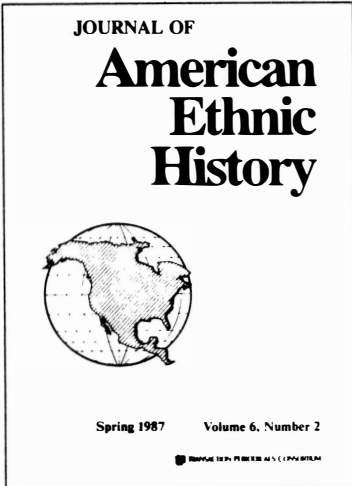
because it requires interchange and dialogue with others engaged in the same or similar tasks, organizationally almost unavailable in academia.

Academic disciplines are or should be continuously evolving. What we thought and taught two years ago is not necessarily what we should be thinking and teaching now. Both Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies are product and process. The product, in part, is education—of our students, of the university community, of ourselves. The process is simultaneously exciting and tiring, solitary and communal, challenging yet often defeating. Creating tools for analyses that incorporate the dynamics of race/class/gender, learning to think polyrythmically, helping students and colleagues accept complexity holistically, peeling away the layers of intellectual stricture are all part of the process we hope we are engaged in. This process, if undertaken carefully, guarantees no finished product.

Many of the old challenges remain—to be or not to be (or how much to be) enveloped in the cloak of university responsibility and sanction; to balance being marginal (in the best sense that that implies) and yet institutionalized (also in the best sense); to be intellectually provocative (and even often antagonistic) and yet be accessible and cooperative.

Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies are not fads. Their tenure in the university should not and does not depend strictly on political climate outside the university. Both “disciplines” offer content, methods, and analysis that enhance the educational process of the university and the society at large. Empowering individual students with knowledge, history, and the ability to ask the right questions can operate arm in arm with institutional analysis and critique. Combining Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies into an Ethnic and Women's Studies approach strengthens each discipline, completes the framework within which lives and experiences are actually structured, allows for a more complete analysis of the past and present, and ultimately promises a more fruitful vision of the future.

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Crossroads to the 21st Century: The Evolution of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University

Robert L. Perry and Susan Mae Pauly

Introduction

At Bowling Green State University's Fourth Annual Ethnic Studies Conference, scholar Dr. James A. Banks observed that Bowling Green State University is soon to become the *only* institution of higher education in the United States to institute a university-wide requirement in cultural diversity. The implementation of this landmark requirement demonstrates the depth and vigor of the commitment to excellence and equity in education held by the University's Department of Ethnic Studies.

The emphasis on a University-wide requirement illustrates the most fundamental principle of our department's over-all philosophy, which is that ethnic studies serves to educate *all* members of the University community—minority and majority group members alike. Our department exists to facilitate an educated understanding of American culture, a culture composed of a large number of various and diverse groups. In order to educate Americans about American culture, it is important not only to educate minority group members about their own rich cultures and cultural contributions, but also to educate members of all groups about the legitimacy and roles of other groups within American culture. As the year 2050 approaches, the year in which the so-called "white majority" may lose its numerical majority status, it is important that Anglo-Americans understand not only their relevant position in society, but also better understand other Americans who may be different from themselves. Because Bowling Green State University is composed largely of middle- and upper-middle class white students, we in Ethnic Studies have addressed this challenge in the development of our department. We hope to meet the challenge even more effectively through the institution of a university-wide cultural diversity requirement.

History

The Department of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University began as a response to a call for social reform and civil rights. This call

came from a new body of socially committed students and faculty seeking the democratization of American higher education. This push for educational reform was part of a larger national movement toward political equality and heightened social consciousness. One of the major goals of this movement was to achieve the democratic ideals guaranteed by the constitution, but denied American racial minority groups. The movement aspired to achieve these ideals by challenging the policies and behavior of the American power elite, especially as they perpetuated domestic racism and sexism, and promoted international imperialism through the continued war in Viet Nam. Our department's origins are essentially representative of the trend in higher education curriculum development which attempted to respond to the social movements of the 1960s.

Historically, ethnicity has been a focus of a variety of disciplines which characteristically approach ethnicity from the perspective of the observer, frequently a Western, often an ethnocentric, perspective. Our department began as a part of the nationwide movement toward the establishment of black studies curriculum during the 1960s. Within this nationwide movement, programs abandoned Euro-centric biases and adopted in their place theoretical and methodological perspectives which reflected Afro-American culture. Further impetus was the killing of students at Jackson State University in Mississippi and at Ohio's Kent State University by the National Guard. A Committee on Ethnic Studies had been meeting for some time at Bowling Green State University, and the result was the appointment of Dr. Robert L. Perry as director of Bowling Green State University's Ethnic Studies Program on July 1, 1970.

The mandate from the Ethnic Studies Committee was for the program director to organize, develop, and teach courses; encourage University-wide development of ethnic studies courses; secure grants for the development of ethnic studies; support student development and recruit faculty; and inform the University community concerning minority group issues. Initially, three part-time faculty and five graduate assistants were assigned to the program. Twelve years after becoming a *bona fide* department, the department is composed of 4.20 tenured professors including a department chair, five part-time faculty members, two teaching fellows, four graduate assistants, one full-time secretary, and three undergraduate student employees. The most distinguished faculty appointment to the department was James Baldwin, who first came to the department as Writer-in-Residence in 1978 and returned in 1979 and 1981 as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University. During his 1979 residency he was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership honor society, and in August 1980 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Bowling Green State University. James Baldwin helped to articulate the significance of the department's concerns to the wider University community and helped

the department to persuade the larger community to support cultural diversity in the University's curriculum.

Initially, the Ethnic Studies Program was not tied to any college, but operated through the College of Arts and Sciences on an informal basis and reported to the Director of Minority Affairs. Now the department reports directly to the College of Arts and Sciences. Before departmentalization, none of the original program's courses were listed in the published schedule of classes; students were informed of classes by word-of-mouth, special flyers, and notices in the student newspaper. All courses within the program were given generic numbers and identified under traditional disciplines; curriculum development was therefore dependent on the good will of others outside the program. None of those early Ethnic Studies courses fulfilled any group requirement, and none of the participating departments provided faculty support for teaching. Yet these other departments were allowed jurisdiction over the program's course offerings and evaluated our faculty. The teaching equivalencies became the property of the departments identified with the generic course numbers. The Ethnic Studies Program was not given credit for the development of ethnic studies curriculum, and the director whose charge it was to develop a program in ethnic studies was given little real power or authority within the College. The program had essentially been instructed to develop a curriculum outside of the normal collegiate structure, and to do so in an environment that often challenged the academic legitimacy of ethnic studies. Ironically, much of the criticism incurred targeted the absence of academic faculty and the integrity of an interdisciplinary program.

The original courses offered by the Ethnic Studies Program focused primarily on Afro-American culture, as did the curriculum of many other black and ethnic studies programs developing across the nation. Our curriculum quickly expanded to include courses addressing general ethnicity and Hispanic culture. While the students who enrolled in courses offered by the Ethnic Studies Program were predominantly black and Hispanic, students currently enrolled in courses offered by the Department of Ethnic Studies are predominantly Anglo-American. The changing demographics of student enrollment in Ethnic Studies was facilitated by our departmentalization. Subsequent to departmentalization, and the development of major and minor concentrations in Ethnic Studies, a number of our courses have been designated by the College and by other departments as fulfilling general and specific requirements. The recent inclusion of Ethnic Studies 101 on the list of courses fulfilling general education requirements in social and behavioral sciences has greatly increased our enrollment, especially in terms of white students and others who might not have taken a course in Ethnic Studies unless it met the general education requirement.

Departmentalization was essential to Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University for a number of reasons. First of all, it allowed us

to be less dependent on the good will of other departments in allowing us course numbers. Secondly, and very significantly, it provided the means to offer our faculty tenured positions. Departmentalization further affirmed the legitimacy of the subject matter by providing both a major and minor in Ethnic Studies and by allowing us to establish a stable curriculum.

As the educational mission of the department continues to expand, we have expanded the community we serve. The Annual Ethnic Studies Conference at Bowling Green State University attracts an audience composed of faculty, students, and staff, as well as scholars and other interested parties from neighboring communities and educational institutions. Keynote speakers for the conference have included Alex Haley, Mary Frances Berry, and Kenneth Clark. Prominent scholars such as Ronald Takaki, Carlos Cortes, and Charles V. Willie have presented papers and participated in conference panels. The conference has raised the department's profile on- and off-campus and has heightened the sensitivity of the University community to the importance of cultural diversity in higher education and to the particular role played by the Department of Ethnic Studies in the creation of a diverse curriculum.

Philosophy

Prior to the development of ethnic studies as an academic discipline, the study of racial and ethnic groups was achieved primarily through the areas of ethnology, a branch of anthropology, and sociology, within the speciality of race relations. Ethnology traditionally approaches various cultures, particularly non-literate societies, comparatively. Ethnographic observation frequently reflected ethnocentric standards, and so evaluated groups by those same standards. Ethnology has traditionally viewed non-Western groups and American minority groups as objects of curiosity, interesting because of their deviation from Anglo-Western norms. Because of this perspective, value judgments are sometimes incorporated into supposedly objective, scientific observation. Some of the same criticisms might be made concerning the specialty of race relations within sociology.

Since the 1970s, the United States has witnessed a number of events which reinforced and intensified ethnic identification and allegiance. During the fifties vigorous protest movements emerged within black communities ranging from nonviolent protests to the Black Power movement of the late 1960s. Afro-Americans during this period fought an unprecedented battle to achieve social, economic, and political equality. As the Civil Rights Movement progressed, black people tried to shape a new identity, shatter old and pervasive stereotypes about their culture, and emphasize the contributions which Afro-Americans have made to American society. Stimulated by the relatively progressive atmosphere of the sixties, other revitalization movements flourished. Hispanics, North American Indians, and other minority groups also demanded

changes in social, economic, and political institutions. In the process of becoming mobilized politically, American minority groups created more positive profiles of their varied cultures. A greater sense of cultural integrity also developed within these groups, some groups experiencing what has been conceptualized as nationalism. As these ethnic groups intensified their search for identity, unity and solidarity were generated, sometimes resulting in alternative forms of ethnocentrism and the rejection of out-groups within higher education. Rejection of scholarship exclusively dominated by Anglo-Western thought resulted in the emergence of Afro-American studies, and later Chicano and Native American studies. Each discipline emphasized a specific cultural perspective.

The movements and reforms initiated by non-white ethnic groups encouraged some white ethnic groups to proclaim ethnic pride and to push for social, political, and educational reforms that would directly benefit their own particular groups. This movement became known as the "new pluralism." Ethnicity is an integral part of American society. A sophisticated understanding of our society cannot be grasped until the separate ethnic communities which constitute American society are seriously analyzed. It is insufficient to conceptualize ethnicity only in terms of racial groups. While these groups, because of institutional racism, discrimination, and individual prejudice, are the most socially isolated and physically identifiable, ethnic divisions also exist among Americans of European origin.

In the spirit of both racial and ethnic pluralism, the Department of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University incorporates a wide variety of cultural perspectives. Our mission is to instill in our students a real understanding of actual American culture. We hope that cultural literacy will result in the appreciation and tolerance of all groups, regardless of any differences which may exist.

In recent years, educators have begun to realize the importance of ethnicity in American society. They recognize the need to help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of the diverse ethnic groups who compose the population and to help them achieve acceptance of cultural differences. Responding largely to student demands and community pressure groups, institutions of higher education have made attempts to incorporate information about ethnic groups into social science and humanities curriculum. Too often, however, social science and humanities courses depict racial and ethnic groups only in terms of how they differ from dominant groups. Ethnic studies is important even where such educational amendments have been made, as ethnic studies presents racial and ethnic cultures without apology or comparison.

In developing our own ethnic studies curriculum, we believe American culture can best be represented by studying each cultural group's understanding of itself. Afro-American scholars, or those who can articulate the perspective, are best equipped to understand the special

position of blacks in American culture; scholars of Asian-American culture are best equipped to observe Asian-American society. By providing a range of scholarship produced primarily by members of specific racial and ethnic groups, we are able to avoid indoctrinating students to any *one* perspective or bias, be it Eurocentric, Afrocentric, or any homogeneous world view. Such a multiplicity of theory and methodology reflects well the multiplicity of groups creating our uniquely American landscape. By advocating the scholarship of minority scholars, however, we do not exclude Anglo-Western scholarship which transcends the limitations of traditional Eurocentric philosophies. Structural functionalism and conflict theorists, for example, are often incorporated into the curriculum regardless of their personal cultural experience.

Because of the careful attention given to cultural perspectives, the movement of ethnic studies away from traditional ethnology, and the rejection of Eurocentric scholarly bias, ethnic studies is in many ways a well-defined discipline. But in order to truly introduce students to groups other than their own, it is necessary to introduce students to the cultural artifacts of those groups. In our department we accomplish this by combining humanities and social sciences in the curriculum. This interdisciplinary approach provides more depth in the understanding of culture than a singular disciplinary approach. We utilize ethnic arts, music, and literature to illustrate various cultural aesthetics. It is vital that students from all backgrounds recognize that different world views exist and further understand those different world views. Only by appreciating numerous cultures can students understand the complexity of American culture.

Department Strengths

The Department of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University is privileged in areas that similar departments at other universities may not be. Our faculty and staff have gathered data and resources which illustrate the experience of ethnic and racial minority groups in Northwest Ohio. The Ohio Hispanic Institute of Opportunity, which once had offices in Bowling Green, donated to our department a wealth of documents pertaining to the migrant experience in Ohio. Once our department is able to obtain funding for a faculty member to develop and direct an applied policy and research center, the data will serve as the foundation for research projects. The existence of this data and the projected establishment of our Ethnic and Migrant Policy Research Center will allow faculty and students the opportunity to understand the dynamics of the geographical area and gain practical research experience. The Center will be designed as an educational, training and research organization. Research will focus on public policy, issues, and concerns related to ethnic minority populations in Northwest Ohio and surrounding regions.

Other materials developed by our faculty and staff for our express use include two documentaries produced through WBGU-TV: *The Heights* explores contributing factors to dramatically low educational attainment for Mexican-Americans in one affluent local school district, and *Crossroads to the 21st Century* (the title comes from our annual Ethnic Studies Conference) which is a series of interviews with Bowling Green faculty staff, and students and with distinguished participants in the conferences including Charles V. Willie from Harvard's School of Education and Mary Jean Mosely, the Director of Intercultural Studies at Ft. Lewis College. The latter documentary makes a strong argument for the necessity of incorporating cultural diversity into the higher education curriculum.

The annual Ethnic Studies Conference creates an invigorated atmosphere within the department. Each fall our faculty and staff encounter new perspectives on ethnic studies through contact with a variety of scholars in education, literature, sociology, and social policy. Such stimulation serves to revitalize enthusiasm which may sometimes be depleted by everyday university politics as well as to create a quality profile for the department on campus. Important papers which have been presented throughout the years at the conference are currently being edited for publication.

Because of the range of courses we offer, including a basic introductory course, a specific introduction to black studies, a course addressing the role of the Chicano in American culture, an upper-level study of the depiction of racial minorities in television and film, and a course addressing Euro-American ethnic experiences, our courses are in many ways "mainstream" courses, meeting a variety of general educational requirements. As a result, our courses attract a variety of students from a variety of areas. This trend in enrollment supports our premise that race and ethnicity are integral components of American culture, and that no education is complete without an understanding of what roles race and ethnicity play in social, political, and economic life. We feel that our platform, which defines ethnic studies as complementary, rather than adversarial, to more traditional higher education curriculum has enabled us to establish ourselves as an important area of study and to continue to grow whereas departments elsewhere may have expired or been diminished.

Fundamental to our survival and success was our departmentalization in 1979. Departmentalization facilitated not only control over our own curriculum, but also the ability to exercise full autonomy over the selection of ethnic studies faculty and to offer faculty tenure. We feel that the evaluation of ethnic studies faculty by others educated in the area is essential to maintaining the quality of instruction and scholarship. Such autonomy promotes survival on campuses which may have indifferent or ambivalent attitudes toward ethnic studies.

Perhaps our largest accomplishment to date is the development of the

University-wide Cultural Diversity requirement. Still in its embryonic stage, the requirement will guarantee that all students graduating from Bowling Green State University will have at some point in their college career been exposed to non-European cultural perspectives. The University-wide requirement at Bowling Green, like less comprehensive requirements elsewhere, not only benefits students, but also elevates the intellectual sophistication of individual Colleges which expand their academic mission to reach beyond traditional historical limitations of curriculum. Faculty, as well as students, improve their scholarship by being encouraged to incorporate additional dimensions into their instruction. We hope that one day this standard will be the *status quo* in higher education.

Limitations

As various ethnic studies courses are identified as meeting specific distribution and general requirements in a number of Colleges within the University, our student enrollment has increased significantly. Unfortunately, the number of full-time faculty has not grown proportionately, and we are having difficulty accommodating the growth. The result of the discrepancy between the demand for courses and the availability of faculty has been twofold: students are frequently denied access to courses they want and need, while our faculty are exhausted by overcrowded courses and frustrated by being forced to turn students away.

While the College of Arts and Sciences has been generous in providing funds for a number of part-time instructors, the department is not fully satisfied with that solution. Because of the tenuous nature of the funding, appointments are often made at the last minute. A larger permanent faculty would allow the department more continuity, which would assist us in better planning for the future. With the institution of the University's Cultural Diversity requirement, our need for faculty will become even greater as students seek to fulfill that requirement. In addition to an increase in the number of full-time tenured faculty, the department also requires an increase in the number of graduate assistants and teaching fellows assigned to the department. The department has always depended on graduate students from a number of academic areas to utilize their particular perspectives while teaching a variety of ethnic studies courses. In order to increase the number of courses and sections offered each semester, a further commitment to the Department of Ethnic Studies must be made by the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College.

One factor contributing to the difficulty in obtaining additional graduate assistants and teaching fellows is the absence of a graduate program in ethnic studies. Although the Graduate College includes an American Studies Program offering a degree at the master's level, and an

American Culture Program at the doctoral level, neither features a concentration in ethnic studies. If our department were to offer a graduate degree, the interdisciplinary programs in American Studies and American Culture could include ethnic studies as important parts of their curricula. All we can offer at this time is an occasional course taught by one of our faculty and assigned a "topics" graduate course number through another department or program. A graduate program in ethnic studies would further generate research in the discipline, benefiting not only the Department of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University, but also departments elsewhere, as research and data would be collected and made available through our developing Ethnic and Migrant Policy Research Center.

An increase in the size of the faculty would facilitate the much needed expansion of undergraduate curriculum. Although we currently offer a wide variety of courses, we need to develop additional courses in theory and methodology to support our major and minor programs, and to increase in the number of courses we offer which could be used to meet the Cultural Diversity requirement.

Because of the small faculty, the department is limited in additional ways. There is not a woman in a full-time or tenured faculty position. We are attempting to improve the current situation by developing a joint faculty appointment with the Women's Studies Program, a program with which we have historically had a mutually supportive relationship. The small size of the department has also limited the variety of ethnic groups represented by faculty; as we increase the number of faculty members, we will be able to expand the racial and ethnic composition of the faculty.

To accommodate a larger faculty, staff, and the Ethnic and Migrant Policy Research Center, the department will require improved and enlarged physical facilities. Despite repeated requests for additional space in which to house the Research Center, we have been granted only a small area for document storage. Commitment to ethnic studies by University administration, at Bowling Green and elsewhere, must transcend verbal support and be made concrete by providing necessary personnel and facilities. Significant commitment to ethnic studies departments and programs will indicate to students higher education's determination to integrate pluralism into the curriculum, a commitment which will better represent and serve higher education's constituency.

Conclusions

As we approach the twenty-first century, it becomes increasingly important that cultural diversity be incorporated into higher education curriculum. This incorporation is best achieved through the establishment of ethnic studies departments and programs which offer curriculum defined by a variety of cultural perspectives.

Two thirds of the world is composed of non-white, non-Western

cultures, yet higher education curriculum continues to emphasize scholarship within the Western, Judeo-Christian tradition. As the economic and political dominance of the West wanes, it will become increasingly imperative that our students be able to function in a world society that may differ dramatically from their own experience. Only through understanding and respect will international conflict be resolved.

Because the racial and ethnic composition of the United States is rapidly changing, it is equally important that students be aware of the nuances of American culture. Black and Hispanic populations in the United States are relatively young, and their birthrate is higher than the older Anglo population. Cultural emphasis on the family also contributes to a large average family size for blacks, Hispanics, North American Indians, and Asian-Americans. In addition, immigration profiles have shifted. The majority of immigrants to the United States no longer come from Europe; they come from Mexico, Central America, South America, and Southeast Asia. These immigrants bring with them languages, religions, and cultural artifacts much different from their European predecessors. Their entrance into the United States alters not only the demographic make-up of society but also the cultural landscape.

These changing patterns in immigration, combined with already existing young minority populations, create new meaning for the concepts of "majority" and "minority." If current trends continue, Asians, Hispanics, and blacks could represent one third of the population by the year 2000. By 2050 these "minority" groups could compose the numerical majority of United States citizens. It is essential that all people possess skills which will allow them to understand, appreciate, and respect groups other than their own. Political, economic, and educational institutions will need to respond to multicultural constituencies. The practical application of ethnic studies can help facilitate the efficient and equitable treatment of all groups by public and private institutions.

The faculty in the Department of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University believe our philosophy and instruction contribute to creating a society which recognizes and respects all of its members. We believe that when different groups understand each other's important roles and contributions to American culture, bigotry and racism will become mere remnants of an earlier, less informed society. We look forward to seeing cultural diversity incorporated into higher education curriculum nation-wide, so that the profile of American culture may become truly representative of all its components and contribute to the unity of the American people. We hope to see this happen as we stand at the crossroads to the twenty-first century.

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.

Ethnic Studies Past and Present: Towards Shaping the Future

Otis L. Scott

Ethnic Studies as a curriculum at predominantly white colleges and universities remains a relatively new phenomenon in academe. The recent history of these formations can be traced back to the several social change movements of the 1960s. These changes, spearheaded by the civil rights movement and the black student protests in the South in early 1960s, provided the impetus for the social change spillover which many college and university campuses were to experience in earnest beginning with the mid-1960s.¹

What is phenomenal is that these programs have managed to persist as academic formations in college and university environments. The environments by some accounts have become even more hostile than the epoch of the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period of rather rapid development and implementation for ethnic studies programs. The presence of ethnic studies programs, courses and faculty is in large measure a testimony to the resolve by a cadre of teacher-scholars and students to persist within a learning environment where the institutional acceptance and support levels range from indifference to overt hostility.

This paper has one major purpose. I wish to focus attention on the future of ethnic studies on predominantly white colleges and universities and what that future may look like. In making this examination—out of necessity—some attention will be placed on the origins and the present status of ethnic studies. Both provide the essential historical context which informs the future of ethnic studies. Both examinations assist in framing the issues and factors which allow us to view the shape of the future. And both establish the agenda of needs and tasks which must be attended if that future is to be one which is appreciably more sustaining than either the past or the present.

To assert that the national waters through which ethnic studies programs have navigated over the last twenty years have been turgid is only to speak to the obvious. To assert that ethnic studies programs at traditionally white colleges and universities have had a mixed record of intellectual achievement and community and university acceptance is again to speak to the record of ethnic studies programs. Because of a myriad of challenges, running the gamut from being ill-conceived and

hastily contrived to being vulnerable to the vicissitudes of a changing market economy, ethnic studies faculty and administrators have been confronted with a range of interdicting variables which threaten the viability, if not the existence, of programs. The challenges faced by ethnic studies scholars have undoubtedly not been of the same kind or degree faced by other scholars in academe as they have attempted to embark on new academic, intellectual, and program development pursuits.

It is this point, that is, the environment within which ethnic studies programs function, which essentially constitutes the continuing challenge to program development and persistence. And by this, I am suggesting that early on ethnic studies programs have had to contend with an academic and intellectual environment which in the main was non-nurturing, reluctantly supportive, and ever wary. It was an environment wherein “mainstream academics” were very critical of the claims by black and brown students, faculty, and community members for a university curriculum that reflected the life experiences and issues significantly attendant to the lives and realities of people of color in the United States and the diaspora. The claims by ethnic studies advocates tended to offend the sensibilities of most “mainstreamers” in an academic community that had long prided itself on having a strangle hold on the university curriculum and the allocation and use of university resources. Who were these “people” now demanding that the university curriculum be broadened? Who were these people now demanding that ethnic faculty, staff, and students become an integral and programmatic part of the post-secondary experience?

Significantly, the ethnic studies thrust during these early years represented a challenge to the gridlock of Euro-American hegemony on the curriculum and the dispensation of resources. And in the main, the continuing presence of ethnic studies programs and especially those programs that have managed to attract and produce top notch scholars and scholarship still remain threats to the monopolization of ideas, knowledge, and information so long harbored by the Euro-American academic community.

And while the pitch, tenor and cadence of the tension between ethnic studies programs and the host campus have somewhat diminished and slowed when compared to yesteryear, the long standing struggle over ideas and perspectives still underlies the tension. It is well that this point is kept in mind; the war is one between prevailing notions of “truth” and their critique. This writer is mindful that in some instances ethnic folk believe they have garnered the “acceptance” of their mainstream colleagues. Some believe also that their perceived and believed acceptance conveys “legitimacy.” Both are confusions with tolerance. Underneath the thin veneer of tolerance the primordial questions still lurk: “Who are these people?” “What is this ethnic studies thing?”

We know these questions are there because curriculum committees

raise them about our courses. We know the uncertainty about the legitimacy of our scholarship persists because tenure and promotion committees raise questions about the legitimacy of our scholarship and teaching. We know that ethnic studies still is not generally embraced as a “serious academic discipline” because of the rascality of our faculty who use budget and curriculum committees as forums to savage ethnic studies proposals and requests. Furthermore, the dearth of our physical presence in colleges and universities across the nation and the significance of our declining numbers over the recent past speaks to the commitment by the Euro-American academic community to continue to close its ranks to ethnic faculty.²

Given the foregoing sketch of the milieu within which ethnic studies programs have tended to exist and still exist, one can in summary fashion assert that over the last 15 to 20 years ethnic studies has been shaped by a growth dialectic which can be represented as follows:

1966-1970

Activity	Growth and Development	Survival
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1971-Present

Activity	Stasis	Decline	Survival
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Given that there has not been a genuine commitment on the part of most institutions to properly building and adequately supporting ethnic studies, programs have always operated from a survival/defense mode. Ethnic studies folk—faculty and students in particular—have directed most of their interest, energy, and time toward fending off attempts, and in many instances not so veiled ones, to diminish ethnic studies presence and influence.

I, for one, expect that this is the academic climate within which programs will operate into the foreseeable future and beyond.

I advance this line of thought regarding the future academic setting for ethnic studies because I understand two essential points as they bear on comprehending the academic environment within which ethnic studies exists on campuses in the U.S. First, colleges and universities represent the most conservative institutional formations in this society. American colleges and universities tend to be most resistant to “upstart” ideas and formulations which challenge long settled “truths” and status quo formations. Part and parcel of the conservative nature of these institutions is the fundamental, Eurocentric, and at times, unabashed racist, sexist and elitist nature of these institutions. It is against the pervasive Eurocentrism and particularly its perverse manifestations in representing the social histories of people of color that much of ethnic studies scholarship is directed. The ever present ethnic studies critique tends to be a critique of Western and Euro-American cosmologies. And as is usually the case, the veracity of the critique, more often than not, insulates it from conservative rebuttals. Consequently, upon close inspection, the pedestal upon which Eurocentric perspectives have long

rested is no longer sturdy.

Secondly, the delivery of education (or miseducation for that matter) is a function of political power. The acquisition of power and the ability to win concessions from competitors in public arenas, especially policy making arenas, is a necessity on college and university campuses. Ethnic studies clientele continue to work within settings where power has long been entrenched for the purposes of sustaining traditional status quo academic formations, ideas and values.

To wit, ethnic studies folk must be able to amass power bases, for example, from students, colleagues, community members, and from professional associations. This must be done if we are to be sufficient to the tasks of navigating ethnic studies programs through the maelstroms of academia. The use of power as the manifestation of the conservative personality of post-secondary institutions will continue to shape what we try to do and how successful we are at what we try to do. One of our important roles in ethnic studies into the next century will be to try to check the use of power residing in academe which threatens the life blood of our programs and therefore our ability to serve our on-campus and off-campus constituencies and interests.

I believe that the tension of give and take between the traditional repositories of power in the academy, i.e., central administrations, curriculum, budget, personnel committees, and ethnic studies program will continue through the last quintile of this century. Additionally, implementing an ethnic studies agenda will be fraught with considerable resistance, given the “excellence” movement in higher education. This is movement which has the thinly veiled objective of returning colleges and universities to their historical places as bastions for the elite and privileged in this society.³ This movement portends an exacerbation of the historical tension already mentioned.

Given the foregoing, there is a prediction I will offer regarding the future of ethnic studies as such programs are currently conceptualized, designed, and in place. Perhaps the prediction is reckless. Nevertheless, I will posit that ethnic studies disciplinarians will attend to the political tasks necessary to ensuring the continued presence of course offerings, budget, and resource allocations. I also believe that they will undertake other actions essential to maintaining the research and teaching objectives of ethnic studies programs.

I will further posit that ethnic studies practitioners—no strangers to ethnic group social history and the lessons of vigilance and readiness taught by those histories—will neither wittingly nor due to a lapse of attention betray the investment made by countless numbers of students, community allies, faculty and others in creating ethnic studies programs. This writer is of the mind that the continued presence of ethnic studies programs speaks more to the commitment by ethnic studies folk to maintaining presence than it does to some transformation in the consciousness and personality of Euro-American dominated academics.

I choose not to underestimate the element of commitment. I have on occasion questioned the level of commitment of my colleagues. If, however, my assumptions concerning this capacity to persevere are incorrect, then we will become casualties of our clumsy assistance at our own birthing.

This outline of issues casts a dark pall over the present and immediate future of ethnic studies. It is nothing new. It is the nature of things given the cultural context of American society. The litany of issues framing the challenges to ethnic studies need not be summarized. The struggles for “acceptability,” “legitimacy,” “recognition,” “authenticity,” and “institutionalization” will continue.

In the face of the gale of these challenges there is work to which we teacher/scholars can and must attend. There remains much work if we are to build an intellectual and academic enterprise which we can use and which can be used by the folk we research, and write about, and teach, and learn from to build more humane human institutional formations.⁴

The tasks before us are those necessary to strengthening our ability to persist and grow within our respective academic environments. These tasks must be attended to if ethnic studies scholarship and teaching are to be even more relevant. Relevance here conveys compliance with the sense of social responsibility which appropriately undergirds ethnic studies study, teaching, and research. My point here is that there is much building to do if our enterprise is to be a more useful tool for folk to better interpret and understand their environments. This utilitarian feature of the discipline is an imperative. Our scholarship must assist folk of color with developing correct responses to the several predations so common to their environments.

The tasks before us have been elsewhere articulated and explicated. This writer is only restating old ideas. Yet, old good ideas need be restated. They have pragmatic value; they are focussing. I see the tasks as: further institutionalizing ethnic studies courses and programs at colleges and universities and seeking better clarity of the concept “ethnic studies.”

A major objective by advocates of Asian American, black, Chicano, and Native American studies programs during the late 1960s was to broaden the university curriculum to include courses reflecting the totality of the colored ethnic experience. And as uneven as the implementation of this objective has been over the intervening years, the centrality of this objective to the programmatic mission of ethnic studies remains constant.

As argued above, this is a responsibility which cannot be taken casually or approached with arrogant indifference. Those of us at institutions whose primary mission is teaching must attend to the demands of course development and course revision as these bear on course offerings which are engaging, timely, and purposeful. In order

that the fruits of course development labors be harvested, we must attend to what I will refer to as the politics of program maintenance.

A bane of many of our faculty is committee work. Often times, it seems that the more institutionalized some of us become, by virtue of tenure and promotions, we tend to shirk those responsibilities pertinent to maintaining our programs. Having served on many committees and chairing a few, I know first hand the oft-time thankless drudgery which accompanies these tours of duty. I also know that given the ethnic studies socio-political experience at colleges and universities, it is necessary to have ethnic studies representation on those academic assemblies having power to significantly impact what we do. Institutionalizing ethnic studies in part means ensuring ethnic studies' presence on those strategic university committees concerned with budget, curriculum and personnel issues. More ethnic studies disciplinarians must be brought to the point of commitment where they understand that just as is air to fire—our presence in the “pits,” *viz.*, committees, is essential to our survival and progress. Inasmuch as ethnic studies has and maintains presence within these vital processes, program agendas can be presented, advanced and defended. To do less tacks in harm's way.

Attending to the politics of program maintenance also means that more attention needs to be given to strengthening the presence of ethnic studies courses in post-secondary general education or liberal education programs. Indeed, on this point, a program objective over the next three to five years of organizations like the National Association for Ethnic Studies may be to encourage and assist college and university programs in making ethnic studies a mandated part of a student's general/liberal education program. In light of the current demographic transformation of California's social fabric and given the demographics of a planet that is largely non-European, there seems to be no plausible reason for not requiring students to take a minimum number of hours in course work intended to inform them of the “real world.”

Currently, faculty in the Ethnic Studies Center at CSU, Sacramento, this writer's home institution, are preparing such a proposal to the University community. And while the structural changes recommended to the extant General Education (GE) program will be minimal, the impact on the content and philosophy undergirding the program will be significant. And therein we expect that stoney will be the road trod towards revising the GE program at CSU, Sacramento. The eventual adoption of the proposal will in a small way institutionalize an important part of the Ethnic Studies program and go a long way toward bringing the University's general education program into the real world. As noted earlier, an ethnic studies requirement should be adopted as a short range objective by ethnic studies programs in post and secondary institutions in this state. NAES may consider a program for developing strategies/tactics which can assist ethnic studies programs in California and elsewhere with institutionalizing an ethnic studies general education

requirement.

The other assignment we must attend to concerns shaping or better focusing the concept we call ethnic studies. I am mindful that this is (or can be) sensitive ground to tread. I am mindful that a lot of ideological and philosophical dust has been raised—more so nearly a generation ago than now—over this subject. I am aware of the cases and countervailing cases for better defining ethnic studies—its methods, scope, and areas of inquiry. I am mindful also of the oppositional schools of thought which argue that ethnic studies is a discipline vs. those believing ethnic studies is actually an area of study.

I am not interested so much in resurrecting the various conceptual arguments for or against ethnic studies as an area or discipline in this paper. I am interested in urging those of us who labor in this vineyard to expend more of our labor on clarifying what we do in order to better communicate what we do to each other, to others, and especially to students.

This is not a call for a flurry of activities aimed at rigidly and for all time defining ethnic studies. Such activity would be purposeless, unnecessary, and virtually impossible to accomplish given the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of our perceptions of the ethnic experience and given that these perceptions essentially guide our teaching and scholarship. It is, however, a call for more attention to better identifying and describing the philosophical, ideological, subject matter, and other bounds of what we do. Again, this activity must not be engaged for the purpose of staking out territorial claims between, for example, Afro American studies and Asian American studies. My concern is that more attention to building and clarifying what we do is essential if we are to more effectively and convincingly articulate those aspects of what we do as teachers-scholars which builds on and contributes new knowledge about the human experience.

And while some of us claim clarity as to the objectives and purposes of what we call ethnic studies, others do not. Moreover, I am not so certain that those of us who talk and write about ethnic studies do so from the vantage point of a commonly agreed body of knowledge framing and driving what many of us refer to as a discipline. There are some reasons for this failing.

One of the difficulties confronting us as we set about clarifying ethnic studies rests with the academic preparation ethnic studies disciplinarians typically receive. Most of us tend to be trained in the more or less rigid canons of “traditional disciplines.” Many of us are “experts” at identifying, categorizing, explicating, and otherwise representing those aspects of “traditional” disciplines which are distinct and unique. Our training prepares us to be guardians at the gates of our respective disciplines. We are taught to be wary against intrusions by suspect “disciplines” and even more suspect of loosely—read, not explicitly defined—bodies of knowledge seemingly unconnected by theory, generaliza-

tions, specificity, methodology, acceptance, and focus.

Unfortunately, our “expertness” does not provide us the disciplinary tools to readily decipher, much less define, a “non-traditional” varied program formation like ethnic studies. Moreover, we are hard pressed to represent what we do to others, especially in academe, who are trained in similar traditions. In addition to these factors, those of us who consider ourselves ethnic studies scholars really issue from a mono-ethnic studies disciplinary component, e.g., Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, or Asian American Studies. And on top of this we tend to bring to bear on each of these areas our “traditional” training as anthropologists, political scientists, historians, and so on. We tend to, at least initially, know little if anything about the other ethnic studies subject areas.

The fact that early on many ethnic studies faculty accepted appointments to programs that were fledgling or floundering, where the top priority was and continues to be survival, has not afforded high quality time needed for introspection and clarification called for here. As a consequence of these and other salient issues and factors, some important work in the area of building the conceptual bases of ethnic studies has largely gone unattended. As a consequence of this inattention we have not raised the kinds of questions necessary to establish the conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and factual foundations to better define, build, strengthen, and communicate what we do.

In this brief exposition I have attempted to identify some of the challenges facing both ethnic studies program formations and faculty as we prepare to turn the corner on this century. Barring a spontaneous transformation of racial/ethnic consciousness in American society, the short term future looks much as does the present. The staying power of both faculty and programs will continue to be tested.

I am not of the mind that ethnic studies will wither and die. I am of the mind that there is much that we can do to vitalize, protect, and advance what we do under the aegis of ethnic studies. This has in fact been a principle concern of this paper. Indeed, as we move toward the twenty-first century our activities and energies should converge on strengthening what we do well. If the past and present of ethnic studies are accurate indicators, our future as an academic formation will in large measure be determined by the amount of work we are willing to expend on shaping that future.

Notes

¹The following sources provide good discussions and analyses of the societal formations prompting the black studies movement which is the indicator for ethnic studies courses and programs on predominantly white colleges and universities: Allan B. Ballard. *The Education of Black Folk*. (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1973); Nick A. Ford. *Black Studies: Threat or Challenge?* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1973).

²For a penetrating analysis of the factors contributing to this issue along with some prescriptive measures see: Western College Association Addresses and Proceedings. *The Coming Shortage of Faculty*. (Oakland, California: Western College Association, 1987).

³Charles V. Willie. *Effective Education: A Minority Perspective*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1987). Especially pertinent is Chapter 2.

⁴Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970). Freire's discussion of the true ends of education and the responsibilities of the "critically" educated and the educator in this book represents one of the most eloquent statements on the processes of human and institutional transformation.

Contributors

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EXPLORATIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES
AUTHOR AND TITLE INDEX
Volume 10, 1987

Auser, Cortland P. Critique of "From the Ground Up . . ."	2:11-12
Bataille, Gretchen M. "An Interview with Geraldine Keams"	1:1-7
Bedrosian, Margaret "From the Ground Up: Multiethnic Literature in the Humanities Curriculum"	2:1-7
Clemmer, Janice W. Critique of "Implications for Survival . . ."	1:21
Eive, Gloria. Critique of "From the Ground Up . . ."	2:8-9
Gradwohl, David M. Critique of "The Challenges and Limitations of Conducting Research Among the Old Order Amish"	2:35-36
Laughlin, Margaret. Critique of "The Challenges and Limitations of Conducting Research Among the Old Order Amish"	2:37-38
Mayo, Louise. Critique of "The Challenges and Limitations of Conducting Research Among the Old Order Amish"	2:38-39
Savells, Jerry and Thomas Foster. "The Challenges and Limitations of Conducting Research Among the Old Order Amish"	2:25-35
Schnell, Jim. Critique of "From the Ground Up . . ."	1:9-10
Scott, Otis L. Critique of "Implications for Survival . . ."	1:22-23
Sisney, Mary F. Critique of "Implications for Survival . . ."	1:23-24
Walker, Robbie Jean. "Implications for Survival: Coping Strategies of the Women in Alice Walker's Novels"	1:9-20

EXPLORATIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES
TITLE INDEX
Volume 10, 1987

“Abstracts from the Fifteenth Annual Conference on Ethnic and Minority Studies”	2:13-33
“The Challenges and Limitations of Conducting Research Among the Old Order Amish”	2:25-35
“From the Ground Up: Multiethnic Literature in the Humanities Curriculum”	2:1-7
“Implications for Survival: Coping Strategies of the Women in Alice Walker’s Novels”	1:9-20
“An Interview with Geraldine Keams”	1:1-7

The editor notes . . .

This issue celebrates the commitment Charles C. Irby had to ethnic studies in general and to the National Association for Ethnic Studies in particular. The issue was Charles's idea; he wanted several scholars to examine where we have been and where we are going in ethnic studies. He did not intend to include his own essay, but the editors thought it was appropriate to reprint the piece which was originally published in the newsletter of the Association. That Charles was thinking about the twenty-first century long before most of the rest of us is testimony to his farsightedness. At the memorial service for Charles last June, Dr. Yolanda Moses, Dean of the College of Arts at California State Polytechnic University, commented that Charles was usually thinking beyond his colleagues, a factor which often made it difficult for those of us with more impoverished imaginations. Those of us who knew Charles well and who loved him often had to admit, sometimes years later, that he was indeed right on some issues about which we had argued strongly with him. Charles was interested in scholarship, but he cared how scholarship affected human beings. He was interested in serious discussions, but he was always playful. He asked us who loved him not to mourn his death but to celebrate his life. We hope that this issue of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* does just that.

Gretchen M. Bataille, Editor
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Hania Zlotnik

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Mary M. Kritz

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International Migration**

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A Historical Perspective

Ellen Percy Kraly and K.S. Gnanasekaran

The United Nations Recommendations and Data
Efforts

Alan B. Simmons

Improving the Comparability of International
Migration Statistics: Contributions of the Conference
of European Statisticians from 1971 to Date

John J. Kelly

The Canada-United States Joint Immigration Study:
Issues in Data Comparability

Edward T. Pryor and John F. Long

RESEARCH NOTES

The SOPEMI Experience: Genesis, Aims and
Achievements

John Salt

Migration and the Population Census in Asia and
the Pacific: Issues, Questions and Debate

Ronald Skeldon

Research on International Migration and Census Data
Co-operation in Latin America

Carmen Arretx

Part III: National Statistical Systems: Case Studies

The Measurement of International Migration in
Belgium

Michel Poulain

United Kingdom Statistics on Immigration:
Development and Limitations

David A. Coleman

National Recording Systems and the Measure-
ment of International Migration in Canada: An
Assessment

T.J. Samuel, P.M. White and J. Perreault

Using National Recording Systems for the Measure-
ment and Analysis of Immigration to the United States
Guillermina Jasso and Mark R. Rosenzweig

RESEARCH NOTES

International Migration Data in Mexico

Manuel Garcia y Griego

The Nature and Scope of International Migration
Data in Nigeria

Paulina Makinwa-Adebusoye

The Philippine National Recording Systems on
International Migration

Benjamin V. Cariño

International Migration Data: Their Problems and
Usefulness in Venezuela

Ricardo Torrealba

Part IV: Methodological Approaches

New Approaches to the Estimation of Migration Flows
from Census and Administrative Data Sources

Kenneth Hill

Change in the Undocumented Alien Population in
the United States, 1979-1983

Jeffrey S. Passel and Karen A. Woodrow

Consistent Correction of International Migration
Data for Sri Lanka, 1971-1981

*Norman Y. Luther, K.H.W. Gaminiratne, Soma de Silva
and Robert D. Retherford*

Using Census Data to Study Elderly Migration:
Problems and Possibilities

Graeme Hugo

The Indirect Estimation of Migration: A Critical
Review

Basia Zaba

Comparison of Two Methods for Estimating the
Number of Undocumented Mexican Adults in Los
Angeles County

David M. Heer and Jeffrey S. Passel

"Conventional Numbers" in Immigration
Research: The Case of the Missing Dominicans

Eric M. Larson and Teresa A. Sullivan

The Ethnosurvey in Theory and Practice

Douglas S. Massey

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Newsletter Article	³ James H. Williams. "Ethnicity and Human Rights: Raising the National Consciousness." <i>NAIES Newsletter</i> . Vol. 5, No. 2 (October, 1980) 19.
Newspaper Article	⁴ Jack Slater. "Where Are the Blacks in Ballet?" <i>Los Angeles Times</i> . (June 8, 1980) 18.
Article in a Book	⁵ 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	⁶ Michael G. Karni. "Yhteishyra"—or For the Common Good: <i>Finnish Radicalism in the Western Great Lakes Region 1900-1940</i> . Ph.D. Dissertation. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1975) 115-195.
Multiple Authors	⁷ 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.
Subsequent References	⁸ Ibid. (follows immediately) ⁹ Williams, 20. (otherwise)
Additionally	¹⁰ Informational notes are acceptable.

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